

WRITTEN SUBMISSION
FOR THE STUDY
“IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM”

By the group of
“In-Canada Express Entry applicants with accompanying overseas dependents”

Recommendation 1: That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (**IRCC**) abolish its latest procedural provision preventing from finalizations Permanent Residents applications of the Express Entry and PNP based streams due to “inability of the accompanying overseas dependents to travel”

Recommendation 2: That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (**IRCC**) finalize the applications for Permanent Residence of the Express Entry and PNP based streams, where Primary Applicant is in-Canada and accompanying dependents are overseas

Recommendation 3: That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (**IRCC**) grant Primary Applicants of the Express Entry and PNP based streams the virtual Confirmation of Permanent Residence(**COPR**); whereas their overseas dependents to be issued Passport Requests (**PPR**) for stamping at the Canadian Embassies of their country of residence and issuing COPR to subsequently land at the Port of Entry

Subject: Major delays in finalizing Permanent Residency Application (CEC, PNP, FSW Class) For Applicants in Canada with Dependent spouses/children outside of Canada

We are a category of Express Entry (CEC, PNP, FSW class) applicants currently in Canada with accompanying dependents outside of Canada in our applications for Permanent Residence. The Acknowledgement Of Receipts (AOR) for some of us were received from 2019 and 2018; all Express Entry process stages for most of us are marked as “**PASSED**” and files are being held on purpose according to GCMS notes and confirmation from IRCC call center agents.

Many of us have not seen our families for over 12, 15, 19, and 24+ months as current travel restrictions put a ban on non-essential travel and do not allow primary applicants leave Canada. Despite IRCC declaration of **family reunification** measures, our spouses and children **are being denied** visas to join us in Canada. Applying for temporary visas or authorization letters, they get refusals in contravention of the announced IRCC plan to bring families together. Namely, the common ground for rejection is “**Purpose of travel**” or “**Travel is non-optional**”. However, if our families coming to join us in Canada under IRCC family reunification policy are not considered to be travelling with the right purpose, what other obscure meaning for family reunification does IRCC imply?

The worst part is that as per the last IRCC procedural provisions the PR files of our category are not finalized due to being labeled “**inability of overseas dependents to travel**”. In fact, it is just the opposite. As per June and October 8, 2020 travel exemptions, overseas dependents are able to enter Canada as the immediate family members of permanent Canadian residents. This means that when the PR application is approved, the primary applicant will get a Confirmation of Permanent Residency (COPR). Therefore, the dependents as his/her immediate family, will immediately fall under the latest travel exemptions and having PRVs and COPRs will be able to travel to Canada and land without an issue at the port of entry.

Contradictorily, our PR files and lives have been put on hold due to this apparently artificial “inability of dependents to travel”. **A common IRCC reply to the request on PR application status is as follows: “Regarding your application, as your dependents are overseas, the application will be placed on hold as we are only processing applications for Permanent Residency if all family members are in Canada. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure when travel restrictions will be lifted”**. A vicious painful cycle. Visitor’s visa on family reunification ground refused, while PR file is not finalized due to family overseas. Is this family reunification policy in place?

Moreover, despite the existing travel restrictions, we have currently observed numerous PPRs issued by IRCC to applicants outside of Canada for FSW and PNP EE streams. It turns out that currently, we are the only EE and PNP category neglected by the IRCC in terms of finalizing our PR files. **To underline, we are the sole Express Entry and PNP based category separated for years from our families. All this sounds so inhuman towards the sufferings this process is causing to our marriages and our families.**

PR finalization is the only and much-awaited way to reunite with our families. We plead you to reconsider the IRCC provision that holds PR files of applicants that are currently in Canada with their accompanying dependents overseas from finalization as our families are to be authorized to enter Canada per travel exemptions and will comply with every safety requirement in place.