

IMPORTANT LEGAL UPDATE REGARDING REFUGEE CLAIMS IN CANADA

On March 26, 2026, the government of Canada passed a new law called [*Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act*](#). Among the serious changes, the new law significantly limits who can make a refugee claim in Canada.

NEW RULES IMPACTING REFUGEE CLAIMS

One-year limit to making a refugee claim

You cannot make a refugee claim more than one year after your first time entering Canada. This rule applies to anyone who entered Canada after June 24, 2020. See below for information about what happens if you cannot make a refugee claim because of the one-year limit.

The one-year limit does not apply to someone who first entered Canada on or before June 24, 2020 and has not left the country since.

New rule at the United States border

You cannot make a refugee claim if you crossed the Canada-United States border at an unofficial entry point, and attempt to file your refugee claim 14 days after you entered. You will not be sent back to the United States if this new rule applies to you, and you have been in Canada for more than 14 days. You can find more information about the laws that apply to people crossing the Canada-United States border [here](https://stepstojustice.ca/questions/refugee-law/can-i-make-refugee-claim-canada-if-im-coming-us/): <https://stepstojustice.ca/questions/refugee-law/can-i-make-refugee-claim-canada-if-im-coming-us/>

What happens if you cannot make refugee claim because of the one-year time limit or the new rule at the United States border?

Most people who cannot make a refugee claim because of the new rules will be invited to apply for a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA). A positive PRRA decision makes you a "protected person," like a positive refugee claim. The PRRA is a written process, with short deadlines, usually decided without a hearing. You can keep your Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) coverage if you are affected by the new rules and awaiting a PRRA.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

If you have already made a claim, you may be contacted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) or the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Whether or not you are contacted by IRCC or CBSA, you should talk to a lawyer immediately if you are or will be impacted by the new law. If you do not have a lawyer, you can find information about legal services in Canada [here](https://www.halco.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Legal-Services-in-Canada_April-14-2026.pdf): https://www.halco.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Legal-Services-in-Canada_April-14-2026.pdf