



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT MUST BE STREAMLINED AND EXPEDITED

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

As of today, 2 million people have been forced to flee Ukraine because of Russia's invasion. Ukrainians are fighting back as hard as they can but meanwhile children, the elderly and those unable to fight need a safe place to go. While fleeing Ukrainians are eligible for consideration as a refugee, to be resettled in the United States, a refugee has to go through the eight to ten step security vetting process that the United States has had in place since September 11, 2001. Because every step in this process is time sensitive and the staff necessary to appropriately process each of the steps is insufficient, it is a common occurrence for someone's clearances to expire while waiting for the next clearance. When that happens, the refugee seeking security clearance must start the clearance process all over again from the beginning. HIAS PA has resettled refugees that have been stuck in camps for twenty years. This must stop.

Refugees are fleeing and any processing necessary to ensure that they can safely begin their lives in another country should be responsive to the emergency, taking no longer than several weeks or months at the most. As numbers of displaced people continue to increase at an alarming rate and meanwhile American need for families to populate our declining cities and towns, work in our hospitals, schools, factories, and businesses grows, we are violating our humanitarian principles, turning our backs on enormous need and failing our own children when we fail to ensure that fleeing refugees have a chance of resettlement within the United States in a reasonably timely manner.

In addition, refugee camps, where most refugees are stuck waiting for their clearances, are not pleasant or safe places. Many camps have reputations for violence and disease. There are few resources for language learning, education in general or vocational training. There are no resources for mental health and few resources for physical health. As a result, conditions of refugees, while waiting to be resettled, deteriorate, and create higher burdens on resettlement communities.

CALL/LETTER SCRIPT

My name is _____ and I live at _____ and I vote. I am calling to demand that you expedite the refugee resettlement process so that fleeing Ukrainians – and others in need of resettlement – can be helped now. Humanitarian legal processes meant to help those who are endangered that take years and years to resolve are not responsive to humanitarian needs and are inconsistent with the intentions behind our refugee and asylum laws. The United States' on-going failure to stream-line and appropriately staff processing centers is resulting in the daily loss of human lives. It also fails to recognize the growing urgent need that the United States has for newcomers given our population decline, mortality increases and economic policies which are destroying our middle class. Newcomers will stop the staffing crisis that we are currently experiencing, revitalize our declining communities and re-invigorate the middle class.

Note: For this script, it would be more effective if you were able to add any kind of personal story—either about your own or your family's immigration experience if there was humanitarian need, or about a loved one, a colleague, a neighbor, or a friend. If you have no personal immigration stories you can add information about why you think it is important to make sure that there is a remedy for all that is accessible and immediate.

[Contact your legislators](#) and the [President](#) directly and ask them to expedite refugee resettlement processes now.