

To:

The Honourable Prime Minister Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

The Honourable Anita Anand
Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree
Minister of Public Safety

We, the undersigned, write to you as faculty members and representatives of the faculty associations across 26 Canadian universities who have admitted students from Gaza into Canadian graduate programs. For more than 23 months, a group of 130 displaced Palestinian students have been waiting for Canada to process their study permits. The result of this extensive delay has resulted in many of them losing their offers, funding expiration and project delays for professors and undue hardship on students experiencing exceptional circumstances.

These students were admitted on merit into highly competitive programs for funded research in fields such as artificial intelligence, public health and other fields the Government of Canada has prioritized. They represent exceptional academic talent and have earned their place within our institutions. Yet, their futures remain in limbo due to excessive delays, stemming from the imposition of additional security screening measures applied specifically to applicants residing in Gaza in 2023.

These students have survived unimaginable conditions in Gaza, and remain steadfast in their academic pursuits. Now, these prolonged delays threaten the futures they worked for.

Unlike previous crises, IRCC has stated that biometrics waivers will not be considered for Palestinian applicants. In response to other crises, Canada has swiftly created academic and humanitarian programs. But for Palestinian applicants, this government has imposed requirements that are impossible given the extraordinary circumstances in Gaza, instead of adapting existing frameworks to resolve these delays.

Two students admitted to the University of Waterloo for PhD studies, Sally and Dalia, were killed before they could begin their studies in Canada. Others have been severely injured. These students' lives are at risk due to the Government of Canada's inaction.

Our research programs, many of which are funded by public and institutional grants with strict timelines, depend on the contributions of these admitted scholars. These students are set to participate in critical research across disciplines including artificial intelligence, sustainable infrastructure, public health, and social sciences. The ongoing delays jeopardize project outcomes, strain research capacity, and risk the loss of allocated funding. This undermines individual professors' research, university publications and Canada's academic and research ecosystem.

We urge Prime Minister Carney to take immediate and concrete action to resolve these excessive delays.

1. Request that IRCC apply the same biometrics waivers and delivery solutions as in previous crises.
2. Request that the Minister of Public Safety expedite background checks and resolve the secondary screening directive.
3. Request that IRCC, Public Safety and Foreign Affairs work together to ensure timely processing of the study permits.

With the next academic term quickly approaching, inaction will result in the loss of educational opportunities that these students have rightfully earned.

As educators and researchers, we affirm that diversity, academic exchange, and equitable access to education are foundational to the integrity of our institutions. These students are not only scholars, but future leaders, educators, and contributors to both their communities and to Canada.

We call on you to act with urgency and accountability.

Respectfully,
(Faculty associations name)