

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

**RECEIVED**  
*By ESEC at 1:24 pm, Mar 31, 2022*

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, SW  
Washington, DC 20528-0075

Dear Secretary Antony Blinken and Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas:

We write to call attention to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Ukraine that to date has forced over 3.5 million Ukrainians to flee their homeland. First, we want to thank the Biden Administration for showing leadership by signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2022 which provides \$4 billion to address the needs of refugees who have fled Ukraine or displaced within Ukraine, \$2.65 billion through USAID's International Disaster Assistance program to provide emergency food assistance, health care, and other urgent support and \$1.4 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance to support refugees fleeing Ukraine. In addition, domestically the Administration announced the designation of Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months that will protect tens of thousands of people in the United States from returning to the war and humanitarian disaster in Ukraine.

However, we believe the U.S. can and should do much more to share responsibility and show solidarity with our EU allies and the Ukrainian people. The Administration has additional immediate tools at its disposal that we ask you to consider using.

**Expedite relocation:** Ukrainians with pending immigrant visa applications and family in the U.S. should be expedited and able to enter the U.S. as refugees. Another alternative is that they could be paroled into the U.S. to await their visa numbers. There is precedent for both options. For example, Iraqis were allowed to apply for refugee status as beneficiaries of filed I-130 family immigration petitions. In addition, under the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, after natural disasters devastated Haiti, if granted parole, Haitians with pending immigration petitions were permitted to reside in the United States with their loved ones and wait for their visa numbers to be processed.

**Expedite applications:** The Administration should expedite refugee applications for Ukrainians who have applications pending under the Lautenberg program for Ukrainian religious minorities with first degree relatives in the U.S. According to the Department of State, there are currently 16,717 open Lautenberg cases for people still in Ukraine. These

applicants should be immediately paroled in the U.S. where they can complete refugee processing and adjudication. There is precedent for such a practice. In 1999, the Clinton Administration expeditiously commenced the adjudication of Kosovar refugee applications in Macedonia, paroled the applicants into the United States, and completed the refugee adjudications in the United States.

**Eliminate student visas wait times:** The 120-day advance limit on a new student visa and the 30-day limit on travel before the start date should be waived for new Ukrainian students entering the U.S for study. These students should be able to receive a student visa and travel immediately upon adjudication of their application.

**Use the DHS automated vetting system:** The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is an automated, online immigration process that can take parolees information and provide travel approval within just 72 hours. While the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is normally restricted to Visa Waiver Program countries, DHS can allow Ukrainians to temporarily use the system to receive authorization to travel in order to receive humanitarian parole. ESTA has the capacity to inexpensively and securely process a high volume of parole applicants each month.

We ask that your agencies work together to expeditiously implement these important lifesaving recommendations. Congress stands ready to work hand in hand with you to ensure that we provide any additional resources necessary to address the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since WWII.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



Jared Golden  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



Elaine Luria  
Member of Congress



Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

May 16, 2022

The Honorable Jason Crow  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Crow:

Thank you for your March 22, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). 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 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

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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>

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

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. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. 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>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)