



International Refugee  
Assistance Project

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### NEW IRAP REPORT RECOMMENDS ACTION TO ADDRESS DELAYS IN FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROCESS

(New York, NY) – Today, the [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP) released a new report, "[Families in Limbo](#): What the Biden Administration Can Do Now to Address Unreasonable Delays in Refugee and Asylee Family Reunification." The report outlines how the "Follow-to-Join" process, by which refugees who have been resettled in the United States are reunited with their spouses and children stuck abroad, has been nearly ground to a standstill by actions taken by the Trump Administration. It calls on the new administration to take immediate action to improve the process and help reunite these vulnerable families.

The report draws from the experiences of refugee families, legal practitioners, and government documents that were obtained through FOIA requests and litigation. In 2017, IRAP challenged the Trump Administration's refugee ban targeting Muslim refugees in *JFS v. Trump*, which [resulted in an injunction](#) against the Trump Administration's suspension of the Follow-to-Join program.

Nevertheless, since then, family reunifications under the Follow-to-Join process have moved slowly or not at all. **The report's key findings conclude that "delays in FTJ processing have resulted from explicit suspensions of the program; repeated transfers of responsibility within or between the agencies; unnecessary, confusing, and sometimes unannounced changes to the process; and inefficient and ineffective changes to security vetting and background checks."**

As a result, thousands of families separated during their perilous journeys to safety have been prevented from reuniting, even after years of waiting. Tragically, some spouses and



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children stranded abroad have been harmed or even killed while awaiting a decision from the government.

Since taking office, the Biden Administration has stated its commitment to family unity in refugee processing, and IRAP has welcomed this return to humanitarian values. In addition to outlining the changes that led to the unreasonable delays, the report offers a blueprint for remedying the effects of the previous administration's harmful policies. Among other suggestions, **the report recommends to roll back Trump-era agency actions, improve the vetting process, reduce inefficiencies in domestic processing, bring uniformity to overseas processing, and expand the use of humanitarian parole and requests to expedite delayed cases.**

To download the report, "Families in Limbo: What the Biden Administration Can Do Now to Address Unreasonable Delays in Refugee and Asylee Family Reunification," [click here](#).

To view the press release, [click here](#).

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