

Refugee Shabbat 2024 Resource Guide



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Safety and Security

As you determine what your participation in Refugee Shabbat looks like, HIAS would like to take this opportunity to remind you to incorporate safety and security management into your planning process. In this era of heightened antisemitic, anti-immigrant, and Islamophobic violence, it is prudent to reflect on your community's approach to safety and security. We encourage you to consider which best practices are applicable to your congregation and facilities. [Secure Community Network \(SCN\)](#) is the official homeland security and safety initiative of the organized Jewish community in North America working to strengthen safety and security at Jewish institutions around the country. Working in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security, SCN has created and curated some useful resources. Several are shared here for your consideration as you prepare for Refugee Shabbat.

- [Cybersecurity Resources](#)
- [Institutional Security](#)
- [Low-Cost Security Measures for Jewish Facilities](#)
- [Video Conference Best Practices](#)
- [Active Shooter Response: Online Training](#)
- [Mass Gatherings: Take Charge of Your Personal Safety](#)

Publicity and Social Media

HIAS Refugee Shabbat is an opportunity for the Jewish community to communicate our strong, shared support for refugees and asylum seekers. HIAS headquarters will be working to tell the story of the Jewish community's participation in Refugee Shabbat, and we hope that you will do so too by media about your programming, inviting local elected officials to attend and/or speak at your programs, and/or writing op-eds about your participation for local news outlets. Please also consider writing about your participation on social media and in your community's newsletter or bulletin.

Program Ideas

We recognize that HIAS' supporters observe Shabbat in a multiplicity of ways. We encourage you to choose the activities that work best for you and to use the time leading up to Refugee Shabbat and directly after for any of the activities that resonate but are not in line with your personal Shabbat practice.

1. **Volunteer with refugees in the U.S.** – There are countless ways to volunteer with refugees and asylum seekers today. If you are located near one of [HIAS' local resettlement partners](#), many need individuals to help as skilled

volunteers as well as congregations and organizations to assist in welcoming new neighbors to their communities. If you are not near a HIAS partner, there are a network of organizations around the country that you can find on [this map](#) who do similar work. Congregations and organizations interested in serving as private sponsors (supporting your new neighbors independently) can explore the opportunity to become a [HIAS Welcome Circle through Welcome Corps](#).

2. **Learn something** - Check out the [HIAS blog](#), [podcast](#), and [video archive](#) to share these resources with family and friends.
3. **Join the “Jews for Refugees” Facebook Group** – Joining this group is a great way to connect with thousands of other committed individuals across the United States and around the world, access up-to-the-minute information about the Jewish response to the refugee crisis and share actions that you are taking. [Click here to join](#).
4. **Shop at Refugee and Immigrant-Owned Businesses** – Consider doing a Google search for refugee-owned restaurants and shops in your local area. Check out lists like [this one](#), [this one](#), or [this one](#) to purchase refugee-made products from around the world.
5. **Learn a Language with Refugees** – Sign up to learn Arabic, Armenian, French, Kurdish, Persian, or Spanish by employing a refugee as a teacher through [NaTakallam](#). You can even purchase “Gift of Conversation” packages for family and friends eager to learn. Professional translation services also available for individuals and organizations worldwide.
6. **Donate Goods** – Donate old technology (PCs, printers, tablets or PDAs, mice, sound and video cards, etc.) through [PCs for Refugees](#). Donate new or gently used baby carriers to refugees through [Carry the Future](#). Choose something from the [public wish list](#) of a [shelter serving asylum seekers](#). Your local resettlement agency likely has other specific needs.
7. **Support Refugees and Asylum Seekers** – In the week leading up to Refugee Shabbat, set up a Facebook fundraiser to benefit HIAS’ work. For assistance setting up a personalized fundraiser page, please email development@hias.org.
8. **Donate to a Bond Fund** – Consider contributing to a [bond fund](#) to assist in releasing immigrants from detention.

HIAS and Israel

In the aftermath of the horrific attacks of October 7th, 2023, the world feels different. While Refugee Shabbat is an opportunity to stand in solidarity with the more than 110 million displaced people around the world, we know that this year, in particular, many communities will be thinking of those displaced by the Hamas attacks and asking questions about HIAS’ work in Israel.

- For the most up-to-date information on HIAS’s work with displaced people in Israel, please visit our [Israel Emergency Response Page](#).
- For a beautiful and thoughtful reflection on HIAS’ role as a Jewish and humanitarian organization, please read [Sustaining Life Amid the Devastation](#) by Rabbi Sarah Bassin and Rebecca Kirzner.
- For background on HIAS’ work in Israel over the past seven decades, please visit our [HIAS Israel page](#).

New Resources for Refugee Shabbat 2024

- [Reflective Reading](#) that can be used at home or in the synagogue
- [Sermon Talking Points](#) to bring more depth to your sermon or d’var Torah
- [Toolkit](#) for hosting your own Refugee Shabbat dinner discussion

- [List of book and film suggestions](#) to enrich your Refugee Shabbat Experience

US-Based Advocacy Opportunities

1. **Advocate to your Elected Officials** – The United States can and must welcome refugees and asylum seekers in a fair and compassionate way. Send a message to the Biden administration and/or your Member of Congress using the links on [this page](#).
2. **Ask Your Members of Congress to Support Welcome for Refugees** – [Join HIAS communities across the country for Spring Advocacy Week 2024](#). This is an opportunity to work with HIAS' Grassroots Organizing and Advocacy team to urge your Senators and Representatives to welcome refugees, asylum seekers, parolees, and those seeking a safe place to call home. To get involved, contact Russ Agdern, Grassroots Campaign Manager in Community Engagement.
3. **Become a Welcome Campaign Congregation** – If you are a member of a synagogue, check this list to see if your community is part of HIAS' Welcome Campaign, an action network uniting congregations across the United States in response to the largest refugee crisis in history. If your congregation is already signed up, contact synagogue lay leadership and clergy to find out how you can get involved. If not, contact synagogue lay leadership and clergy to encourage them to join.

For those in Europe: Ways to get connected

1. **Volunteer with refugees** – There are countless ways to volunteer with refugees and asylum seekers today. Examples of volunteer opportunities across Europe can be found [here](#), [here](#) (FR) and [here](#) (BE). Congregations and organizations interested in serving as private sponsors (supporting your new neighbors independently) can explore the opportunity to become a [HIAS Welcome Circle](#).
2. **Incorporate Gishur holiday resources** into your programming on shabbat and year round to offer awareness raising activities and learning opportunities focused on promoting inclusive communities that are respectful of refugees and migrants of all faiths.
3. **Join the HIAS Europe Facebook Group** – Joining this group is a great way to connect with other committed individuals across Europe, we share updates and information about current refugee responses and how you can help. Click [here](#) to join.
4. **Register to vote in the European elections** – Europe can and must welcome refugees and asylum seekers in a fair and compassionate way. [Register to vote](#), urge your friends and family to do the same, and use your vote to support fair and functioning asylum systems, inclusion of refugees, and EU funding and policies which advance the rights of displaced people (more detail [here](#)).
5. **Support Refugees and Asylum Seekers** – In the week leading up to Refugee Shabbat, set up a Facebook fundraiser to donate to HIAS Europe's work. For assistance setting up a personalized fundraiser page, please [email development@hias.org](mailto:development@hias.org).