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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 23, 2022

**RECEIVED**

**By ESEC at 8:34 am, Mar 24, 2022**

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

As Vladimir Putin continues his horrific assault on the Ukrainian people, I strongly urge you to accelerate plans for the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees to the United States, particularly those looking to reunite with family already in the United States. I also urge you to establish a robust humanitarian parole program. Given the global refugee crisis, and lessons learned from the Afghanistan evacuation, we need multiple legal pathways for Ukrainians to find safety in the United States.

By swiftly resettling Ukrainian refugees in the United States, your Administration would send a strong signal of solidarity to our European allies and partners, including Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Moldova, who have welcomed Ukrainian refugees. Since the start of the conflict, more than 3.5 million people have fled and millions more are expected to flee in the coming months. Neighboring countries have quickly stepped up to offer refuge, work permits, schooling for children, and other assistance. At the same time, they are warning that the speed and size of Ukrainian forced displacement is becoming unmanageable, in what is now the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

Offering refuge to Ukrainians fleeing the war will be another powerful demonstration of U.S. commitment to the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom in the face of Putin's illegal and unjustified invasion. The vast majority of those who have fled are women and children. History has repeatedly shown that women and girls who are forcibly displaced are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence, arbitrary killings, rape and trafficking, making our effort to provide safe refuge all the more pressing. Refugee applications for Ukrainians with family members already in the United States – while maintaining all appropriate security measures and standards – must be expedited. Refugees, particularly those in the midst of a war, should not have to wait for years to reunite with family in the United States.

If we are to swiftly resettle Ukrainian refugees, the Administration must mobilize significant resources now. After the Trump administration worked to gut it, the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) requires rebuilding in order to increase the capacity of refugee processing and resettlement operations. This will enable the United States to safely resettle Ukrainian refugees, while also maintaining our important commitments to resettling refugees from Afghanistan, Venezuela, Burma, Ethiopia, and elsewhere in the world. This will require

expanding overseas capacity by opening new Resettlement Service Centers and hiring more refugee officers while also increasing the resources of resettlement agencies here at home.

It will not, however, just be families who are at an increased risk of harm. Activists, journalists, LGBTQI+ individuals, and other minority groups are particularly vulnerable in this conflict and should be considered for expedited resettlement or humanitarian parole. I urge the Administration to expeditiously create a robust humanitarian parole program for all eligible Ukrainians fleeing the conflict. The Secretary of DHS holds broad discretionary authority to grant parole to certain fully-vetted individuals for admission for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. For Ukrainians, the “urgent humanitarian reasons” for which parole should be extended are clear—with Russia unleashing a brutal, systematic attack on civilians, choking off access to food, water, and electricity for thousands in besieged cities, and targeting humanitarian corridors. Offering a program for humanitarian parole will provide life-saving protection to a broad swath of vulnerable Ukrainians who may otherwise be ineligible for refugee status, do not desire to permanently resettle in the United States, or who are waiting for their refugee application to be processed. I also urge the Administration to mobilize the necessary resources to efficiently and fairly adjudicate humanitarian parole cases and to apply reasonable and just standards to Ukrainians in desperate need of protection.

Finally, I encourage the Administration to consider the overwhelming desire of Americans to welcome Ukrainians to the United States. I have heard from employers, community organizations, and civil society groups who want to welcome Ukrainians into their communities. I urge the Administration to consider how we can use this moment of global crisis to allow more people to sponsor, support, and integrate Ukrainian refugees. Doing so would build out new networks of support that could eventually help refugees of all nationalities.

Amid Putin’s brutal war, we must do our part as a nation to stand in solidarity with our European allies and support the Ukrainian people. I urge the Administration to take the necessary steps to facilitate the expeditious resettlement of Ukrainian refugees to the United States.

I thank you in advance for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Chairman



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

May 16, 2022

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez:

Thank you for your March 23, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Your letter requests the acceleration of plans to resettle Ukrainian refugees in the United States as well as the establishment of a parole program and highlights the need to make available multiple legal pathways for Ukrainian nationals to find safety in the United States. Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf.

On April 21, 2022, DHS announced a new streamlined process, Uniting for Ukraine (U4U), to provide Ukrainian citizens who fled Russia's unprovoked war of aggression with opportunities to come to the United States.<sup>1</sup> To be eligible, Ukrainians must have been residents in Ukraine as of February 11, 2022, have a U.S.-based supporter, complete vaccinations and other public health requirements, and pass biometric and biographic screening and security background checks.

As of April 25, 2022, U.S.-based individuals interested in supporting Ukrainian beneficiaries can file a Form I-134, Declaration of Financial Support, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as the first step in the U4U process. Individuals are vetted to ensure they can assist those they agree to support. USCIS will reach out to the Ukrainians named in approved Forms I-134 with instructions on how to initiate vetting and apply for a travel document that will authorize them to travel to the United States and be considered for parole, on a case-by-case basis, for a period of two years. Once paroled through this process, Ukrainians are eligible to apply for employment authorization. More details on who is eligible to provide support and who can be considered for parole under U4U can be found on the U4U landing page.<sup>2</sup>

Secretary Mayorkas also announced the designation of Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months to offer protection for individuals who have been residing in the United States since April 11, 2022 and who are nationals or who last habitually resided in

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/uniting-for-ukraine>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/uniting-for-ukraine>

Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> TPS allows eligible Ukrainian nationals in the United States to remain and authorizes them to work lawfully. The Department recently published a Federal Register notice with instructions for applying for TPS and an Employment Authorization Document. In addition, USCIS recently released an alert providing individuals with critical information about immigration avenues that may be available entitled, *“Immigration Help Available to Those Affected by Special Situations, Including the Invasion of Ukraine.”*<sup>4</sup>

To further support the President’s recent commitments, DHS is also working to expand current legal pathways and develop new programs. We are coordinating our efforts closely with our European allies and partners who are on the front lines of this refugee crisis. Individuals, depending on location and circumstances, may be eligible for a nonimmigrant visa, an immigrant visa, TPS, asylum, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, or the new U4U process for applying for parole.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou  
Director

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/03/03/secretary-mayorkas-designates-ukraine-temporary-protected-status-18-months>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/immigration-help-available-to-those-affected-by-special-situations-including-the-invasion-of-ukraine>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20DHS%20Efforts%20to%20Assist%20Ukrainian%20Nationals\\_1.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20DHS%20Efforts%20to%20Assist%20Ukrainian%20Nationals_1.pdf)