



## Canadian Immigration Updates and News

Our efforts to keep you informed are ongoing. At this time, we are providing details of the ongoing Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers strike.

### •Continuing Strike Action by the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers

As you may be aware, since early summer the union representing the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) has been engaging in rotating work stoppages at Canadian Embassies, Canadian Consulates and Canadian High Commissions around the world. The notice from the PAFSO is reproduced below and they note that on account of the on-going labour dispute, their members have withdrawn all services to Canada's fifteen (15) largest overseas visa processing centres. The effected offices are:

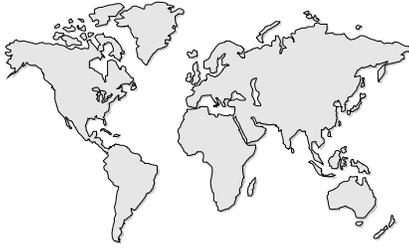
- Abu Dhabi
- Ankara
- Beijing
- Cairo
- Delhi/Chandigarh
- Hong Kong
- London
- Manila
- Mexico City
- Moscow
- Paris
- Riyadh
- Sao Paulo
- Shanghai.

If the strike action expands to other offices or the situation is resolved we will inform you and keep you apprised of the situation, generally.

We will continue to submit applications online as is possible; however, we are uncertain as to how the physical visas will be issued in these circumstances (i.e. putting the physical visa into the employee's passport) when the applicant is a resident/citizen of a country serviced visa office where there is a work stoppage.

It is critical that you keep this situation in mind when making business decisions concerning foreign workers who may require processing at the offices noted above.

The complete reproduction of the PAFSO notice can be found on the next page.



• **Reproduction of Statement from PAFSO**

26 July 2013 - Statement by the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers:  
PAFSO Responds to Government's Rejection of Arbitration

*“Shortly before noon today, PAFSO received a letter from the President of the Treasury Board in which he rejected our offer of binding arbitration. Minister Clement’s decision was based on the grounds that PAFSO would not accept all six of the preconditions he wanted to impose on the arbitration process.*”

*The Canadian public must understand two key facts:*

1. *Two of Treasury Board’s preconditions were so paralyzing that their acceptance would have predetermined the outcome of arbitration in the Government’s favour and negated the purpose and integrity of the process. Specifically, they wanted to exclude from consideration any mention of other professional groups in government who perform the same work as us – often in neighbouring offices – which has been at the heart of our position since day one.*
2. *PAFSO made a reasonable and responsible effort at finding common ground by accepting two of the six preconditions, and committing to a goodwill gesture – a suspension of service withdrawals while arbitration is ongoing – which would have satisfied a third.*

*Let us be clear: PAFSO has not rejected binding arbitration. We offered it in the first place. We agreed to pursue it even with three of Treasury Board’s preconditions. This offer still stands.*

*If Minister Clement truly believes his offer is “fair and reasonable”, he would not have shied away from arbitration without preconditions. Rather, he would have welcomed the opportunity to submit his offer to independent scrutiny. Instead, he sought to stack the deck in his favour by cherry-picking criteria which would have favoured Treasury Board’s position. He is trying to tilt the playing field to the Government’s advantage, and is clearly uninterested in a fair contest.*

*The Government has reached tentative agreements in two other long-outstanding contract negotiations during the last month, and will return to the table on Monday to address a third. PAFSO is one of the smallest unions in the federal government. Equal pay for our members could be achieved for \$4.2 million – 1.5% of the impact this strike is having on the tourism sector alone. PAFSO can only conclude that the Government is behaving prejudicially toward the Foreign Service and is therefore negotiating in bad faith. This should be of serious concern to all Canadians.*

**Effective Monday, in order to persuade the Government that binding arbitration remains the responsible way forward to resolve our dispute, PAFSO members will withdraw all services until further notice at Canada’s fifteen largest visa processing centres abroad: Abu Dhabi, Ankara, Beijing, Cairo, Delhi/Chandigarh, Hong Kong, London, Manila, Mexico City, Moscow, Paris, Riyadh, Sao Paulo, and Shanghai.**

*We take no pleasure whatsoever in these strike actions and their real, severe, and mounting effects on the Canadian economy. But it should now be evident to all Canadians that from this point forward the Government of Canada bears sole and complete responsibility for these impacts. PAFSO has made every reasonable effort to resolve this situation; the Government has not. PAFSO encourages all individuals, businesses, and industry associations with a stake in the outcome of our dispute to intervene with the Government and urge them to bargain freely and flexibly with their own employees.”*