

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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Ottawa prioritized immigration processing over public safety
By Riley Donovan

Protecting Canadians is the government's first duty, and speedy immigration processing should never come at its expense

The first obligation of a nation's government is to keep citizens safe. On this critical duty, Canada's immigration policy is failing us.

On May 9, 2022, 77-year-old Arnold De Jong and 76-year-old Joanne De Jong, an elderly retired couple beloved by their family and community, were killed in their home in a brutal double homicide in Abbotsford, B.C.

Abhijeet Singh, Gurkaran Singh and Khushveer Toor have been found guilty of first-degree murder in the case.

According to a Global News report, the court heard that two of the three perpetrators were on study visas, and at least one did not attend a single class. Their daughter, Heather Hoogland, points out the horrific murders would never have occurred if Canada had simply carried out routine deportations of fake foreign students.

"They would have been kicked out of Canada... The crimes wouldn't have been committed. My parents would still be here."

This tragic incident is by no means an isolated occurrence. Temporary resident streams are being used by gangs to bring criminals to Canada, and visa holders are targeted as a rich recruitment pool.

The extortion crisis engulfing communities across the country from Brampton to Calgary to Surrey regularly features police reports and press conferences in which Canadians learn the suspects identified or rounded up are non-citizens, often on active or expired study visas.

An April 2026 special bulletin from FINTRAC, Canada's national financial intelligence agency, highlights how extortion networks are recruiting "typically financially vulnerable, young male Indian nationals in Canada on study permits" as "foot soldiers" to intimidate extortion victims and as "money mules" to transport proceeds of crime.

The federal government's failure to enforce its own immigration rules is not simply illustrated by these cases. It is documented in the March 2026 report on Canada's international student program by Auditor General Karen Hogan.

Hogan's study found that between 2023 and 2024 Canada's Immigration Department identified 153,000 foreign students as potentially non-compliant with study permit conditions, but due to funding constraints investigated just 2,000 cases each year. Of the cases it investigated, 40 per cent ground to a halt because students did not reply to the department.

The Hogan report also highlighted the department's sluggish response to integrity concerns within the Student Direct Stream (SDS), an expedited pathway dominated by Indian nationals. The SDS featured a "light touch" review process—so light that approval rates for Indian study visa applications at one point hit 98 per cent. In August 2023, the department flagged that this stream was being targeted by non-genuine applicants, yet no action was taken, and the SDS was only shut down in November 2024.

The Auditor General's report also revealed that the Immigration Department identified 800 study permits obtained through fraud or misrepresentation, yet elected not to pursue enforcement action. No alert was placed in these files to warn processing officers, and by the end of the audit period, 92 per cent of these students had been approved or were waiting on decisions for other kinds of permits, including applications for permanent residence.

Temporary visa streams have even figured in a previously rare form of crime in Canada: political assassinations.

U.S. prosecutors recently unveiled an indictment against notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, currently in jail in India, for ordering the killing of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down outside a gurdwara in Surrey, B.C., in June 2023. CBC reported that the four-man hit squad all arrived on temporary visas, including study visas. One of the "students" was even featured in a promotional video for an immigration service in Punjab, in which he said he obtained his study visa in a matter of days.

Canada's international student stream began to be widely seen as a hotbed of fraud in the tail end of the Trudeau years, and the Carney government is reforming the program. In response to the Auditor General's report, Ottawa has pledged to step up actions against fraud and give the Canada Border Services Agency an annual list of students with expired permits obliged to leave the country.

Yet at the same time, the Carney government is exempting graduate students from the cap on international student numbers and offering lightning-fast 14-day application processing for foreign PhD students and accompanying family members.

Security is put on the back burner by an Immigration Department that describes immigration applicants as "clients" and seeks to aggressively clear backlogs.

The remedy is simple. Ottawa must ensure that every temporary permit receives full security vetting. If the Immigration Department does not have enough funding to do so, either boost funding or cut the number of permits. When fraud is found, consequences must be automatic, not discretionary.

Sacrificing security vetting for fast immigration processing is a disservice to the federal government's only real "clients": Canadians.

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Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com

Dear Editor:

Just sent this to our local federal MP Stephen Furrh.

Reflecting on the federal Liberal government's out-of-control spending, like that 700 million dollars each year to encourage Canadian mainstream media to promote the federal Liberal government's distorted narratives, the 3.2 billion dollars to bail our B. C. developers, who inflated the Canadian housing industry out of reach for prospective Canadian home owners, 70 billion dollars every year to feed that ugly Truth and Reconciliation disaster, not to forget about one billion dollars each week interest payment each week, estimated to increase to about 1.5 billion by 2029-30, just to service the federal government debt, and now a 700-million-dollar loan guarantee to support a 21-billion-dollar Darlington nuclear project, we are left to wonder what's next?

Plundering taxpayers is not reconciliation. That would better be defined as federal crimes.

UNDRIP was created, proposed, and adopted, as a reminder we all have the same human, legal, and Constitutional rights, that includes being consulted, on all of these projects and issues, not just a select 5% of the people, while segregation will continue to promote racism and hatred. This insanity has to stop.

We are also allowed to wonder how much or how little cash the Williams Treaties Nations will be investing in the Darlington nuclear project. The share of the project should be limited to 5%, making sure the governments and Crown corporations represent the remaining 95% non-Indigenous people as the legitimate owners and shareholders.

The Williams Treaties First Nations should be a legitimate registered corporate structure, and all 9,000 Members of the Nations should have an equal number of voting shares. Nobody should have more than one vote – Chiefs included.

Reflecting on that nasty multi-billion-dollar TMX pipeline disaster, who will pay all those millions of dollars in interest on all that borrowed money, not to mention potentially billions in cost-overruns? Will the global King of AI just wave his magic wand, and make it all go away?

Andy Thomsen.
Kelowna BC

Dear Editor:

Keeping Ontario families safe starts with making sure violent and repeat criminals stay behind bars.

That's why Doug Ford and the Ontario PCs are making a historic \$3 BILLION investment to expand jail capacity across our province.

Unlike the previous Ontario Liberal government, who closed eight jails, we're exploring every opportunity to create more space.

We've hired over 4,000 new correctional officers to keep our jails running. We've created more than 2,500 correctional beds across Ontario. And when we reopen the Brantford jail, we're going to be adding another 125 more correctional beds.

We're making the investments needed to hold criminals accountable and keep your community safe.

Sincerely,
Michael Kerzner
MPP, York Co

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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or

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