



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02857**

BY: **Ms. KWAN (VANCOUVER EAST)**

DATE: **OCTOBER 29, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **HONOURABLE AHMED HUSSEN**

Response by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Issuance of visas

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Biometrics expansion is intended to facilitate travel for legitimate travellers, maintain confidence in Canada's immigration programs, increase the safety and security of all Canadians and travellers to Canada, and prevent abuse of the immigration system. Biometrics is recognized globally as a reliable tool for establishing identity. Biometric immigration screening is becoming the international standard, with more than 70 countries using biometrics for migration control.

Canada's biometrics collection program will be expanded globally in two phases: since July 31, 2018, citizens from countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa have been required to provide their biometric information (photograph and fingerprints) in support of their application for temporary or permanent residence. As of December 31, 2018, this requirement will apply to citizens from countries in Asia, Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

To reduce the compliance burden on clients, biometrics provided in support of a temporary resident visa, status or permit will be valid for 10 years from the date of enrolment to support a subsequent or new temporary resident visa, status or permit.

Travellers can go to any Visa Application Centre or U.S. Application Support Center to enrol their biometric information. To support increased demand, additional biometric collection kits have been added to existing Visa Application Centres in neighbouring countries. To enhance client experience and reduce wait times at Visa Application Centres in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Canada has recently introduced an optional appointment scheduling service. This will allow Iranian clients who are required to provide their biometrics to better plan their visit to the Visa Application Centre.

Canada is constantly monitoring its Visa Application Centre network to ensure it meets the needs of applicants. It has one of the most extensive Visa Application Centre networks in the world and between 96% and 98% of applicants can access a Visa Application Centre in their country of residence. Visa Application Centre locations were selected based on various factors, including geographic distribution of clients and past temporary resident application trends, with the goal of limiting inconvenience for applicants. That said, it is not always possible to open a Visa Application Centre in certain locations, due to a number of factors, including but not limited to the security situation, country conditions or accessibility.

Canada is monitoring its Visa Application Centre service footprint and Visa Application Centres may be opened in additional locations at a later date.