March 24, 2022

Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We applaud your decision to grant Temporary Protected Status to Ukrainians currently in the United States, but there remain millions of refugees who are stranded after fleeing Ukraine who we must not ignore or abandon. **We ask your administration to take several necessary steps to ensure the safety of the Ukrainian people and a robust resettlement program for Ukrainian refugees within the United States.** We have a series of recommendations for your administration to accomplish this goal, which can be found below.

As you have noted, the long tradition of the United States as a leader in refugee resettlement provides a beacon of hope for persecuted people around the world.\(^1\) Beyond this moral duty, the United States has a legal duty under our international agreements to accept refugees.\(^2\) We were pleased when you lifted the historically low refugee cap—from 15,000 to 62,500—before the end of FY21, and then up to 125,000, for FY22. These actions have helped restore America’s promise to meaningfully honor our obligations.\(^3\) While this number was set during a global refugee crisis, it was before the war in Ukraine began, which demands that we revisit refugee admissions.

More than 3 million refugees have already fled their homes in Ukraine, and more than 4 million Ukrainians are expected to flee as the illegal Russian invasion continues.\(^4\) Humanitarian organizations have catalogued a Russian airstrike on a civilian breadline in Chernihiv,\(^5\) a ballistic

---


2. *Id.*


missile strike on a civilian hospital outside Vuhledar, and repeated bombardment of civilians fleeing the Russian advance on Kyiv.

Russia’s attacks on Ukrainian civilians, as well as members of the international press, have only worsened as their illegal invasion of Ukraine has continued to falter. Russia reportedly bombed a theater in Mariupol, where innocent civilians were sheltering, and was marked with the word “children” in huge letters which were clearly visible from the air. Recently, it has also been reported that Russian forces in Ukraine are hunting down international journalists, in an effort to kidnap and coerce them into recanting their reporting. There have even been reports that a Russian airstrike indiscriminately bombed a maternity hospital in the besieged port city of Mariupol, which wounded at least 17 people. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are internally displaced, with families sheltering in bomb shelters, basements, and subway stations to avoid Russian attacks.

Refugees who have fled Ukraine are currently housed in temporary shelters throughout European countries including Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova, and Romania, many with no idea where they will go or what their lives will look like in the coming months and years. For example, reporting has indicated that cities in Poland are struggling to house and feed these refugees, in which two Ukrainians enter Poland every three seconds, and the millions of Ukrainian refugees who have already arrived in Poland would create the country’s second-largest city. Indeed, these countries face immense burdens as a result, with Europe facing its worse refugee crisis since World War II. The burden of sheltering and settling refugees cannot fall solely on European countries. America must also do its part.

America has set the refugee ceiling as high as 231,000 since the enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980. On April 16, 2021, you announced that given new “emergency refugee situation[s]” stemming from “increasing political violence, repression, atrocities, or humanitarian crises,” you were revising the allocation of refugee admissions to ensure the United States was responding adequately to those developing emergency situations. You also announced that, if the 15,000

---


7 Id.


refugee cap was reached before the end of FY21, you would consider a declaration increasing the refugee cap as appropriate.\textsuperscript{13} You increased that refugee cap on May 3, 2021, from 15,000 to 62,500.\textsuperscript{14} However, our nation only resettled 11,411 individuals in FY21, the lowest since we started tracking in 1975.\textsuperscript{15} Further, we are disappointed that only 6,494 individuals have been resettled in FY22 as of February 28, 2022.

Given the foregoing facts, we respectfully request that you consider the following recommendations to address the growing international refugee crisis:

- Commit to using your power under 8 U.S.C. 1157(b) to significantly raise the refugee admission ceiling to allow additional Ukrainian refugees to resettle in the United States during FY22, should we exhaust the refugee admissions for which Ukrainians are eligible in FY22;
- Ensure the FY23 refugee cap reflects needed refugee and resettlement goals in light of the war in Ukraine;
- Use your power under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42)(B) to designate persons within Ukraine, who may not be able to leave the country, as eligible for refugee status under U.S. law;
- Ensure that Ukrainians are eligible for Priority-3 (P-3) resettlement by the Department of State.\textsuperscript{16} \textsuperscript{17} This will ensure efficient processing of very similar persecution claims, expediting the refugee referral process and facilitating resettlement, especially for Ukrainians with family members already in the United States;\textsuperscript{18}
- Ensure that the already estimated 17,000 pending Lautenberg applications submitted by Ukrainians, in addition to any new Lautenberg applications, are expeditied to ensure the safety of these persecuted religious groups;
- Expedite relocation of Ukrainians with pending immigrant visa applications through creating a program similar to the Haitian Family Reunification Program from 2014, or the

\textsuperscript{19} The Lautenberg amendment, reauthorized on March 15, 2022 when you signed into law H.R. 2471, the “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022,” provides a pathway for members of historically persecuted religious groups from countries of the former Soviet Union to be reunited with family members in the United States.
program created for Iraqi and Syrian beneficiaries of I-130 petitions in 2016, for Ukrainians;

- Eliminate wait times for Ukrainians coming to the United States on new student visas by waiving both the 120-day advance limit on a new student visa and the 30-day limit on travel before the start date;
- Ensure that DHS uses the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to process Ukrainian visas more efficiently; and
- Provide resettlement opportunities to asylum seekers and refugees, primarily from Afghanistan, who also reside in Ukraine.

The Statue of Liberty displays Emma Lazarus’s famous poem, partly reading: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” This sentiment still reflects the values of our nation, a symbol of freedom and opportunity to the world. Today, we have the opportunity—and the obligation—to put these words into power by welcoming these refugees with open arms.

Sincerely,

David N. Cicilline  Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff  Bradley Scott Schneider  Julia Brownley
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu  Juan Vargas  Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean Casten</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph D. Morelle</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna G. Eshoo</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek Kilmer</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elissa Slotkin</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Yarmuth</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Wild</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Panetta</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Quigley</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James A. Himes</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald E. Connolly</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earl Blumenauer</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jahana Hayes</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritchie Torres</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Swalwell</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Marie Newman  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress