

HIAS is the international Jewish humanitarian organization that provides critical support to displaced people and advocates for their right to rebuild their lives in safety. Founded more than 140 years ago, HIAS is the oldest refugee organization in the world. HIAS is also one of the U.S.' national refugee resettlement agencies and has provided pro bono immigration and asylum legal services in the United States for more than 50 years.

Refugees and Resettlement

1. Rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)

- **Bottom Line:** Insist that the administration fully resume refugee processing and resettlement, prioritizing the most at-risk refugees from around the world.
- **Why:** The USRAP is now essentially closed for everyone except White South Africans, leaving behind thousands of refugees who have already been conditionally-approved for resettlement to the U.S., religious minorities, including Iranian religious minorities who are in the Lautenberg pipeline, and Afghans who supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan.
- **Ensure strong refugee integration supports:** There must be a full restoration of food and medical assistance for resettled refugees, and there must be a full resumption of I-485 applications (adjustment of status for permanent residency).
- **Hold the administration accountable:** Convene hearings that shine a light on the radical changes to the USRAP and U.S. support of refugee protection, including the prioritization of White South Africans, the cruel and unnecessary revetting of resettled refugees, the work of the Office of Remigration in PRM, and the planned transition to a state-resettlement model.
- **Funding:** Rebuilding of the USRAP requires necessary funding for the Refugee and Entrant Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance accounts and assurance that funds in these accounts are used to support forcibly displaced people, not third country deportations currently undertaken by the Office of Remigration.

Asylum, Due Process and Immigration Enforcement

1. We can protect asylum seekers *and* secure our borders

- **Bottom line:** Strengthen procedural and substantive protections for asylum seekers, and update asylum law to reflect today's global realities.
- **Substantive protections:** Update the law to clearly cover today's protection needs to address gang violence, gender-based violence, and persecution by non-state actors that governments can't or won't control.
- **Procedural protections:** Guarantee access to the asylum process, regardless of how or where someone enters.
- **Resource ports of entry for protection:** Fund dedicated, specially trained units at ports of entry to process asylum seekers, rather than expecting port officers and Border Patrol to serve in this capacity. Real access at ports reduces the need for people to cross between them.
- **Don't prosecute people seeking refuge:** People fleeing for their lives should not be prosecuted for crossing the border irregularly, especially if they are being denied access at ports of entry. Prosecuting them wastes resources that should target those with criminal intent who threaten national security or public safety.
- **The United States is a nation of immigrants and of people seeking protection and better lives. Our asylum laws should reflect that.**

2. Due process, a core value, is non-negotiable

- **Bottom line:** Due process only works if it is guaranteed for *everyone*.

- **Guarantee universal representation:** Current law provides counsel only "at no expense to the Government." Forcing vulnerable populations to represent themselves in cases where their lives are on the line is cruel and unjust. We must provide competent legal representation for all asylum seekers.
- **Depoliticize the immigration courts:** Immigration judges work inside the Justice Department, under the Attorney General, the nation's chief prosecutor. This structure leaves the courts open to political pressure, from hiring and firing decisions to case quotas and policy directives. Instead, the U.S. should establish an independent Article I immigration court, insulated from the politics of the day.
- **Properly resource the courts:** Fund enough experienced, well-trained immigration judges, along with the clerks, interpreters, and support staff needed, to decide cases fairly and efficiently. Judges should be selected for their legal expertise and impartiality, not their politics, and given the training and independence to do the job well.
- **Guarantee on a meaningful review of asylum applications:** Asylum seekers must have a real opportunity to present their case, including testimony and evidence, before an immigration judge or trained asylum officer. End the policy of denying and dismissing asylum applications (also known as "pretermissions") without a full adjudication on the merits. Congress should block these changes and guarantee full, fair hearings on cases' merits
- **Access to life-saving protection should not depend on whether someone can afford a lawyer. Outcomes should turn on the merits of a case, not on who can pay, or the politics of the moment.**

3. Keep families together with real legal pathways

- **Bottom line:** Clear family visa backlogs and expand safe, legal alternatives for people who need safety but may not qualify for asylum.
- **Why:** Many people flee out of fear and hope to reunite with family already in the U.S. When told the legal wait is years (or decades) they turn to dangerous, irregular routes.
- **Fix the backlog:** Raise or recapture unused family-based visa numbers and lift per-country caps that stretch waits for decades.
- **Expand humanitarian options:** Strengthen humanitarian parole, family reunification parole, and Temporary Protected Status. When we take away legal pathways, people fearing for their lives turn to desperate measures.

4. Hold immigration enforcement accountable

- **Bottom line:** Establish independent oversight of ICE, with enforceable detention standards and transparency when people are harmed or die in custody.
- **Why:** Between the horrific public killings in the streets at the hands of immigration enforcement officers and more than 50 deaths in immigration detention since the start of Trump's second term, we must rethink how immigration enforcement is conducted.
- **Due process in deportations:** Guarantee meaningful notice, access to counsel, and a fair hearing before anyone is deported. End punitive removals to third countries where people have no ties or face persecution, torture, or indefinite detention.
- **No more funding for ICE and CBP:** Oppose any additional funding for ICE and CBP while they operate without accountability. Congress should use its power of the purse to enforce oversight, not expand a system that is already causing harm.
- **Independent investigations:** Require independent, public review of every death in custody and serious abuse allegation, with consequences when standards are violated.
- **Enforceable standards:** Make detention standards legally binding, with unannounced inspections, and expand community-based alternatives to detention.
- **Noncitizens should not be cast as criminals to serve a political agenda. Policy and rhetoric should reflect that. People who pose zero threat to public safety or national security shouldn't be in detention.**

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