

Opening Remarks

Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, ECNS, KC, P.C., M.P. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security Removal of Individuals with Criminal Records

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Thank you, Chair.

I'm pleased to be here with colleagues in related security portfolios.

The motion before this committee reflects a legitimate public concern. Canada's immigration system welcomes those who contribute to this country and keeps out those who could do harm. We're committed to maintaining that balance which is fundamental to Canadians' safety and trust.

IRCC is a part of the first line of defence. From the moment a foreign national applies for a visa, permit or status, they're subject to a multi-layered, coordinated screening process.

We assess their identity, eligibility, and admissibility under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Officers have authority to refuse entry to foreign nationals with a history of criminality, organized crime, or human rights violations.

When concerns arise, we seek input from our partners in law enforcement, border security and intelligence.

We're taking a more proactive, intelligence-driven approach to the screening process. This includes continuously improving how we flag cases, share data with our partners, and track status in Canada to support more timely action.

Our goal is to identify risks as early as possible—so that we reduce the pressure on enforcement later.

Safeguards exist at several stages of the process.

We're strengthening preventative measures at the visa stage, including tightening requirements and improving how we verify applications in higher-risk streams.

Once a foreign national is admitted to Canada, if they're found to have misrepresented their criminal history on their application, their case may be referred for enforcement.

When other inadmissibility concerns are identified, CBSA will investigate and take appropriate enforcement action, which may include removing someone from the country.

The law is clear. Non-citizens convicted of a serious crime are inadmissible, and those sentenced to six months or more of imprisonment have no right to appeal to the Immigration Appeal Division.

I appreciate the committee's work and look forward to our discussion.