

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Reaffirming the importance of the United States promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons in the United States and around the world.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the importance of the United States promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons in the United States and around the world.

Whereas, June 20, 2026, is an international day designated by the United Nations as “World Refugee Day”, to recognize refugees around the globe and celebrate the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their homes to escape conflict or persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group;

Whereas, July 28, 2026, is the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, held at Geneva on July 28, 1951, a landmark achievement that codified a definition for “refugee”, established the foundational principle of non-refoulement, and outlined the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of nation states to protect such rights;

Whereas, in 2026, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this preamble as “UNHCR”) reported that, as of the end of 2025—

(1) there were more than 117,000,000 displaced people who had been forced from their homes worldwide, including more than 41,600,000 refugees, 9,000,000 asylum seekers, and 68,700,000 internally displaced persons;

(2) 68 percent of all refugees worldwide were hosted in low- and middle-income countries and fewer than 1 percent of refugees are ever resettled;

(3) 70 percent of all refugees worldwide were in protracted situations, having been forcibly displaced from their country of origin for at least 5 years;

(4) approximately 1,300,000 Syrian refugees returned to Syria during 2025 out of the roughly 6,000,000 Syrian refugees as of the end of 2024 who had been displaced by years of conflict;

(5) nearly 2,000,000 internally displaced Syrians returned to their area of origin, but Syria remains affected by one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, despite positive political changes and renewed hope for returns following the fall of the Assad regime at the end of 2024;

(6) approximately 8,900,000 Ukrainians had been forcibly displaced as a result of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia, including 5,200,000 Ukrainian refu-

gees, which represents an increase compared to the end of 2024;

(7) there were an estimated 3,700,000 Afghan refugees around the world, representing a decrease compared to the end of 2024 in part due to restrictive government policies toward Afghans in certain refugee-hosting countries, which placed vulnerable Afghans, including women and girls, at risk of persecution;

(8) approximately 11,900,000 people were forcibly displaced due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan, including 9,100,000 internally displaced persons, representing the largest internal displacement crisis globally, and an estimated 2,800,000 refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, many of whom are women or children;

(9) there were more than 6,000,000 people displaced from Venezuela, the majority of whom were being hosted in Latin America;

(10) more than 1,400,000 people had been forcibly displaced in Haiti due to widespread violence, representing a nearly 40 percent increase compared to the end of 2024;

(11) more than 90 percent of the population of Gaza (approximately 2,000,000 people) had been internally displaced since October 2023;

(12) the Democratic Republic of the Congo had one of the largest internal displacement crises, with 3,900,000 people newly displaced due to the ongoing conflict even as 3,600,000 people returned to their area of origin, often involuntarily, due to the forced closure of internal displacement settlements by the de facto authorities;

(13) an estimated 1,200,000 Rohingya refugees resided in Bangladesh, constituting the largest refugee set-

tlement in the world, with thousands more Rohingya refugees residing in nearby countries; and

(14) in the Sahel region, which encompasses Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, an estimated 3,900,000 people were forcibly displaced;

Whereas, the vast majority of people fleeing persecution do not have access to refugee resettlement and instead must seek protection through asylum or other humanitarian relief;

Whereas, welcoming people from around the world who have been oppressed and persecuted is a tenet of our Nation and the United States is home to a diverse population of refugees and immigrants who contribute to the economic strengths and cultural richness of our communities;

Whereas, since seeking asylum is a protected right under United States domestic and international law, the United States is legally obligated to contribute to the maintenance of a humane and functioning international asylum system;

Whereas, the principle of non-refoulement is also a central tenet of the United States refugee and asylum systems and thousands of people living in the United States who immigrated from countries around the world would be subject to harm if they were deported to their countries of origin or to third countries due to widespread conflict or persecution in such countries;

Whereas, the United States Refugee Admissions Program, which was established in 1980—

(1) is a lifesaving pillar of global humanitarian efforts;

- (2) advances United States national security and foreign policy goals; and
- (3) supports regional host countries;

Whereas, Executive Order 14163 (90 Fed. Reg. 8459; relating to realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program), which was issued on January 20, 2025, indefinitely suspending all refugee admissions to the United States, remains in place and continues to put at risk the lives and well-being of refugees fleeing violence and persecution, including Iranians, Afghans, Burmese Rohingya, Sudanese, and Somalis;

Whereas, President Trump set the fiscal year 2026 Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions at a record low of 7,500 individuals, prioritizing the resettlement of Afrikaners from South Africa, such that Afrikaners made up over 95 percent of arrivals during fiscal year 2026 as of May 2026;

Whereas, President Trump's decision to increase the fiscal year 2026 Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions by 10,000, exclusively for the resettlement of Afrikaners from South Africa, is a politically motivated and unjust decision that excludes those most in need of protection, including tens of thousands of already approved and thoroughly vetted refugees who have fled persecution;

Whereas, the Trump administration has failed to implement the Lautenberg-Specter Program, which Congress reauthorized for fiscal year 2026, to screen and admit religious minorities in the former Soviet Union and Iran who are facing persecution and discrimination, including 15,000 religious minorities in Iran;

Whereas, the Trump administration's sweeping cuts to United States foreign assistance have reduced support to refugees abroad, including through the reduction in food rations to refugees in camps, threatening to destabilize fragile situations;

Whereas, as of June 2026, the ongoing refugee admissions ban remains in effect;

Whereas—

(1) more than 100,000 refugees who had been conditionally approved for refugee status by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services remain indefinitely stranded;

(2) more than 22,000 refugees who were considered “ready for departure” and who had completed all necessary medical checks, security screenings, and interviews remain indefinitely stranded;

(3) more than 12,000 refugees who had flights booked to travel to the United States, many of whom had begun to move and sell belongings in preparation for their resettlement, remain indefinitely stranded; and

(4) more than 800 Afghan allies, about ½ of whom are women and children, evacuated to the Camp As Sayliyah in Qatar are refugees, who have a clear path to resettle in the United States, but remain indefinitely stranded;

Whereas, the Trump administration's actions to detain dozens of approved refugees, who underwent years of vetting prior to approval and traveled thousands of miles from home to reexamine their refugee cases, only to determine once again that they were properly approved for refugee status, was a violation of our Nation's laws and commitments to refugees;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States protects all individuals within its jurisdiction, regardless of citizenship status and should afford noncitizens in the United States, including refugees and asylum seekers, full due process before deportation or other adverse action affecting their protection;

Whereas, attempts to suspend refugee admissions, bar individuals based on religion or nationality, or implement blanket asylum bans and indiscriminate removal or detention policies are inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–212), our treaty obligations, and established international human rights norms;

Whereas, resettlement is an essential part of a comprehensive strategy to respond to refugee crises, promote regional stability, and strengthen United States national security;

Whereas, resettlement to the United States is available for the most vulnerable refugees who undergo rigorous security vetting and medical screening processes;

Whereas, the United States supports the efforts of the UNHCR to increase protection for, and the global resettlement of, LGBTQI+ refugees overseas;

Whereas, women and girls have an increased risk of sexual violence, exploitation, and trafficking while they are traveling to seek safe living conditions;

Whereas, according to a study by the Department of Health and Human Services, between 2005 and 2019, refugees and asylees in the United States contributed an estimated \$581,000,000,000 in total revenue across all levels of government;

Whereas, most refugees integrate and quickly become self-sufficient members of their respective communities by joining the workforce, paying taxes, supporting local commerce, helping to address labor demand in critical industries, and creating new jobs; and

Whereas, robust funding for international and domestic protection and assistance for refugees and other displaced populations bolsters United States national security, foreign policy, economic, and humanitarian interests: Now, therefore be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the urgency to establish and fol-
3 low comprehensive, fair, and humane policies to ad-
4 dress forced migration and refugee challenges;

5 (2) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the
6 United States to promote the safety, health, and
7 well-being of millions of refugees and asylum seek-
8 ers, including the education of refugee children and
9 displaced persons fleeing war, persecution, or torture
10 in search of protection, peace, hope, and freedom;

11 (3) recognizes the many individuals who have
12 risked their lives working, either individually or on
13 behalf of nongovernmental organizations or inter-
14 national agencies, such as UNHCR, to provide life-
15 saving assistance and protection for people around
16 the world who have been displaced from their homes;

1 (4) reaffirms the imperative to fully restore
2 United States asylum protections enshrined in the
3 Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–212) by reject-
4 ing harmful bans and restrictions that limit refu-
5 gees’ access to protections and due process at the
6 United States border;

7 (5) reaffirms the importance of the United
8 States Refugee Admissions Program as a critical
9 tool of the United States Government—

10 (A) to strengthen national and regional se-
11 curity; and

12 (B) to encourage international solidarity
13 with host countries;

14 (6) calls upon President Trump to lift the in-
15 definite suspension of the United States Refugee Ad-
16 missions Program and to fully restore resettlement
17 to the United States; and

18 (7) calls upon the Secretary of State, the Sec-
19 retary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of
20 Health and Human Services, and the United States
21 Ambassador to the United Nations—

22 (A) to uphold the United States’ inter-
23 national leadership role in responding to dis-
24 placement crises with humanitarian assistance
25 and to strengthen its leadership role in the pro-

1 tection of vulnerable refugee populations that
2 endure gender-based violence, torture, human
3 trafficking, persecution, violence against reli-
4 gious minorities, forced conscription, genocide,
5 and exploitation;

6 (B) to work in partnership with the inter-
7 national community to find solutions to existing
8 conflicts, prevent new conflicts from emerging,
9 and tackle the root causes of involuntary migra-
10 tion;

11 (C) to increase support for the efforts of
12 the UNHCR and advance the work of non-
13 governmental organizations to protect refugees
14 and asylum seekers regardless of their country
15 of origin, race, ethnicity, or religious beliefs;

16 (D) to increase efforts to alleviate pres-
17 sures, through humanitarian and development
18 assistance, on frontline refugee host countries
19 that absorb the majority of the world's refu-
20 gees, while effectively advocating for refugee
21 well-being, including access to education and
22 livelihoods;

23 (E) to meaningfully include refugees and
24 displaced populations in creating and achieving
25 the policy solutions affecting them;

1 (F) to respond to the global refugee crisis
2 by meeting robust refugee admissions goals;

3 (G) to implement the United States'
4 pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum
5 held in Geneva in December 2023 to expand
6 refugee protection;

7 (H) to address barriers faced by refugees
8 with disabilities by ensuring accessible infra-
9 structure and the availability of disability-re-
10 lated services and social protection schemes;
11 and

12 (I) to reaffirm the goals of “World Ref-
13 ugee Day” and reiterate the United States’
14 strong commitment to protect refugees and asy-
15 lum seekers who live without adequate material,
16 social, or legal protections.