



Ms Janet Dench
Executive Director
Canadian Council for Refugees
6839A Drolet #302,
Montreal, QC H2S 2T1

MAR 09 2010

Dear Ms Dench,

This is in reference to the report "Protection Delayed, Protection Denied" which was released by the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) in October 2009. At our meeting in November 2009 to discuss this and other issues, I agreed to send you a written response.

As you are already aware, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is committed to finalizing Permanent Resident applications in as timely a manner as possible. In prioritizing the processing of applications, the department has given first priority to reuniting families, including those involving refugees.

The department is particularly sensitive to the circumstances of its most vulnerable applicants and this is reflected in the priority given these applications. However, CIC has finite resources to deploy throughout its extensive overseas network. Many visa offices, including Nairobi, have large caseloads that involve priority class applications and require sufficient allocations of CIC's finite resources to ensure these cases are finalized as quickly as possible.

Each visa office must deal with operational environments unique both to its role in CIC's overseas program commitments and the realities of the region of the world in which they are located. Since mid last year, the visa office in Nairobi has been working to develop strategies to reduce both Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) processing times and inventory backlogs. In 2009, the visa office in Nairobi issued over 30% more visas in the PSR category than in 2008.

CIC International Region has committed significant temporary duty (TD) resources to the visa office in terms of experienced TD officers and will continue to do so in the near future. Several of these officers have had either multi-year or previous TD assignments in Nairobi increasing their efficiencies and productivity. The visa office has deployed TD officers strategically to increase its capacity to interview and finalize PSR applications while ensuring it meets its commitments to other priority cases.

CIC International Region has reviewed the Canada based and Locally Engaged staff compliments in Nairobi to ensure that its program, including the PSR movement, has the resources required to meet its target assignments and reduce processing times and backlogs. As a result, CIC plans to transfer some resources from other missions to Nairobi in summer 2010.

As well, the visa office has undertaken several organizational changes meant to increase efficiencies throughout all of its business lines e.g. creation of specialized processing units, improving capacity to track files.

There are also proposals under review which would see a role for CIC offices in Canada at the initial stages of PSR and DR2 (dependents on protected persons in Canada) processing, to ensure application completeness and to act as a point of contact for the sponsors.

I hope that you will acknowledge that we have moved significantly in addressing the issues you raised with me last June and I hope shortly to be able to confirm in even more details some of the additional measures we will be able to pilot.



Claudette Deschênes
Assistant Deputy Minister
Operations