

117TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 283

Reaffirming the importance of the United States to promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 23, 2021

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the importance of the United States to promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons.

Whereas June 20 is observed as “World Refugee Day”, a global event to acknowledge the courage, resilience, and determination of individuals and families who are forced to flee their homes due to persecution;

Whereas December 14, 2020, signified 70 years since the founding of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

Whereas July 28, 2021, is the 70th anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, signed in Geneva on July 28, 1951, which defines the term “refugee” and outlines the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states to protect them;

Whereas, in 2020, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—

(1) there were more than 82,400,000 forcibly displaced people worldwide, the worst displacement crisis in recorded history, including 26,400,000 refugees, more than 48,000,000 internally displaced people, and 4,100,000 people seeking asylum;

(2) on average, 1 out of every 95 people worldwide was a refugee, an internally displaced person, or a person seeking asylum;

(3) 11,200,000 people were newly displaced due to recent conflict or persecution;

(4) 68 percent of the world’s refugees came from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Burma;

(5) 2,600,000 Afghan refugees were displaced worldwide, making them one of the world’s largest and longest-running displaced populations;

(6) more than 50 percent of the population of Syria, at least 13,500,000 people, were displaced, either across the international border or within Syria, which represents the largest displacement crisis in the world today;

(7) children accounted for 30 percent of the world’s population but 42 percent of all forcibly displaced people, millions of whom were unable to access basic services, including education; and

(8) 86 percent of all refugees were hosted by developing nations, and less than 1 percent of vulnerable refu-

gees in need of resettlement had the opportunity to resettle because sufficient numbers of places do not exist;

Whereas refugees are major contributors to local economies and served as critical frontline health professionals and essential workers combating the COVID–19 pandemic worldwide;

Whereas the United States has an obligation to provide humanitarian protection to refugees, as well as interpreters, translators, and others in Afghanistan who served alongside United States and NATO troops, diplomats, and development workers;

Whereas the United States supports the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to increase protection for LGBTQI+ refugees overseas and to support global resettlement of LGBTQI+ refugees; and

Whereas the United States Refugee Admissions Program, which was established over 40 years ago, is a lifesaving solution crucial to global humanitarian efforts, strengthens global security, advances United States foreign policy goals, supports regional host countries, and assists individuals and families in need: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the
3 United States to promote the safety, health, and
4 well-being of millions of refugees, including the edu-
5 cation of refugee children and displaced persons,
6 who flee war, persecution, or torture in search of
7 peace, hope, and freedom;

1 (2) recognizes those individuals who have risked
2 their lives working, either individually or for non-
3 governmental organizations and international agen-
4 cies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner
5 for Refugees, to provide lifesaving assistance and
6 protection for people displaced around the world;

7 (3) underscores the importance of the United
8 States Refugee Admissions Program as a critical
9 tool for the United States Government to strengthen
10 national and regional security and encourage inter-
11 national solidarity with host countries;

12 (4) calls upon the Secretary of State and
13 United States Ambassador to the United Nations
14 to—

15 (A) continue providing robust funding for
16 refugee protection overseas and resettlement in
17 the United States;

18 (B) uphold the United States international
19 leadership role in responding to displacement
20 crises with humanitarian assistance, and restore
21 its leadership role in the protection of vulner-
22 able refugee populations that endure sexual vio-
23 lence, human trafficking, persecution and vio-
24 lence against religious minorities, forced con-
25 scription, genocide, and exploitation;

1 (C) work in partnership with the inter-
 2 national community to find solutions to existing
 3 conflicts and prevent new conflicts from begin-
 4 ning;

5 (D) continue supporting the efforts of the
 6 United Nations High Commissioner for Refu-
 7 gees to advance the work of nongovernmental
 8 organizations to protect refugees regardless of
 9 their country of origin or religious beliefs;

10 (E) continue to alleviate pressures on
 11 frontline refugee host countries that absorb the
 12 majority of the world's refugees through hu-
 13 manitarian and development support; and

14 (F) respond to the global refugee crisis by
 15 meeting robust refugee admissions goals; and

16 (5) reaffirms the goals of “World Refugee Day”
 17 and reiterates the strong commitment of the United
 18 States to protect the millions of refugees who live
 19 without material, social, or legal protections.

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