



October 11, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

**RE: Replicating Uniting For Ukraine for displaced Venezuelans**

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

On behalf of the undersigned Venezuelan American organizations, immigration advocacy groups, immigrant service providers, and prominent civil society leaders representing a broad spectrum of constituents and stakeholders across the U.S., we are calling on the President Biden administration to replicate the successes of the Uniting for Ukraine parole program for Venezuelans fleeing persecution: Volunteering for Venezuela.<sup>1</sup>

Facing severe political, economic, and social turmoil, nearly 7 million Venezuelans have fled their home country since 2015, making the Venezuelan exodus the second-largest displacement crisis in the world and the largest in the Western hemisphere.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of the population is experiencing “limited access to food, basic services, and adequate healthcare, and the deterioration of the rule of law and protection of human rights.”<sup>3</sup>

This fiscal year, more than 150,000 Venezuelans crossed into the U.S. at the southwestern border; some were then subject to further partisan exploitation, bussed to cities, or flown to Martha’s Vineyard.<sup>4</sup> Still, the primary mechanism for displaced individuals to enter the U.S. is typically through the refugee program. Yet, the U.S. resettled just 102 Venezuelan refugees this fiscal year.<sup>5</sup>

Expanding the Uniting For Ukraine model to welcome Venezuelans would provide a safe, orderly, and legal pathway for displaced Venezuelans to live and work in the U.S. for two years. There is no fee to apply, and there is no numerical cap. Beneficiaries enjoy modern, digital processing without visiting an embassy or consulate. Volunteering for Venezuela can prevent the dangerous journey of many Venezuelans across the Darien Gap.<sup>6,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matthew La Corte & Gil Guerra. [“Uniting for Ukraine is successful. Let’s expand it to include Venezuelans.”](#) Niskanen Center. August 29, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html>

<sup>3</sup> [“Extension of the Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status”](#). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Homeland Security (DHS). September 8th, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/14/us/desantis-florida-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/3/6243298f4/number-venezuelans-crossing-darien-gap-soars.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/world/americas/venezuelan-migrants-us-border.html>

Finally, robust public-private partnerships already exist to support sponsors, many with learned, first-hand experience.

The Uniting model is part of a broader border management strategy to streamline temporary admission for vulnerable migrants by pairing them with U.S. sponsors who have shown an enormous capacity to welcome newcomers in recent years. Through Uniting For Ukraine, more than 130,000 sponsors have registered from all 50 states, providing safe haven to tens of thousands of Ukrainians. We believe Volunteering for Venezuela would see similar interest, especially given the hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan Americans already living in the U.S.

We hope to meet with your office to discuss the crisis in Venezuela and how this program can help save lives.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

**Community Organizations and leaders signing this letter:**

Maria	Diaz	Founder & President	Venezuelan American Alliance Inc	FL
Oscar	Chacon	Executive Director	Alianza Americas	IL
Maria C.	Vegas	Deputy State Director	American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC)	FL
			American Business Immigration Coalition/American Business Immigration Coalition Action	
Samuel	Vilchez	Florida State Director		FL
William				
J.	Diaz	Founder	Casa de Venezuela Orlando	FL
Isabel	Vinent	Co Executive Director	Florida Immigrant Coalition - FLIC	FL
Hector	Mujica	Board Member	Hispanics in Philanthropy	FL
		Business		
Jorge	Fernandez	owner/Community Leader	GBS Group	
Vicente	Perez	Legal Coordinator	Casa de Venezuela (CDV) Orlando	FL
			Programa de Ayuda Humanitaria para Venezuela, Inc.	
Marisol	Dieguez	Founder/President		FL
Matthew	Burwick	Activist	Comunidad Venezolana	DC
Emilio	Buitrago	Board Member	Casa de Venezuela Greater Philadelphia	PA
Adelys	Ferro	Executive Director	Venezuelan American Caucus	FL
Maria A.	Marquez	Community Leader	As self	FL
Adriana	Acosta	Co-Founder	CESI Center	NY
Hector	Arguinzones	Director	Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid, Inc.	NY
Erick	Rozo	Co-Founder	CESI center	NY

Euclides	Morles	Community Leader	Casa Venezuela Columbus _Ohio	OH
Norely	Lopez	Community Activist	ONG Blanca Nieve Sierra	UT
Nerlitt	Torres	President	Ong Blanca Nieve Sierra	FL
Leon	Granado	President	Venezuela USA Foundation, Inc.	FL
Sonia	Cosme	Directora	Asociación de venezolanos en Puerto Rico.	PR
Alberto	Feo	Community Activist	Casa Orlando	CA
Raquel	Leal	Founder	Latinas Time	TN
Belkys	Polanco	President	Casa de Venezuela Jacksonville	FL
Ana	Gil Garcia	Director	Illinois Venezuelan Alliance	IL
Vladimiro	Mujica	Director	VenAmerica	AZ
Denise	Rincon	President	Venezuelan Association of Massachusetts	MA
Brenda	Stephens	President	CASA VENEZOLANA AMERICANA EMERALD COAST	FL
Carla	Bustillos	Director	Vision Diaspora Foundation	DC
Johana	Linares	Vice-President	Casa Venezuela Dallas	TX
Jorge	Marquez	Community Leader	Unidad Houston	TX
Gabriela	Blondell	Director	Caleidoscopio Humano	DC
Paciano	Padron	President	VENAMERICA	FL
Ivan	Diaz	Administrator	Venezolanos en Wisconsin	WI
Liz	Alarcon	Founder & Exec.Director	Pulso	FL
Jose	Oropeza	General Secretary	Panamerican and caribbean Union for Human Rights	FL
Edgar	Amado	Coordinador General	Juventud Venezolana en el Exterior(JUVENEX)	FL
Eva	Santos-Monasterios	Community Activist	Venezuelan Association of Massachusetts	MA
Libia	Gregg	Director	Philanthrartist	TX
Mary	Salazar	Community Activist		TX
Diego	Maldonado Santos	Community Activist	Diegolandia	MA
Luis	Maldonado-Moreno	Community Activist		MA
Lorena	Camacho	Vicepresident	Venezolanos en Sanford	FL
Patricia	Parada	Directora de servicio social	Venezuela Para Ti	NC
Jesler	Molina	Director	Alianza Venezolana Utah	UT
Maryori	Duarte-Sheffield	Secretary	VENEZOLANOS UNIDOS EN INDIANA	IN



December 9, 2022

Maria Diaz  
Founder & President  
Venezuelan American Alliance Inc.  
3350 SW 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 120  
Miramar, FL 33027

Dear Ms. Diaz:

Thank you for your October 11, 2022 letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requesting to expand the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) model to Venezuelans. Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf, and I apologize for the delay in my response.

On October 12, 2022, DHS announced a new process that allows Venezuelan nationals and their immediate family members to legally enter and temporarily remain in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Similar to the U4U process for Ukrainians, Venezuelan nationals must have a U.S.-based supporter to initiate an application on their behalf. This process provides a safe and orderly way for eligible Venezuelan nationals and their qualifying immediate family members who are outside the United States to be considered, on a case-by-case basis, for advance authorization to travel to the United States to seek a discretionary grant of parole for a period of up to two years. Upon arrival to the United States through this process, Venezuelan nationals and their immediate family members are eligible to apply for employment authorization.

Within days of launching this process, the first Venezuelan nationals began to arrive safely in the United States. Through October 31, 2022, more than 6,800 Venezuelans received authorization to travel to the United States and more than 490 Venezuelans arrived lawfully.

Consistent with Department and agency public engagement priorities, USCIS is committed to creating opportunities for stakeholders to share their input on USCIS policies and operations, including this new process for Venezuelans. To that end, on October 19, 2022, USCIS hosted its first national stakeholder engagement on the new process for Venezuelans, to provide an overview of the process, communicate eligibility requirements, and demonstrate how to file [Form I-134, Declaration of Financial Support](#), online. Since then, USCIS has hosted many local public engagements on the process for Venezuelans and on November 7, 2022, I was honored to meet with you and others from the Venezuelan American community in Miami to continue our efforts to share information about the process and answer questions from supporters and beneficiaries. USCIS looks forward to continuing this public engagement with you and your

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/10/12/dhs-announces-new-migration-enforcement-process-venezuelans>.

**Maria Diaz**

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partners both locally and nationally, and with a commitment to accessibility in the form of Spanish-language engagements. USCIS will also maintain information on our website at [uscis.gov/venezuela](https://uscis.gov/venezuela).

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned this letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou  
Director