

Report on Illegal Immigrants in Canada

"Illegal immigration in Canada is a major problem that is growing every day. Something must be done about it."

The report on illegal immigrants presented to Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council has found that illegal immigration in Canada is a major problem. The Council was unable to arrive at an exact figure for the number of illegal immigrants in Canada due to a lack of precise data; however, the Council believes that the number 200,000, often used as an estimate, is conservative.

The solutions to Canada's illegal immigration problem proposed by the Council include the following:

1. **Curative Measures:** Illegals presently in Canada should be given legal resident status after a phased, six-year probationary program administered by the government with the help of non-governmental community agencies. The Council feels that such measures would be the most realistic and humane way to deal with illegal aliens in Canada. However, the Council has made a clear distinction between this program and an unconditional amnesty, which it feels is ineffective and counter-productive.

2. **Preventive Measures:** To prevent a further build-up of illegal immigrants, the Council advocates tighter control at points of entry as well as stiffer enforcement measures within Canada as follows: the establishment of an entry and exit control system at border points; the active seeking out of illegal immigrants; and a more strict application of the the Immigration Act for employers who knowingly hire illegals.

Canada. Employment and Immigration Advisory Council. Dec. 8, 1982.

A Study Document of Principles on the Issue of Undocumented Aliens came out of a conference on undocumented aliens convened by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in November 1978 and followed by a lengthy study process. Adopted by the LIRS standing committee in September of 1980, the document provides pertinent background material on undocumented persons or "illegal aliens," a theological framework for discussing the issue and public policy recommendations for improving U.S. immigration law and policy. It can be obtained by writing to the Lutheran Council in the United States of America, 360 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010.

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Canada Makes Unilateral Declaration Against Torture

The Honourable Charles Lapointe, Minister of State (External Relations), announced on December 17, 1982 that the Government of Canada has decided to make a unilateral declaration of its continued compliance with the "Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment".

The declaration, conveyed in a note addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, confirms solemnly the intention of the Canadian authorities to continue to act in conformity with the Declaration. This moral commitment entails no change in present Canadian law or practice which continue to be consistent with the principles contained in the Declaration of the United Nations.

The UN Declaration against torture, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1975, does not include legally binding obligations for States. To date, over 30 governments, including the Canadian Government, have declared unilaterally that the competent authorities within their respective territories intend to act in conformity with the provisions contained in the Declaration.

The Government of Canada intends, in addition, to continue to work within the UN Commission on Human Rights for the early completion of the drafting of an "international convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (under consideration in Geneva since 1978). Canada believes it is important that the international community provide itself with the legal instruments necessary for the effective suppression of the practice of torture in the world.

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Minister of Employment and Immigration Appoints Special Advisor

Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced on December 21, 1982, the appointment of Mr. W.G. Robinson as a special advisor to study and analyse problems related to people living in Canada without official status, as well as those seeking unauthorized entry into this country. The announcement is in response to the recent report on illegal immigrants prepared by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council.

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Vietnamese Community Petitions Canadian Government

Members of the Vietnamese community are planning to get signatures for a petition addressed to the Canadian Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ask the Canadian Government and UNHCR to intervene in favour of Vietnamese refugees now being detained in concentration camps in Thailand so that the Thai Government will grant them the status of refugee (according to the Geneva agreements) and allow UNHCR, the Red Cross, and settlement countries' immigration officers to visit and interview them.

