

## **SPOUSES**

The Committee has been informed that there are cases in which two individuals who are married to each other have separate claims being processed in the backlog. The draft regulations state that any claimant found to have a credible basis may apply for landing along with his or her spouse and unmarried children. It would seem unnecessary and inefficient, therefore, to continue to process the claim of one spouse when the other has been accepted. Nevertheless, witnesses informed the Committee that this happens. The Committee recognizes that in some cases the spouse will wish to continue the claim, but the Committee recommends that in any case where a spouse whose claim has not yet been processed agrees, officials cease processing that claim upon acceptance of the other spouse.

## **HUMANITARIAN ISSUES**

Not all of the Committee's concerns and recommendations relate to questions of efficient processing. The Committee is aware that a number of claimants have close family abroad who may be in danger. Testimony before the Committee indicated that there did not seem to be an effective mechanism to give priority to those claimants so that their claims could be dealt with as early as possible. Even more importantly, it is not clear whether processing of families abroad, even when they may be in danger, actually starts until accepted claimants are landed in Canada. It appears that as a result of the Committee's visit to a processing centre, instructions were clarified in this regard, but the concern remains that the plight of families abroad is not being adequately addressed.

In particular, advising accepted claimants that processing of their families cannot begin until they have been landed must be very frustrating because the regulations that provide for these procedures have not yet come into force, despite the fact that almost a year has passed. The Committee therefore recommends that claimants with family who may be in danger abroad should be processed in priority to other claimants and that, if accepted, their families should be reunited in Canada as soon as possible, using Minister's Permits if necessary! We further urge the government to enact the regulations and begin the process of landing for all accepted claimants as soon as possible. We find the delay in promulgating these regulations completely unacceptable.

The Committee also wishes to comment on the humanitarian and compassionate criteria that are applied at the initial interview. It became quite clear to the members of the Committee during their visit to a processing centre that there was confusion on how the criterion relating to the family class was being interpreted. It is hoped that as a result of the