

119TH CONGRESS
1ST 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, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, 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, 2025, 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, 2025, is the 74th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, held at Geneva on July 28, 1951, which defines the term “refugee” and outlines the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of nation states to protect such rights;

Whereas, in 2025, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this preamble as “UNHCR”) reported that as of the end of 2024—

(1) there were more than 123,000,000 displaced people who had been forced from their homes worldwide, which is more displaced people than at any other time in recorded history, including more than 31,000,000 refugees, 8,400,000 asylum seekers, and 73,500,000 internally displaced persons;

(2) 73 percent of all refugees worldwide were hosted in low- and middle-income countries and fewer than 1 percent of refugees are ever resettled;

(3) there were 6,100,000 Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers and an additional 7,400,000 people displaced inside Syria as a result of years of conflict, but the fall of the Assad regime has raised renewed hope for return for many displaced Syrians, with more than 500,000 Syrian refugees returning to the country and an estimated 1,200,000 internally displaced Syrians returning to their area of origin as of May 2025;

(4) approximately 8,800,000 Ukrainians were forcibly displaced as a result of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia, including more than 5,000,000 Ukrainian refugees;

(5) there were an estimated 5,800,000 Afghan refugees around the world, representing a decrease from 2023 in part due to deportations from refugee-hosting

countries, which placed vulnerable Afghans, including women and girls, at risk of persecution;

(6) more than 14,300,000 people were forcibly displaced due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan, representing nearly 1 in 3 Sudanese, including an estimated 2,800,000 refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, many of whom are women or children;

(7) there were more than 6,000,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants globally, the majority of whom were hosted in Latin America;

(8) more than 1,000,000 people were forcibly displaced in Haiti due to widespread violence, representing a 200 percent increase during the year;

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

(10) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of the largest internal displacement crises in the world continued to grow, with approximately 7,400,000 forcibly displaced people within or from the country as a result of violence between armed groups;

(11) an estimated 1,100,000 Rohingya refugees resided in Bangladesh, constituting the largest refugee settlement in the world, with thousands more Rohingya refugees residing in nearby countries; and

(12) in the Sahel region, which encompasses Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, an estimated 3,500,000 people were forced to flee their homes, an 89 percent increase since the end of 2020;

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 pathways;

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, through the United States Refugee Admissions Program the number of refugees who arrived in the United States increased from only 11,411 during fiscal year 2021 to 100,034 during fiscal year 2024;

Whereas Executive Order 14163 (90 Fed. Reg. 8459; relating to realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program), which was issued on January 20, 2025, indefi-

nately suspending all refugee admissions to the United States, put at risk the lives and well-being of refugees fleeing violence and persecution, including Afghans, Burmese Rohingya, and Sudanese;

Whereas, as of June 2025, 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; and

(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;

Whereas the Trump administration’s selective resettlement of Afrikaners to the United States over tens of thousands of already-approved refugees who have fled persecution is a politically motivated and unjust decision that excludes those most in need of protection;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States protects all individuals within its jurisdiction, regardless of citizenship status, and should afford 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 the Trump administration’s travel ban, issued in Proclamation 10949, dated June 4, 2025 (90 Fed. Reg. 24497), which went into effect on June 9, 2025, blocking individuals from 12 countries from entering the United States and restricting the entry of nationals from 7 other countries, could deny refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing conflict, violence, and persecution the chance to seek safe refuge in the United States;

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 refugee resettlement organizations, businesses, and other community and faith-based groups offer support for refugees who resettle in the United States, and groups of private citizens step forward to support newly arrived refugees through Welcome Corps, a refugee sponsorship initiative under the United States Refugee Admissions Pro-

gram, which was terminated by the Trump administration;

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;

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; and

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: 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

1 displaced persons fleeing war, persecution, or torture
2 in search of protection, peace, hope, and freedom;

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

9 (4) reaffirms the imperative to fully restore
10 United States asylum protections enshrined in the
11 Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–212) by reject-
12 ing harmful bans and restrictions that limit refu-
13 gees’ access to protections and due process at the
14 United States border;

15 (5) reaffirms the importance of the United
16 States Refugee Admissions Program as a critical
17 tool of the United States Government—

18 (A) to strengthen national and regional se-
19 curity; and

20 (B) to encourage international solidarity
21 with host countries;

22 (6) calls upon President Trump to lift the in-
23 definite suspension of the United States Refugee Ad-
24 missions Program and to fully restore resettlement
25 to the United States; and

1 (7) calls upon the Secretary of State, the Sec-
2 retary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of
3 Health and Human Services, and the United States
4 Ambassador to the United Nations—

5 (A) to uphold the United States' inter-
6 national leadership role in responding to dis-
7 placement crises with humanitarian assistance
8 and to strengthen its leadership role in the pro-
9 tection of vulnerable refugee populations that
10 endure gender-based violence, torture, human
11 trafficking, persecution, and violence against re-
12 ligious minorities, forced conscription, genocide,
13 and exploitation;

14 (B) to work in partnership with the inter-
15 national community to find solutions to existing
16 conflicts, prevent new conflicts from emerging,
17 and tackle the root causes of involuntary migra-
18 tion;

19 (C) to continue supporting the efforts of
20 the UNHCR and advance the work of non-
21 governmental organizations to protect refugees
22 and asylum seekers regardless of their country
23 of origin, race, ethnicity, or religious beliefs;

24 (D) to continue to alleviate pressures,
25 through humanitarian and development assist-

1 ance, on frontline refugee host countries that
2 absorb the majority of the world’s refugees,
3 while effectively advocating for refugee well-
4 being, including access to education and liveli-
5 hoods;

6 (E) to meaningfully include refugees and
7 displaced populations in creating and achieving
8 the policy solutions affecting them;

9 (F) to respond to the global refugee crisis
10 by meeting robust refugee admissions goals;

11 (G) to implement the United States’
12 pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum
13 held in Geneva in December 2023 to expand
14 refugee protection;

15 (H) to address barriers faced by refugees
16 with disabilities by ensuring accessible infra-
17 structure and the availability of disability-re-
18 lated services and social protection schemes;
19 and

20 (I) to reaffirm the goals of “World Ref-
21 ugee Day” and reiterate the United States’
22 strong commitment to protect refugees and asy-
23 lum seekers who live without adequate material,
24 social, or legal protections.