

URGENT ACTION

STOP DEPORTATION OF HEALTHCARE WORKER

Mamadou Konaté, an immigrant worker from Ivory Coast who has lived in Canada for six years, is at imminent risk of deportation, which has been scheduled for 19 November. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked in facilities accompanying vulnerable seniors. He contracted COVID-19 in the workplace. In 2020, the federal and Quebec governments launched programs to give permanent residency to refugee claimants who worked in healthcare services during COVID-19. The programmes are discriminatory against certain healthcare worker roles such as janitorial positions, like Mamadou Konaté. Instead of deporting him, the government should ensure its programmes to regularise health workers during COVID-19 fulfil its obligations towards all immigrant essential workers without discrimination.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1A 0A6
Telephone: 613-992-6022 | Fax: 613-992-2337
Email: sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

*I am writing to bring to your attention the case of **Mamadou Konaté**, an Ivorian immigrant worker who has been living in Canada for six years and is threatened with imminent deportation. Mr. Konaté worked performing janitorial tasks in residential and long-term care facilities accompanying vulnerable seniors through months of fear and distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, barely a year and a half later, Mamadou Konaté's fate is uncertain as the prospect of imminent deportation looms. The deportation date is scheduled for 19 November.*

While the Quebec and federal regularization of status programs for health care workers expired on 31 August and the federal program to facilitate the granting of permanent residence to essential temporary workers and foreign graduates ended on 5 November, Canada must not only commit to extending the duration of these programs, but also to modifying their eligibility criteria. At the moment, the eligibility criteria are still too restrictive and discriminatory, and Amnesty International in Canada has campaigned for their expansion.

Canada must live up to its commitment to put in place a fair and efficient procedure that respects the integrity of the Canadian asylum process and the human rights and freedoms of all human beings, and ensure that regularisation processes are non-discriminatory. We urge you to cancel Mamadou Konaté's deportation and grant him residency as part of the temporary program to grant permanent residency to certain foreign nationals working in the health care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours Sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mamadou Konaté is an immigrant worker from the Ivory Coast. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked in residential and long-term care facilities accompanying vulnerable seniors through months of fear and distress, playing a crucial role in Canada's collective effort against the virus. However, barely a year and a half later, this fate is uncertain, while the prospect of an imminent expulsion hangs over him, even though he holds a temporary work permit valid until 2022. Mamadou Konaté has expressed that he has a fear of returning to Ivory Coast because there are no secure conditions for him to return to a country he fled in 2016 following threats to his life. Mamadou Konaté has told Amnesty International that having suffered the consequences of the war (physical abuse, post-traumatic syndromes, uprooting) he no longer feels safe going back to his country.

In December 2020, the federal and Quebec governments launched special programs to regularize the status and pave the way to permanent residency for refugee claimants who provided services in health care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The stated purpose of these programs is to recognize the contribution of a large number of essential migrant workers during the pandemic. However, in reality, the programs only target asylum seekers who worked in certain health care positions, during specific hours and weeks, and only during the first wave of the pandemic. The narrow eligibility criteria of these programs means that people like Mamadou Konaté, who worked in janitorial tasks, did not have access to regularization.

Cleaners in healthcare facilities have occupied a particularly vulnerable situation in the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on rationing personal protective equipment (PPE) outline that cleaners and housekeepers indeed should have more PPE than many other hospital staff members, including doctors and nurses who do not have direct contact with COVID-19 patients. For example, cleaners entering the rooms of COVID-19 patients should have a medical mask, a protective gown, heavy duty gloves, eye protection, and boots. Nevertheless, cleaners and housekeepers consistently have been among the most unprotected workers in health settings.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has the authority to grant status to Mamadou Konaté under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 November 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline. His deportation date is scheduled for 19 November 2021.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mamadou Konaté (He/Him)