

March 4, 2022

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

Via email: Sean.Fraser@parl.gc.ca; SF1@cic.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

Like the rest of Canada, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers is watching in shock as the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues.

The need for global solidarity and burden-sharing to meet this and other humanitarian crises is, and remains, clear. In less than a week, [a million people](#) have been forced to flee Ukraine and cross international borders in search of protection. We are deeply appreciative of the welcome offered by Europe. We are also immensely troubled by the [racist treatment](#) of migrants and refugees from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, also looking for a safe haven.

CARL commends your government for the swift action taken to provide humanitarian relief to Ukrainians in the midst of this crisis. With yesterday's announcement of humanitarian measures, CARL was pleased to see Canada put in place pathways to temporary and permanent residence, with eligibility to apply for open work permits. We trust these measures will set the standard for future humanitarian responses; they should be the norm, and not the exception. Wherever Canada can use its immigration policies to provide humanitarian relief for people, we trust that it will do so, in keeping with our humanitarian commitments.

In addition to the measures already announced, we encourage your government to extend humanitarian relief to non-Ukrainians who have been caught in this devastating war, taking the following additional steps to respond to this crisis:

- Expedite processing of refugees who have been hosted in Ukraine and are awaiting resettlement to Canada. This includes Afghan refugees evacuated by Ukraine after the Taliban takeover last summer. We urge Canada to provide expedited Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs) to those awaiting resettlement, under s. 24 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and waive medical and biometric requirements. Or, Canada could issue conditional TRPs that allow individuals to come to Canada to complete medical and biometric requirements.

- Provide humanitarian relief to other refugees from third countries who were residing in Ukraine, particularly if they do not have access to temporary protection in the European Union. Similar to the proposal above, Canada could introduce an expedited and simplified TRP process under s. 24 of the *IRPA*, waiving medical and biometric requirements, or issue conditional TRPs allowing individuals to travel to Canada to complete processing.
- Ensure that TRPs are coded to qualify holders for provincial health insurance coverage during their stay, and facilitate the issuance of work permits on arrival under s. 208(b) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*.

As you finalize measures announced yesterday, CARL urges you to make use of lessons learned from the procedural hurdles encountered in responding to the Afghan refugee crisis to avoid similar delays in responding to this crisis.

We thank you for your prompt action in support of Ukrainians, and in the spirit of our common humanity, hope that you will extend that generosity to third country nationals also deeply impacted by this crisis, and equally in need of humanitarian relief.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these proposals further.

Sincerely,



Aviva Basman
President

Anthony Navaneelan
Vice-President