

Dear Minister Miller,

I am writing on behalf of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) and our federate member, the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada (UWAC) regarding the Ukrainian family reunification pathway launched on October 23, 2023. As President of NCWC, an organization founded in 1893 and incorporated by Parliament in 1914, we collaborate with women's organizations to advocate for positive changes for women, families, and communities.

The special family reunification program welcomed Ukrainian family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents, allowing them to escape their war-torn country and build lives in Canada with family support. However, UWAC has informed us that Ukrainian citizens applying for permanent residency (PR) under this program are facing unexpected challenges.

We understood that this program would facilitate a smooth transition to permanent residency. However, applicants are now experiencing delays due to a new policy limiting annual PR approvals to 10,000 from all sources. Given the unique circumstances under which Canada admitted approximately 23,000 Ukrainian citizens, we urge you to process and approve their applications outside this annual limitation.

These delays are causing additional complications:

1. Passports nearing expiration, which IRCC requires to be valid for PR application decisions.
2. Difficulties obtaining passport renewals due to lack of necessary documents.

With the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and the heightened risks to those in Ukraine that we are currently witnessing, we strongly recommend expediting these applications.

Canada has a long-standing tradition of supporting those fleeing wars and oppression. We fully support UWAC and the Ukrainians who arrived under the Family Reunification Program in their journey to become permanent residents and contributing members of Canadian society

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Marianne Wilkinson

President, National Council of Women of Canada