

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 743

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

JUNE 20, 2024

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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, 2024 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, 2024 is the 73rd 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 2024, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this resolution as “UNHCR”) reported that—

(1) at the end of 2023, there were more than 117,000,000 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 31,600,000 refugees, 6,900,000 asylum seekers, and 68,300,000 internally displaced persons;

(2) 75 percent of all refugees worldwide are hosted in low- and middle-income countries and fewer than 1 percent of refugees are ever resettled;

(3) 73 percent of the world’s refugees originate from 5 countries, namely Afghanistan, Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, and Sudan;

(4) more than 50 percent of the population of Syria (approximately 13,800,000 people) have been displaced since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, either exiting Syria across an international border or going to other areas within Syria;

(5) as of June 2024, 9,700,000 Ukrainians are displaced as a result of Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which is an estimated $\frac{1}{6}$ of Ukraine’s pre-war population, including more than 6,400,000 Ukrainian refugees;

(6) there are an estimated 6,400,000 Afghan refugees around the world, of whom 90 percent are hosted in either Iran or Pakistan;

(7) Latin America and the Caribbean currently host 84 percent of the more than 7,000,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants globally, and the Americas currently host approximately 20,000,000 refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people from around the world;

(8) as of June 2024, more than 9,000,000 people are displaced due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan, including nearly 2,000,000 refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, many of whom are women or children;

(9) as of May 2024, more than 360,000 people were internally displaced in Haiti due to widespread violence in the prior year;

(10) between October 2023 and June 2024, approximately 75 percent of the population of Gaza (approximately 1,700,000 people) have been internally displaced;

(11) as of April 2024, there were approximately 6,800,000 internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a result of violence between armed groups;

(12) as of May 2024, nearly 1,000,000 Rohingya refugees resided in Bangladesh, with thousands more refugees throughout the region, and an estimated 45,000 newly displaced Rohingya people fled to the border of Burma and Bangladesh in 2024 amidst renewed violence in Rakhine State, with the potential for increased refugee flows in the coming months as violence continues; and

(13) as of May 2024, in the Sahel region, which encompasses Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, nearly 4,800,000 people have been forced to flee their homes;

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 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 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 through the United States Refugee Admissions Program—

(1) the number of refugees who have arrived in the United States increased from only 11,411 during fiscal year 2021 to 60,014 during fiscal year 2023;

(2) as of May 31, 2024, more than 60,000 refugees had arrived in the United States during fiscal year 2024; and

(3) the Biden Administration continues to actively pursue its stated goal of 125,000 refugee admissions during fiscal year 2024;

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 are now supporting newly arrived refugees through Welcome Corps, the refugee sponsorship initiative under the United States Refugee Admissions Program;

Whereas, 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 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 most refugees integrate and quickly become self-sufficient members of their respective communities by join-

ing the workforce, paying taxes, supporting local commerce, helping to address labor demand in critical industries, and creating new jobs: 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;

17 (4) reaffirms the imperative to fully restore
18 United States asylum protections enshrined in the
19 Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–212) by reject-
20 ing harmful bans and restrictions that limit refu-
21 gees’ access to protections and due process at the
22 United States border;

1 (5) reaffirms the importance of the United
2 States Refugee Admissions Program as a critical
3 tool of the United States Government—

4 (A) to strengthen national and regional se-
5 curity; and

6 (B) to encourage international solidarity
7 with host countries; and

8 (6) calls upon the Secretary of State, the Sec-
9 retary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of
10 Health and Human Services, and the United States
11 Ambassador to the United Nations—

12 (A) to uphold the United States inter-
13 national leadership role in responding to dis-
14 placement crises with humanitarian assistance,
15 and strengthening its leadership role in the pro-
16 tection of vulnerable refugee populations that
17 endure gender-based violence, torture, human
18 trafficking, persecution, and violence against re-
19 ligious minorities, forced conscription, genocide,
20 and exploitation;

21 (B) to work in partnership with the inter-
22 national community to find solutions to existing
23 conflicts, prevent new conflicts from emerging,
24 and tackle the root causes of involuntary migra-
25 tion;

1 (C) to continue supporting the efforts of
2 the UNHCR and advance the work of non-
3 governmental organizations to protect refugees
4 and asylum seekers regardless of their country
5 of origin, race, ethnicity, or religious beliefs;

6 (D) to continue to alleviate pressures,
7 through humanitarian and development assist-
8 ance, on frontline refugee host countries that
9 absorb the majority of the world's refugees,
10 while effectively advocating for refugee well-
11 being, including access to education and liveli-
12 hoods;

13 (E) to meaningfully include refugees and
14 displaced populations in creating and achieving
15 the policy solutions affecting them;

16 (F) to respond to the global refugee crisis
17 by meeting robust refugee admissions goals;

18 (G) to implement the United States
19 pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum
20 held in Geneva in December 2023 to expand
21 refugee protection;

22 (H) to address barriers faced by refugees
23 with disabilities by ensuring accessible infra-
24 structure and the availability of disability-re-

1 lated services and social protection schemes;
2 and

3 (I) to reaffirm the goals of “World Ref-
4 ugee Day” and reiterate the United States
5 strong commitment to protect refugees and asy-
6 lum seekers who live without adequate material,
7 social, or legal protections.

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