

# WIN ★ WITHOUT ★ WAR

June 12, 2017

Dear Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives,

On behalf of the millions of Americans represented by Win Without War coalition members, we are writing to urge you to reaffirm the importance of the U.S. refugee resettlement program. As we approach World Refugee Day on June 20, we should take care to live out America's founding ideals that all people -- whether internally displaced in their home country or seeking refuge from the terror of war and persecution elsewhere -- can seek refuge and shelter in the United States.

The world has not witnessed such a dramatic scale of human suffering and displacement since World War II. Climate change, war, poverty, and persecution have forced millions from their homes. Over 65 million people, including 21 million refugees, are now displaced worldwide. As supporters of principled U.S. engagement in the world, we believe that America and the world are stronger, safer, and more prosperous when our policies at home and abroad align with our values. Now more than ever, the United States must reaffirm its commitment to protecting refugees. Failing to do so would not only be an attack on America's tradition of being a beacon of hope for those seeking refuge, but it would also undermine our credibility on the global stage and worsen an already horrific global crisis of human suffering.

Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted individuals who come to the United States. Today, every refugee is subject to a series of stringent examinations and checks over a two-year period by the FBI, National Counterterrorism Center, State Department, and Department of Homeland Security, which include background checks, multiple interviews, biometric security checks, medical examinations, and recurrent vetting.

While the President is permitted to set the number of refugee admissions, we urge you, as a co-equal branch of government, to assert a clear, principled position in favor of refugee resettlement. While today's crisis should be met with an equally urgent level of assistance to refugees, it is unconscionable to set the resettlement cap below 75,000 refugees for fiscal year 2018. America should do more - much more - and providing a new home to 75,000 refugees is the bare minimum America must do. We also urge you to oppose any policy riders that would reduce access to protection for refugees, discriminate against refugees of certain faiths or from particular countries of origin, or otherwise pause, defund, or dismantle the U.S. refugee resettlement program. And, as you begin considerations on funding for fiscal year 2018, we urge you to continue America's commitment to supporting robust funding for international aid and support to those in need, and to providing the diplomatic resources necessary to reduce the root causes creating refugees in the first place. Failing to address these needs will not only continue the suffering of innocent lives and inhibit their greatest opportunity to live with freedom and dignity, but it will also help feed marginalization, radicalization, and instability.

America is at its best when we welcome those in need of a new home. The times when we have failed to live up to our values - like when we turned away Jewish refugees in WWII - are some of our country's darkest hours. America can stay true to its values without compromising its security. Refugee resettlement saves lives, improves our communities, encourages other countries to keep their doors open to people needing protection, and promotes regional stability and global security. At a time when wars, many of them involving the U.S. military, are spiraling out of control, we must take collective responsibility to help the millions of people whose lives have been destroyed by the violence.

We call on all members of Congress to uphold our collective moral and global responsibility to resettle refugees, to advocate for peaceful ends to the brutal conflicts that have forced so many of them to flee, and to demonstrate the best of U.S. leadership by always committing to an America whose humanitarian efforts are robust and whose strength is grounded in our values.

Sincerely,

Stephen Miles  
Director, Win Without War