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**PRESS CONTACT**

Henrike Dessaulles, IRAP, [hdessaulles@refugeerights.org](mailto:hdessaulles@refugeerights.org), 516.838.1269

Mariya Parodi, Amnesty International USA, 212-633-4211

Louisa Tavlas, Niskanen Center, [ltavlas@niskanencenter.org](mailto:ltavlas@niskanencenter.org), 571-527-6403

**ADVOCACY GROUPS RELEASE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDED COMMUNITY  
SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES**

**(New York, NY)** - Today, the [International Refugee Assistance Project \(IRAP\)](#), [Amnesty International USA \(AIUSA\)](#), and the [Niskanen Center](#) published a [joint paper](#) offering recommendations to the Departments of State (DOS) and Health and Human Services (HHS) as they design an expanded community sponsorship system that includes a new private sponsorship program for refugees.

President Biden's [Executive Order 14013](#), issued February 4, 2021, directed the Secretaries of State (DOS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to deliver a report to the White House detailing their plan to expand opportunities for communities to partner in welcoming refugees to the United States. The Secretaries were due to deliver their report this past Friday, which would lay the groundwork to launch a private sponsorship program that offers organizations, institutions, faith communities, companies, and other civil society groups the opportunity to lead in the welcome of refugees and support their local integration.

The joint paper provides recommendations as DOS and HHS design expanded community sponsorship programs, encouraging the government to:

- Provide clear definitions of the forms of sponsorship, as well as clear timelines for the private sponsorship program design process and launch;

- Utilize a co-design process with a spectrum of stakeholders, based on equity, inclusion, and diversity;
- Create a private sponsorship program that is iterative, with a strong monitoring and evaluation component incorporated from the outset;
- Work with the White House to designate a number of resettlement slots each fiscal year for private sponsorship *in addition* to the number of refugees who will be traditionally resettled by the U.S. government and resettlement agencies;
- Consider a mechanism for private sponsors to “name,” or nominate, refugees for sponsorship; and
- Consider a broad range of potential private sponsors.

Refugee sponsorship harnesses the collective interest, service, and resources of communities around the country. Expanded community sponsorship, inclusive of private sponsorship, can be a transformative tool, strengthening the U.S. public’s sense of ownership of refugee resettlement, fostering even more direct relationships with their new neighbors, and further deepening engagement between community members and newcomers.

**Elizabeth Foydel, Private Sponsorship Program Director, IRAP:** “A new private sponsorship program, complementary to traditional resettlement, can be an additional pathway to safety for refugees. By utilizing broader community engagement in welcoming new arrivals, the number of refugees the United States resettles on an annual basis can be increased, while maintaining a robust support system for refugees and the local communities they settle in.”

**Denise Bell, Researcher for Refugee and Migrant Rights, AIUSA:** “The Biden administration has charted an innovative path for rebuilding the U.S. refugee program by establishing a new private sponsorship program, as part of an expanded community sponsorship system. The United States has a critical opportunity to invest in our shared future and to welcome people caught between home and safety through supporting a private sponsorship model, humanitarian programs, family reunification, and expanded community involvement in resettlement. We all have a stake in making the world a safer place and the private sponsorship model ensures there are more communities that work on creating safe havens.”

Matthew La Corte, Government Affairs Manager for Immigration Policy. Niskanen Center: "From faith groups to university groups, book clubs to local charities, communities across the country stand ready to welcome refugees. By expanding community sponsorship and launching a new private sponsorship program, the Biden administration can harness the interest and energy of local sponsors to revitalize the resettlement system from the ground up. To maximize interest from sponsors and widen the number of refugees who could be resettled, the government should consider a mechanism for private sponsors to name or nominate refugees. In designing such programs, administration officials should consult with a variety of stakeholders, including refugees themselves, to ensure a successful co-design process."

IRAP, AIUSA, and Niskanen encourage the U.S. government to lead by example and revitalize the global system for humanitarian protection through a system of expanded community sponsorship that shows how direct engagement builds more resilient programs and communities.

To view the recommendations paper, [click here](#).

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

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