

Gaza TRV Reunification Advocacy Toolkit

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Gaza TRV Reunification Advocacy Toolkit

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Gaza TRV Reunification Advocacy Toolkit

OVERVIEW

To educate and mobilize the public, media, and policymakers about the systemic failures of Canada's Gaza TRV program and advocate for immediate reforms and expanded humanitarian support for Palestinian families affected by the ongoing crisis.

INTRODUCTION: Why This Toolkit Matters

As Palestinians in Gaza continue to face catastrophic violence and displacement, Canada's failure to implement a functional and just family reunification program remains a glaring injustice. For Palestinian Canadians, the inability to bring their loved ones to safety — despite government promises — is a source of deep pain and frustration.

In the face of immense suffering, many Canadians have felt helpless - unsure of how to meaningfully support Palestinians. This toolkit is a powerful reminder that **we are not powerless**. The Canadian government acts in our name and with our tax dollars. We CAN demand that it uphold international law, meet its obligations, and demonstrate real leadership grounded in human rights and compassion. Demanding action from our elected officials is a tangible, focused way for Canadians to support Palestinian families.

This toolkit has been developed to:

- Equip you with the facts, and key talking points about the Gaza Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) program.
- Expose how the program's systemic failures reflect anti-Palestinian racism within Canada's immigration system.
- Provide concrete ways you can raise awareness, pressure government officials, and advocate for urgent change

Skip to page 11 for direct talking points and guidance on engaging with elected officials.

Let's turn grief into action and solidarity into change. Let's make it impossible for our leaders to look away.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF IRCC AND GAC

To better understand where the responsibility lies and how we can hold Canada's government accountable, it's important to recognize the roles of both IRCC and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in the Gaza TRV program:

1. IRCC (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada):

- IRCC is responsible for processing visa applications, including Temporary Resident Visas (TRVs). This includes establishing eligibility criteria, vetting applicants, and making decisions regarding the issuance of visas.
- The department's failures in providing clarity around application procedures, offering inconsistent guidance, and implementing discriminatory practices have exacerbated the suffering of applicants and their families.

2. Global Affairs Canada (GAC):

- GAC oversees Canada's diplomatic relations and foreign policy and continuously engages with Israel. In the context of the Gaza TRV program, GAC needs to play a crucial role in negotiating and facilitating safe passage for approved applicants, as well as securing necessary arrangements with Israel and Egypt.
- GAC has been criticized for not using Canada's diplomatic influence effectively, failing to ensure the safe passage of evacuees, and not prioritizing this issue within its broader foreign policy approach.

By understanding these roles, we can better advocate for the specific actions needed from each department. Both IRCC and GAC must be held accountable for their failures in fulfilling Canada's promise to Palestinian Canadians and their families.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND CURRENT STATUS

In January 2024, following sustained advocacy by Palestinian Canadians and civil society organizations, Canada announced a special immigration program to facilitate family reunification for those with loved ones trapped in Gaza: the **Gaza Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) Program**. Introduced under Section 25.2 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA), the program was framed as a humanitarian measure — but in practice, it has failed to deliver meaningful protection.

Key Facts and Issues

The Gaza TRV program was initially capped at **1,000 applications** but was later expanded to allow for up to **5,000 individuals**. As of **March 6, 2025**, the program has closed to new applications, having reached its intake cap. However, reaching this cap does **NOT** mean the program has successfully met its



commitment or reunited families. In fact, the vast majority of applicants remain stranded, with only a small fraction having been approved - let alone evacuated. The Program remains temporary and offers no pathway to permanent residence, despite the life-threatening conditions applicants are fleeing.

Application Numbers and Geographic Breakdown

More than **5,000 applications** have been submitted under this program. Of these, approximately **3,200 individuals remain in Gaza**, while another **1,800 are currently in Egypt**. In Egypt, approximately **1,085 applications** have been approved. However, **more than 700 individuals** among them are still waiting for final processing or onward movement by the Canadian government, despite many having already completed their biometrics and met eligibility requirements.¹ In

Within Gaza, as of the publication of this toolkit:

- **Only 503 individuals** have been added to the evacuation list since January 2024
- **Just 41 individuals have actually managed to leave Gaza**
- All evacuees had **valid biometrics on file** - a requirement that has become a major and absurd barrier to access

Canada has effectively excluded thousands of eligible applicants by insisting on biometrics from within an active war zone under siege and blockade - despite the complete absence of biometric collection infrastructure in Gaza. This unrealistic and punitive requirement has left countless individuals in limbo, denied even the chance of evacuation.

While the aforementioned 41 individuals are described as “evacuated,” it is important to clarify that the Canadian government has not directly conducted or coordinated these extractions. Instead, their departure appears to have been enabled primarily through the efforts of community organizations, third-party intermediaries, or self-coordinated means.

Widespread Family Separations

One of the program’s most glaring failures is the ongoing separation of families across Gaza, Egypt, and Canada. At least **85 families remain separated**, including deeply unjust cases where children were evacuated but their parents were left behind, with lack of biometrics used as an excuse. This serves as yet another intentional tactic to inflict suffering on Palestinians. Two recent examples, **the Alyazji and AbuAmrah families**, highlight this cruel reality: the children of these families were brought to safety, while their mothers remain trapped in Gaza. These cases are part of a larger trend, where a significant number of applicants are **elderly parents and children under 18** - both groups that are particularly vulnerable, yet still stranded due to bureaucratic hurdles.

¹ In the context of Canada's immigration system, biometrics refers to a process where individuals are required to provide fingerprints and a digital photo. These are used for identity verification and security screening. Biometrics must be collected in person at a designated collection site — such as a visa application centre — making it an impossible requirement for those trapped in Gaza, where no such infrastructure exists.

Humanitarian Harm and Medical Urgency

The delay and dysfunction of this program has life-and-death consequences. An analysis of **over 300 family feedback submissions** shows that **52 cases involve serious or urgent medical needs**, including:

- Cardiac conditions, cancer, and chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension
- Pediatric emergencies such as hydrocephalus and thalassemia
- Disabilities and high-risk pregnancies
- Trauma-related psychological injuries

Even more enraging is the fact that at least **six families have had loved ones killed** while waiting for security clearance or visa approval, amid Israel's relentless and indiscriminate assault on Gaza. The most devastating of these is the case of **Abeer Hilles**, whose husband and three children were killed while still awaiting processing.

Extreme Delays in Security Screening

One of the most persistent failures of this program is the prolonged and intentionally opaque security screening process. More than **100 families** - some waiting for **9 to 14 months** - remain in limbo despite having passed eligibility checks, submitted biometrics, and maintained active communication with IRCC. These delays impact applicants both in Gaza and in Egypt, and the lack of transparency or updates from IRCC has only deepened public outrage and the community's distress.

KEY FAILURES AND CRITICISMS

Ineffectiveness in Facilitating Evacuations

- Despite the program's life-saving intent, very few Gazans have successfully reached Canada.
- As of October 2024, only a small fraction of the 5,000 promised visas had resulted in actual evacuations. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Canadian government has communicated any concrete numbers or progress to Israeli and Egyptian officials regarding the number of evacuees within Gaza. This lack of coordination is concerning and points to systemic inefficiencies. Other countries have demonstrated that evacuations are possible when the political will exist - for instance, Ireland, France and Brazil have all managed to facilitate the evacuation of Palestinian civilians from Gaza, through active diplomatic engagement and logistical planning.
- The Canadian government has also failed to provide regular updates, particularly to families and the public, on the status of applications, approvals, and timelines. This lack of transparency has left families in the dark, unsure of when or if their loved ones will be evacuated.

- This intentional withholding of information, compounded by the slow pace of evacuations, has created confusion and exacerbated the distress of families who are desperately trying to protect their loved ones.

Unrealistic and Onerous Requirements

- Applicants faced confusing, unrealistic, and constantly shifting criteria, making the process inaccessible and opaque from the outset. Advocates have correctly questioned the intentionality of this as a barrier.
- Required documentation was often impossible to obtain amid war and displacement in Gaza, including:
 - Full employment history since age 16;
 - Social media handles;
 - Proof of family relationships under Canadian legal standards;²
 - Identification of the origin of each and every scar and injury, despite the traumatic circumstances of war and displacement, with new injuries or circumstances potentially arising that, if not reported in the original application, could compromise the application.
- These demands were not only disconnected from the harsh realities on the ground, but could also be logically deemed impossible to meet. This demonstrates how the Government of Canada purposefully further compromised an already vulnerable and at-risk population.
- Many families were not informed clearly about what documents were needed, or were given contradictory instructions by immigration officials, further exacerbating delays and confusion.
 - IRCC's online guidance was vague and incomplete, leaving families uncertain about timelines, document requirements, and how to link applications to a G-code.³
 - Eligibility criteria—such as the requirement to have been physically present in Gaza since October 7—were inconsistently explained and applied. Some families, acting on unclear messaging, chose not to flee Gaza when they had the chance, believing leaving without a G-code would disqualify them from the program. It was not until April 2024 that IRCC clarified that a G-code was not required before leaving Gaza or applying.

² Under Canadian immigration law, proof of family relationships requires formal documentation that legally establishes the claimed relationship. This typically includes birth certificates, marriage certificates, and adoption or guardianship records. In cases where such documents are missing or inaccessible—as is common in Gaza—IRCC may request DNA testing or secondary evidence like affidavits, communication logs, or photographs. However, these requirements often assume stable civil institutions and fail to accommodate the realities of displacement, lost documentation, or non-Western family structures (such as customary marriages), effectively rendering many applications ineligible from the outset.

³ The G-code refers to a unique identifier that was required for applicants to link their Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) applications to specific categories or special measures, such as those related to the Gaza evacuation program. This code was intended to help streamline the process and ensure that applications were treated under the appropriate criteria for those fleeing the conflict. However, applicants were often left unclear on how to use the G-code, leading to significant confusion and delays. Some were told they could link their TRV application to a G-code, while others were told this was not possible after submission, adding to the uncertainty and frustration.

- The definition of a "family unit" was also unclear. Anchors were unsure whether married siblings or extended relatives could be included in one application, and shifting messaging added to the confusion.
- Applicants received conflicting information on how to proceed—for example, whether to apply for a TRV first and wait for a G-code later, or vice versa. As the program neared its 5,000-person cap, families were left uncertain whether to continue waiting for a code or risk applying without one.
- Families who later entered a G-code reported issues with federal health insurance activation. Some arrivals were unable to access care due to system errors and inconsistent instructions on how and where to activate their coverage.
- Document requirements created further challenges. Applicants who lost their passports or had expired documents during evacuation didn't know what alternatives would be accepted. Although some were assured this wouldn't impact their application, many received requests for missing documents even after submitting explanation letters. It remains unclear whether these applications were stalled or rejected due to unresolved documentation issues. In one case, a newborn born after the application had no G-code, delaying the entire family's processing. In another, a child turned 14 during the process, triggering new security clearance requirements that further delayed the application.
- IRCC and CBSA failed to proactively inform families about essential post-arrival steps, such as the need to apply for a visitor record or a work/study permit. As a result, many newcomers were left without legal status or access to services, including health care.
- Work permits were often delayed, leaving families in financial precarity and unable to support themselves after arrival.
- There was also widespread confusion between TRVs (Temporary Resident Visas) and TRPs (Temporary Resident Permits), particularly around renewal processes. Many with TRPs still do not know how or whether they can extend their stay.
- Communication gaps between IRCC and CBSA had severe consequences. Some families arriving in Canada were detained or threatened with deportation by CBSA officers who were unaware of the special measures, despite anchors having provided full documentation to IRCC. One anchor, for instance, was assured by IRCC that their family could travel without additional documents—only for their relatives to be stopped by CBSA upon arrival and nearly deported.
- Throughout, families struggled to get answers. Attempts to reach IRCC or CBSA were often unsuccessful, and when contact was made, guidance frequently contradicted earlier information. These failures in communication, coordination, and clarity have left many families stranded, fearful, and retraumatized.

Systemic Discrimination and Failure of Gendered Obligations

- [Human rights](#) and [advocacy organizations](#) have raised alarms that the program reflects systemic anti-Palestinian racism, including:
 - Disproportionately strict security screening compared to programs for other conflict-affected populations;
 - Lack of consistency with Canada's humanitarian response to other crises (e.g., Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, etc.).
- Furthermore, these requirements placed a disproportionate burden on women, who are often tasked with navigating applications on behalf of children, elders, or injured relatives. They also fail to account for how conflict systemically strips individuals, particularly those already marginalized, of documentation and proof of family relationships.
- Such requirements directly contradict Canada's commitment to its widely referenced 'feminist foreign policy,' its [Gender-Based Analysis Plus Commitments](#) and its obligations under the [Women Peace and Security Agenda](#). These commitments, at bare minimum, require a gender-sensitive conflict response, actioning "do no harm" humanitarian standards, and gender-responsive and gender-conscious policy implementation. These require the examination, consideration and accommodation of varying vulnerabilities. Instead the Government of Canada has proceeded with the exact opposite, compromising the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized civilian population in the world.

Lack of Diplomatic Effort and Inaction

- The Canadian government failed to take proactive diplomatic steps with Israel and Egypt to secure safe passage for TRV applicants and their families. To date, there is no evidence that the government shared complete lists of approved applicants with either country, even after applicants underwent an extensive and often invasive application and approval process.
- Despite issuing visas, Canada did not ensure applicants could actually leave Gaza or cross borders, leaving them trapped in life-threatening conditions.
- Many families waited for months with no updates, stranded amid ongoing Israeli bombardment in Gaza or in temporary shelters in Egypt, with no clarity on next steps.
- This inaction and delay undermined the program's stated humanitarian purpose and left thousands at risk despite having qualified for relief.

TIMELINE DEMONSTRATING PROGRAM FAILURES

- **December 2023** – Government announces intent to reunite 1,000 family members of Palestinian Canadians.
- **January 2024** – Program officially opens. Immediate concerns are raised by civil society about inaccessibility and discriminatory implementation.
- **Spring 2024** – Only a handful of arrivals are confirmed. Government withholds data on program effectiveness, while advocacy intensifies.
- **Summer 2024** – Legal action is launched, including lawsuits alleging anti-Palestinian racism and failure to uphold Charter rights.
- **Fall 2024** – Program expands to 5,000 applicants but remains plagued by processing delays and diplomatic inaction. The government announces that intake has closed in March 2025.

HUMAN IMPACT

- Families remain painfully separated, with many loved ones trapped in Gaza under relentless bombardment or stranded in Egypt, often in overcrowded or unsafe conditions, while awaiting word on their TRV status.
- Children, pregnant women, and the elderly are among the most vulnerable. Many children are living without one or both parents, enduring trauma without proper psychological support. Elderly applicants—many with medical conditions or mobility challenges—have been left in war zones or border regions without adequate care.
- At the start of Israel's genocidal assault, approximately 50% of Gaza's population were children, with the average age around 5 years old. This demographic reality magnifies the scale of devastation, as the majority of those trapped, injured, or killed are among the youngest and most defenseless.
- Access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare is severely limited, particularly in Gaza, where infrastructure has collapsed. Prolonged delays mean many are living in unsafe conditions, at high risk of disease, injury, and death.
- The psychological toll is profound. Families face daily anxiety over the safety of loved ones, especially when communications are cut off. Many are grieving deaths that occurred while waiting for Canadian action that never came.
- Financial hardship is widespread. Applicants and their Canadian sponsors have depleted their savings on legal fees, documentation, temporary lodging in Egypt, and other expenses—often without result. To make matters worse, the government has knowingly left families to navigate third-party militia networks, where bribes of \$10,000 USD or more per person are demanded for

safe passage out of Gaza — a clear abdication of responsibility that has put lives at further risk and exploited families in crisis.

- This prolonged uncertainty and lack of support have inflicted lasting emotional trauma and economic instability, especially among racialized, refugee, and working-class communities already facing marginalization in Canada.

“These Kids Need Their Mom” — The Story of Doaa, Qasem, and Their Children

Fourteen-year-old Zahed, twelve-year-old Abdalrahman, and seven-year-old Joury survived 18 months of war in Gaza, only to be separated from their mother, Doaa, at the very moment they were finally offered a path to safety in Canada.

Their father, Qasem, an engineer, described the moment they received evacuation instructions from the Canadian embassy as a rare flicker of hope amid relentless trauma. That hope was quickly shattered when they discovered that Doaa’s name was missing from the list of approved travelers. Despite completing her background verification and submitting marriage and travel documents, Doaa was excluded on a technicality related to biometric data - something the Canadian government explicitly acknowledged would be impossible to complete from within Gaza.

With bombs still falling, Qasem was forced to make an impossible choice: leave Doaa behind so their children could survive, or risk the entire family’s safety by staying. “We made one of the most difficult decisions of our lives,” Qasem said. “To leave her alone to face her fate and protect our children by traveling with me for their safety.” The separation has devastated their children, who now live in Canada physically, but are emotionally paralyzed - unable to begin healing or imagine a future while consumed with fear for their mother’s life.

This case illustrates the irreparable harm caused by Canada’s shifting and inconsistent application process, which has forcibly torn families apart and violated the very principles of humanitarian response.

“I Begged Them to Let Him Come” - Story of a Mother, a Disabled Son and a Broken System

In one of the most heartbreaking examples shared by the Gazan Canadian League, a mother in Canada spent months trying to reunite with her disabled son, who was trapped in Gaza amid constant bombardment. She submitted all required documents, secured a G-code, and applied under the TRV program — yet her son was rejected without a clear explanation.

Despite repeated efforts to clarify his eligibility and provide updated medical records showing his urgent care needs, the family was met with silence and delays from IRCC. The mother described pleading with Canadian officials, telling them: *“He cannot walk. He cannot survive this alone. Please — just let him come.”* She received no response.

Eventually, as bombardment intensified, she lost contact with her son entirely. She still does not know whether he is alive. *“I begged them. I did everything right. And they just ignored me,”* she said at the May 22 press conference held by the League. *“It feels like Canada signed his death sentence.”*

This case reflects how bureaucratic opacity and inaction have transformed an emergency relief program into a source of additional trauma. The Canadian government’s failure to accommodate vulnerable individuals, especially those with disabilities, not only violates basic humanitarian principles, it puts lives at risk.

COMPARATIVE INJUSTICE

The Canadian government’s response to the Ukrainian crisis saw over 900,000 applications approved under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program, with nearly 300,000 Ukrainians arriving in Canada. In contrast, the Gaza TRV program has facilitated the arrival of only a few hundred individuals, highlighting a stark disparity in humanitarian response. This disparity is not accidental. It is evidence of systemic anti-Palestinian racism.

Program	Beneficiaries	Requirements	Outcome
Gaza TRV (2024)	1,000 family members of Palestinian Canadians (target)	Prove direct family ties, pay fees, undergo extensive checks, provide documents from a warzone, etc.	Dozens arrived at best; most left in limbo
Ukraine CUAET (2022–2024)	Over 185,000 Ukrainians	No family ties required, open work permits, free travel documents	Broad, fast-tracked access to Canada
Israeli TRV/Work-Study Visas (2024)	Approx. 10,000 Israelis	Normal processing, no humanitarian framing	No public outcry or scrutiny of security risks
Syrian Resettlement (2015)	25,000 refugees in 100 days	Mass mobilization with public support	Proved what’s possible with political will

TALKING POINTS FOR ADVOCACY

Use these talking points in town halls, community meetings, or email/letter campaigns. Each talking point pairs a key question with a rationale you can use to explain the issue or follow up.

Theme	Sample Talking Point / Question	Why It Matters (Rationale)
Broken Promise to Palestinian Canadians	“Canada promised to help reunite Palestinian Canadians with family trapped in Gaza. Less than 200 have made it out. Why has this promise not been fulfilled? Are the promises to Palestinian Canadians and their families not a priority?”	This program was promoted as a lifeline for Palestinian families in dire need of safety. Instead, it's become a symbol of inaction and delay while lives remain at risk. The broken promise leaves families stranded, separated and vulnerable to violence on Canada's watch.
Discriminatory Double Standards	“Canada moved tens of thousands of Ukrainians to safety in weeks, with charter flights and open work permits. Why are Palestinians treated with suspicion and delays?”	Canada's unequal treatment reveals racial and political bias. Palestinians are being subjected to bureaucratic hurdles and dehumanization, contrasting sharply with the swift, comprehensive responses given to other groups. The differential treatment undermines Canada's reputation as a compassionate, fair nation. It also demonstrates a hierarchy of access.
Security Screening as a Barrier	“Why is every Palestinian applicant being treated as a security threat? Will you commit to reviewing the overreach of Canadian security agencies in this context?”	Palestinian applicants face extraordinary vetting with little to no transparency or avenues for appeal. This creates a discriminatory two-tier system, undermining the fairness of the process and denying vulnerable individuals the protection they urgently need.
Visa Rejections Without Reasons	“Will you push for an end to arbitrary visa refusals, and demand that IRCC provide clear reasons when rejecting TRVs for people in Gaza?”	Visa refusals without explanations devastate families, leaving them with no recourse or understanding of why their loved ones are being denied safety. A fair process requires transparency, especially

		when decisions have life-or-death consequences.
Access to Safe Routes	“What will you do to ensure that people approved for TRVs can actually exit Gaza safely? Will you push Canada specifically Global Affairs Canada to negotiate safe passage with Israel and Egypt? Why have you not already?”	Even with approved visas, many applicants are unable to leave Gaza due to closed borders and ongoing conflict. Canada must use its diplomatic influence to ensure that approved applicants can reach safety, as promised by the TRV program.
Policy Reform Commitment	“Will you commit to fixing the Gaza TRV program, creating a clear humanitarian pathway, and ensuring IRCC decisions are subject to oversight and appeals?”	A fragmented response is insufficient. Reform is necessary to create a clear, humane, and effective process that ensures fairness, consistency, and accountability, and protects applicants’ rights.
Addressing Systemic Racism	“Will you speak publicly about the racism embedded in the Gaza TRV program and push for reforms across IRCC to prevent future discrimination?”	The systemic anti-Palestinian racism evident in the Gaza TRV program is not an isolated incident — it is embedded in the system’s structure. Addressing this requires political will to confront and dismantle discriminatory practices that harm vulnerable populations.
Data Transparency	“Will you demand the publication of disaggregated data on TRV approvals and denials for Gaza? The public deserves to see who’s being denied protection.”	Transparency is a critical step toward accountability. Without publicly accessible data, it is impossible to track systemic biases or identify gaps in the program that leave applicants at risk. Data should drive fair, evidence-based policymaking.
Supporting Survivors and Arrivals	“Will you advocate for wraparound services for Palestinian arrivals, including trauma recovery, housing support, and family sponsorship flexibility?”	Protection should not end at the border. Survivors of war and trauma need comprehensive support to rebuild their lives. This includes access to healthcare, housing, and mental health

		services, in addition to family reunification
End Arms Transfers and Dual Policy Failures	“How can Canada claim to protect Palestinians while continuing arms exports to Israel? Will you support an arms embargo to end this contradiction?”	Canada’s continued arms exports to Israel undermine its humanitarian stance and contradict its stated goals of peace and security for Palestinians. A two-way arms embargo is necessary to ensure Canada’s foreign policy aligns with its humanitarian commitments.
Condemning Political Interference	“Will you condemn political interference in immigration decision-making that prioritizes optics over urgent humanitarian need?”	Immigration decisions should be based on human rights, not political considerations. Political interference harms applicants and delays urgent support, particularly when lives are at stake. Canada must commit to decisions that prioritize human dignity and need.
Learning from Other Humanitarian Programs	“Will you push for lessons from past programs — like Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine — to be applied fairly to Palestinians?”	There are proven tools: chartered evacuations, temporary resident permits, special immigration classes. Palestinians deserve the same protection.
Long-Term Status Pathways	“Will you support permanent residence pathways for TRV holders and a special immigration class for Gaza?”	Temporary status is inadequate for families who are fleeing war and persecution. Long-term solutions must provide stable legal status and opportunities for full integration, including permanent residency, so that families can rebuild their lives and contribute to Canadian society.

ACTION STEPS FOR THE PUBLIC

Raise Awareness Year-Round

- **Keep the issue in the spotlight** by sharing information across social media, community spaces, and local media outlets — the Gaza TRV program continues to harm families unless we maintain public pressure.
- **Distribute this toolkit** widely — to friends, networks, masajids, cultural groups, and advocacy circles — so that more people engage with MPs and demand justice and reform.
- **Uplift lived experiences** — share the personal stories of families still waiting, and those lost to delays. These stories make the case for urgent action.
- **Stay connected** with updates from civil society and human rights organizations working on immigration, refugee rights, and Palestinian justice.

Engage with Elected Officials Regularly

- **Call your MP's office** and ask to speak with them or leave a message. Clearly state that you are a constituent and explain why the TRV program urgently needs reform. Be specific: ask them to push for a full overhaul of the program, including pathways to permanent status, transparency on processing, and an end to discriminatory barriers.
- **Write an email or letter to your MP.** You can use the tool on the official Canadian Parliament website [to quickly find and contact your representative](#). For guidance, refer to CMPAC's toolkit, which includes a sample letter: [CMPAC Toolkit for Engaging MPs on the Gaza TRV Reunification Program](#).
- **Schedule meetings** with your MP, or attend their public events and constituency hours to raise the issue in person. Bring allies and speak as a community.
- **Ask MPs to speak out** in Parliament or on public platforms about the program's failures and the need to address anti-Palestinian racism in immigration and foreign policy.
- **Follow up** consistently. If an MP commits to action, track whether they follow through — and hold them accountable publicly if needed.

Support and Join Advocacy Organizations

- Collaborate with and support organizations providing direct support, policy advocacy, and public pressure on this issue.
- Follow, support, and share the campaigns of organizations such as:
 - [Gazan Canadian League](#)
 - [Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council \(CMPAC\)](#)
 - [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East \(CJPME\)](#)
 - [Amnesty International Canada](#)
- Join their calls to action: Send emails, sign and share petitions, and attend meetings or webinars.
- **Attend and help organize vigils, teach-ins, and demonstrations** — especially those led by or centering Palestinian voices. Ask what's needed and show up in solidarity.
- **Amplify their messaging online**, especially if you are Palestinian or have a personal connection to Gaza — your voice carries power and authenticity.

Organize or Attend Town Halls and Forums

- **Raise the issue** at town halls and public forums year-round, not just during elections. Demand answers and commitments from MPs and public officials.
- **Push for transparency and follow-through** — demand updates from elected representatives on their advocacy and government action.

Support Legal and Civil Society Actions

- **Stay informed** on legal challenges and advocacy efforts related to the Gaza TRV program.
- **Donate to or fundraise** for legal advocacy efforts challenging discriminatory practices and supporting impacted families.
- **Share legal updates** and expert analysis through your networks to maintain public awareness and informed pressure.

ADVOCACY DEMANDS

We call on all elected officials to take immediate action to uphold the dignity, safety, and rights of Palestinian families by implementing the following:

- **Reform and Relaunch the Gaza TRV Program with Integrity and Equity:** The Gaza Family Reunification program must not simply be reopened in its current broken form. It must be fundamentally reformed to address systemic flaws, eliminate arbitrary caps, and ensure



transparent, accessible processes. Eligibility must be expanded to include more categories of relatives still trapped in Gaza, and the program must prioritize vulnerable individuals, including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and separated families.

- **Simplify and Humanize Application Requirements:** Eliminate onerous documentation demands—such as full employment history since age 16 and proof of relationship under narrow legal definitions—that are nearly impossible to meet amid war and mass displacement. Create processes that reflect the realities of displacement, destruction, and trauma.
- **Expedite Immediate Processing and Prioritize Existing Applicants:** Accelerate the processing of current TRV holders and stranded applicants, prioritizing children, the elderly, and those with medical needs. Canada has demonstrated the ability to implement such measures swiftly, as seen in the responses to the crises in Syria and Ukraine, showing that effective action can be taken when the political will exists.
- **Ensure Transparency and Accountability:** Publicly release regular clear data on application numbers, approvals, rejections, and wait times. Maintain open lines of communication with sponsors and applicants. Establish independent oversight mechanisms to monitor decision-making and systemic discrimination.
- **Take Diplomatic Action for Safe Passage:** Canada claims Israel as an ally and has direct access to officials who can facilitate safe and timely evacuation routes for TRV holders and their families. It is crucial that Canada uses this influence to engage robustly with both Israel and Egypt, ensuring that these routes are guaranteed without further delay.
- **Establish a Permanent Humanitarian Pathway:** Create a long-term and dedicated immigration stream for Palestinian families affected by conflict and displacement, including a pathway to permanent residency for TRV holders and their families.
- **Address Systemic Anti-Palestinian Racism in Immigration Policy:** Commit to equity by reviewing and reforming policies that disproportionately burden or exclude Palestinian applicants, ensuring they receive the same urgency, dignity, and protection afforded to other refugee and humanitarian groups. This includes aligning with Canada's commitments under GBA+ (Gender-Based Analysis Plus) and its feminist foreign policy, ensuring that the unique needs of Palestinian families, particularly women and children, are addressed with the same attention and urgency as other vulnerable groups.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [CMPAC Toolkit for Engaging MPs on the Gaza TRV Reunification Program](#)
- [CJPME's Full Report on the Gaza TRV Program](#)
- [Amnesty International: Urgent Changes Needed for Canada's TRV Program for Gazans](#)
- [Canada.ca: Crisis in Gaza – Special Measures for Extended Family](#)
- [Reuters: Long Waits for Canadian Visas Leave Gazans in Limbo](#)

- Use updates from the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) on the latest humanitarian impacts and statistics in Gaza, including infrastructure damage, displacement, and casualty number
- [Updates directly from Gazan Canadians](#) on their experiences and ongoing advocacy efforts

REMEMBER

Palestinian lives matter. Family reunification is a right, not a privilege. Canada cannot claim to uphold humanitarian values while maintaining immigration systems rooted in exclusion, racism, and systemic discrimination. There can be no hierarchy of human rights in this country — all families deserve safety, dignity, and the chance to be together. This is a moral imperative that demands consistent public pressure, political will, and bold advocacy. **Now is the time to stay loud, stay mobilized, and hold power accountable. Together, we can shift policy, build solidarity, and fight for a Canada where justice isn't selective - it is universal.**