

Revised March 6, 2026

## Overview

As we continue to witness the devastating impacts of anti-immigrant and refugee attacks in the United States, it can feel overwhelming to find effective ways to take action. Yet every single one of us can make a difference. While the current challenges are considerable, so too is our collective power when we show up in solidarity to support the most vulnerable among us.

Since the start of 2026, we have seen significant policy announcements that threaten the safety and dignity of immigrant and refugee communities around the country. Here is what you need to know now about the most recent changes.

These talking points are meant to help you as you reach out to your elected officials. You can find resources to help you set up meetings and make call at [hias.org/advocacy-toolkits](https://hias.org/advocacy-toolkits). These talking points clearly do not cover all the areas that need our attention, but they do address some of the key federal issues on which our HIAS advocacy team is focusing at this time.

**Remember that your congressional representatives need to hear from you so that they understand that their constituents deeply care about refugee and immigrant rights.**

## Funding the Department of Homeland Security

DHS has not received new funding for the current fiscal year, because Congress has finally heard us and recognized that DHS immigration operations have gone completely off of the rails. People across the country are saying “enough is enough,” and we expect Congress to respond accordingly. One of the key ways that Congress can do that right now is through its “power of the purse.”

### What can you do?

- Tell your congressional delegation that you oppose any new or continued funding for DHS until and unless the rampant CBP and ICE abuses stop. Passing more funding for DHS without meaningful policy changes would be giving a green light to the rampant overreach of these agencies.
- Tell Congress that all immigration enforcement operations must be underpinned with transparency, restraint, proportionality and the safety and due process rights of impacted individuals, their families and their communities. Also let them know that accountability and oversight mechanisms for ICE and CBP must be restored and transparently utilized as part of the process to ensure that ICE and CBP agents can no longer operate with impunity.

## Attacks on Resettled Refugees

Until the end of last year, administration actions targeting refugees were primarily focused on how to keep refugees out of the U.S. Upon essentially shutting down refugee admissions, the administration shifted its attention to how to atrophy protections for refugees who were already admitted and living legally in the U.S.

The first salvo in this attack came with the announcement of [Operation PARRIS](#). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) asserted that the program was intended to combat undefined resettlement fraud by reassessing and reinterviewing refugees who have not yet received their green cards after living in the U.S. for more than a

year. Before Operation PARRIS was stopped by the courts, at least for now, it resulted in the arrest of scores of resettled refugees in Minnesota and their subsequent detention in Texas.

The administration's next escalation was the release of a [DHS memo](#) that aims to allow for the **indefinite** detention of resettled refugees if they have been in the U.S. for more than a year and not yet received their green cards. The memo hinges on the specious assertion that when refugees arrive in the U.S. through the resettlement program, their admission was "conditional", and that DHS can therefore apprehend and detain them for reinspection to confirm if they were erroneously admitted. This change turns decades of policy and practice on its head. Never have resettled refugees been apprehended and detained because they have not yet obtained their green cards.

### What Can You Do?

- Tell your elected officials about your connections to resettled refugee communities. Tell them personal stories. Tell them about the human impacts of these policies. Help them understand why these policies are so dangerous for people in their communities.
- Ask them to speak out about these stories and policies, to use their social media accounts to keep up a steady drumbeat about what these policies mean.
- Urge your elected officials to pressure the administration to rescind these policies.

## Big Changes to the Lautenberg Program

The Lautenberg Amendment, first enacted in 1990 to facilitate the resettlement of Jews from the former Soviet Union, has allowed HIAS to bring tens of thousands of refugees to safety. As the worldwide refugee situation changed, the Lautenberg Amendment was later expanded to include persecuted religious minorities, such as Jews, Christians, Baha'is, Sabaeen-Mandaeans, and Zoroastrians from Iran. Despite being a crucial part of U.S. refugee policy, the amendment expires each year and must be reauthorized by the U.S. Congress.

At the end of 2025, the administration closed the Resettlement Support Center (RSC) in Austria, managed by HIAS for more than 25 years, meaning that currently, there can be no additional processing for Iranian religious minority cases to be admitted to the United States. There is currently a pipeline of more than 14,000 people waiting in Iran.

### What Can You Do?

- Educate your elected officials. Most Congressional offices are completely disconnected from what is happening with the program. They need to understand that not one Iranian case has been admitted since day one of the administration. It is also essential for them to understand why the Lautenberg program is more critically important than ever given the instability in the region and the increased dangers for many groups, including religious minorities. While Lautenberg is not an emergency evacuation program, it is one of the very few pathways out of Iran.
- Ask your Congressional delegation to ensure that even though there are not any Lautenberg admissions right now, the program must continue to be reauthorized and extended in the next round. If that does not happen, it will be impossible for new Lautenberg cases to be filed and for the program to function.
- Ask your Congressional delegation to apply significant pressure on the administration to restart Iranian Lautenberg operations.