

For Immediate Release

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HIAS Commends President Obama on Immigration Executive Action

NEW YORK—This evening, the White House announced a plan that recognizes the contributions of immigrants and honors our history as a nation of refugees and immigrants. [HIAS](#), the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees, supports the President's plan to allow millions of immigrants who have raised families, worked hard, and contributed to communities across the country to remain in the U.S. legally. President Obama's new policies will prevent hardworking immigrants—some of whom have been in this country for decades—from being needlessly torn from their homes, jobs, communities and families.

HIAS also reaffirmed its position that the Administration must prioritize finding a solution to help those who flee violence and come to this country seeking safety, and ensure that they are not needlessly detained or returned to persecution.

Mark Hetfield, HIAS' President & CEO, said, "President Obama's action is not just good for those who will directly benefit, it is good for the country. Throughout our history, immigrants and refugees have contributed to our economy, culture and communities in countless ways. It is no different now. Our immigration system has been broken for decades while immigrants have lived with daily fear of being deported. Today, the President has shown his commitment to addressing this injustice."

Hetfield added, "The President's plan to bring immigrants out of the shadows also benefits our national security."

As President Obama notes, today's actions are just a step. Congress still must enact comprehensive reform to fix the broken immigration system. HIAS urges Congress and the President to work together to enact the legislative proposals contained in the Senate's immigration bill, S. 744. That bill includes crucial improvements to our system for welcoming refugees and how we treat asylum seekers arriving at our border seeking protection.

Melanie Nezer, HIAS' Vice President for Policy and Advocacy, said, "Of course we are relieved to see the President put policy before politics in leading the country towards a more effective and efficient immigration system. But at the same time, the Administration must prioritize support and solutions for those who flee violence who come to this country seeking safety. We must ensure that those who seek safety

at our border are not needlessly detained or returned to persecution.”

In July, HIAS coordinated a [statement signed by 20 national Jewish organizations](#), urging the U.S. government to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children who arrive in the U.S. alone. HIAS also submitted testimony to the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) and the [House Judiciary Committee](#), and [published several opinion pieces](#) on this issue, calling for the U.S. government to provide migrants—particularly children—a meaningful opportunity to request asylum.

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HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees—including women and children, and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities—whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our values and history, HIAS helps refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocates to ensure that all displaced people are treated with dignity.

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