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Bogus refugee claims targeted

By TOM GODFREY
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TORONTO — The immigration department is cracking down on bogus refugee claimants and dangerous aliens by beefing up airline scrutiny and reassigning agents.

Immigration spokesman Gerry Maffre said more agents are being shifted to the enforcement unit from other areas of the department.

And airlines will be required to make a deposit at the beginning of the year, with funds deducted for each bogus claimant they bring into Canada, he added.

There are about 40,000 immigration warrants outstanding for aliens and fugitives on the run in Canada, officials estimate.

On the top of the most-wanted list is convicted child molester George Brian McJannet, who was ordered deported to Britain last October for sexually assaulting a five-year-old girl.

McJannet, 44, who is still at large, is believed to be hiding in British Columbia.

Also on the list is suspected multiple rapist Mohamed Hashi, 30, of Somalia. He's wanted for four brutal sex assaults against women in the Boston area.

U.S. police said he's also wanted for sex attacks in Switzerland and Saudi Arabia.

Hashi fled to Canada last year and applied for refugee status. Warrants have been issued for his arrest in Canada and the U.S. He is wanted in Ottawa for common assault on a woman.

Maffre said the additional agents will concentrate on priority cases.

"More officers will be doing the demanding and time-consuming cases," he said.

At the end of the month, immigration officials will also begin fingerprinting and turning away bogus claimants at Canadian borders.

Claimants who aren't legitimate will be detained until the next flight back to their country of origin.