

February 13, 2025

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned 126 national, state, and local organizations representing resettlement agencies, direct service providers, faith-based organizations, and human rights groups, write to urge you to do everything in your power to see the rescission of the “Realigning USRAP” executive order and immediately resume operations of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Banning refugees is bad for America and for American values.

Americans support refugees; Congress should, too. The U.S. resettlement program is a bipartisan public-private partnership and vital tool for advancing U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic interests. The program is emblematic of our nation’s values of compassion and welcome – and its sudden suspension, even before the executive order’s effective date, threatens global security and countless lives.

Refugee resettlement is a lifeline for displaced people, and for communities benefiting from their contributions. Welcoming refugees and newcomers makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous as refugees revitalize their communities and their economic contributions far outweigh government expenditures on initial resettlement and mid- to long-term integration. The U.S. resettlement program helps to stabilize some of our key strategic allies and front-line refugee hosting states in countries and regions that are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. Refugee resettlement often supports the stability of U.S. allies working in partnership with the United States to counter forces that harm U.S. interests and the principles that we hold dear. Continuing to welcome refugees sends a strong message to groups that want to sow havoc and fear that the United States remains a leading force for stability and liberty in the world.

By demonstrating international leadership on refugee resettlement, the United States has been able to procure additional support for refugees around the world. The vast majority of the world’s refugees live in countries that neighbor those that they have fled. These refugee-hosting countries require infrastructure support and international commitments to resettlement in order to keep their doors open. It is in our national best interest, as we seek regional stability in the Middle East and elsewhere, to help these countries both by providing humanitarian aid and resettling some of the refugees they are hosting.

The Trump administration’s sweeping executive orders that target refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants are already causing undue suffering and chaos in the lives of people the United States has committed to protecting, and are a direct affront to the basic human rights protections that the United States has pledged to uphold.

People who come to the United States through the resettlement program undergo a rigorous process, involving interlocking security and medical screenings that expire and need to be repeated. Even a three-month pause could mean years-long delays in a refugee case, leaving

those we have committed to protect, who have waited in the pipeline, and who remain in imminent danger, waiting in limbo. Once booked for travel, some refugees begin to move, sell belongings, and are deregistered from their country of asylum – a pause leaves them stranded, often in unsafe and unstable conditions.

Among the first flights that were cancelled the morning of January 22 was a group of four Afghan refugee minors, the youngest just seven years old, who were set to reunite with their parents in Massachusetts the following day. Their parents, separated from their children outside of Kabul airport during Operation Allies Welcome, were resettled to the U.S. and have been preparing to see their children for the first time after being separated for almost three and a half years. That reunification – along with thousands of others – has been indefinitely delayed.

Another example, Nur Ahmed is a refugee who resettled in Ohio in 2010 after fleeing civil war in Somalia, has been waiting to reunite with his son, sister, and mother for almost 15 years. But the family was assigned different travel dates – and while his son and sister arrived the week before the ban went into effect, his 70-year-old mother's flight was cancelled unexpectedly the morning the ban went into effect. She is now waiting in limbo, stranded from her children and grandchild.

These harmful executive orders gutting access to asylum, suspending humanitarian and foreign assistance, militarizing our border communities, and threatening the states and localities who welcome newcomers are draconian policies that do not make our communities any safer. Instead, they bypass democratic processes and violate our moral and legal obligations to welcome those fleeing violence, persecution, and desperate circumstances.

We urge all Members of Congress to see that the administration:

1. **Rescinds the executive orders** banning refugees, suspending foreign assistance, and harming asylum seekers and immigrants.
2. **Resumes all foreign aid and humanitarian programs and funding while the 90-day review continues.** The State Department must prioritize the prompt and smooth resumption of refugee processing and admissions as part of the 90-day examination of the U.S. resettlement program – and elevate the importance of the USRAP in advancing U.S. security interests.
3. **Revokes the stop work orders the State Department issued to the ten national resettlement agencies** on January 24, 2025, implicating R&P services to already-arrived refugees - and issue clarifying guidance that the R&P program is excluded from the definition of “foreign development assistance.” Alternatively, as described in section 3(d) of the President’s Executive Order on “Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid,” issue clarifying guidance that R&P services for all eligible populations fall under the waiver allowing for lifesaving humanitarian assistance. If the freeze continues, **the State Department must also swiftly clarify and expand waivers for humanitarian services to all those in need.**
4. Until the USRAP resumes full operations, **provide for the resettlement of particularly vulnerable refugees or those with urgent needs on a case-by-case basis**, as provided by

the “Realigning USRAP” executive order - and at minimum, issue implementing guidance to seek case-by-case exemptions, with a clear process that permits the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security to delegate exemption authority to the working level.

5. **Increase refugee processing and admissions as soon as the suspension ends**, extend the validity periods for refugees whose security or medical checks expire while the USRAP is suspended, and fully restore all forms of humanitarian protection and assistance.

It is imperative that Congress holds the administration accountable to assessing and restoring the U.S. resettlement program in good faith. As the Secretaries of Homeland Security and State examine the merits and strength of the program over the next 90 days, we urge you to ensure that they elevate the importance of the USRAP in advancing U.S. security interests.

Thank you for your swift attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

#AfghanEvac  
#WelcomeWithDignity Campaign  
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE)  
Afghan American Alliance of Georgia  
Afghan Coalition (Fremont, CA)  
Afghan-American Foundation  
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow  
Afghans4Tomorrow  
African Communities Together (ACT)  
Al Otro Lado  
America's Voice  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
Americans for Immigrant Justice  
Amnesty International USA  
Arizona Justice for Our Neighbors  
Asian American Federation  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL)  
Association of Wartime Allies  
Ayuda  
Bay Area Resource for Newcomers  
Borderlands Resource Initiative  
BPSOS  
CAMBA Inc.  
Cameroon Advocacy Network  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Migration Studies of New York  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Climate Refugees  
Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)  
Community Sponsorship Hub  
Comunidad Maya Pixan Ixim  
Dorcas International Institute of RI  
ECDC  
Estrella del Paso  
Every Campus A Refuge  
Family Action Network Movement  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
For All Counseling  
Freedom Network USA  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Global Refuge  
Hearts & Homes for Refugees  
HIAS  
Human Rights First  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef)  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Immigration Equality  
Immigration Hub  
Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti  
International Council for Refugees and Immigrants, Inc.  
International Institute of Los Angeles  
International Institute of New England  
International Institute of New England  
International Refugee Assistance Project  
International Rescue Committee  
JAMAAT - Jews and Muslims and Allis Acting Together  
JB Consulting  
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice of Western MA  
Journey's End Refugee Services  
Just Neighbors  
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Maya Economic Development Corporation  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Miami Valley Immigration Coalition  
Mina's List  
Mobile Pathways  
Mothers and Others: Justice and Mercy for Immigrants  
MPower Change Action Fund  
NAKASEC  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)  
National Partnership for New Americans  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance  
Nebraska Appleseed  
Nebraska State AFL-CiO  
New York Immigration Coalition  
Nilsen Immigration Law  
Oasis Legal Services  
OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership  
PAIR - Partnership For The Advancement & Immersion Of Refugees  
Quixote Center  
RAICES  
Rainbow Railroad  
REACT DC  
Refugee Advocacy Lab  
Refugee Congress  
Refugee Council USA  
Refugee Women Rising  
Refugees International  
RefugePoint  
Restoring Dignity  
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network  
Sanctuary New Orleans Abolition Project  
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team  
Sojourners  
Southeast Dignity not Detention Coalition  
Swan Counseling Services  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
The Episcopal Church  
The Interfaith Center of New York  
Thrive Mahoning Valley  
Treetops Collective

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)  
UndocuBlack Network  
Union for Reform Judaism  
UNITED SIKHS  
USAHello  
VECINA  
Volunteer Lawyers for Justice  
We Are All America  
Welcoming America  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
Women's Refugee Commission  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights