

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

### SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN A CHALLENGING NATIONAL CLIMATE – OCT 27

On Tuesday, October 27 at 2 PM EDT, Hello Neighbor Network will host a webinar to discuss the national climate and hear examples of some of the most innovative programs happening for refugees and immigrants in communities across the country. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### SEPARATED: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN THE AFTERMATH OF AN IMMIGRATION RAID – OCT 29

On Thursday, October 29 at 4PM EDT, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG) will host a webinar discussing immigration raids. The discussion will center around the chaos of immigration enforcement through the lens of community health and deportation's rippling negative effects on families, communities, and individuals. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### IMMIGRATION AND EPIDEMICS: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – OCT 30

On Friday, October 30 at 12 PM EDT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) will host a webinar presenting a historical perspective on the links between public health crises, especially epidemics, American immigration policy, and the American public's xenophobic fears. The speaker will be Alan M. Kraut, Distinguished Professor of History at American University in Washington, D.C. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



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## USCRI Backgrounder: The Crisis in Somalia

USCRI has recently published a new backgrounder on the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Please find below a short excerpt from this latest publication:

The Civil War in Somalia has been going on for almost three decades. Although the intensity of the crisis has fluctuated over time, refugees continue to flee Somalia because of the combined forces of violence and natural disasters. While there is hope for future stability in the country, over 3 million Somalis are currently displaced, both within Somalia and in refugee communities around the world.

The land now known as Somalia has a rich cultural history and was known as a prolific trading post for Egypt and the Middle East as early as 3000 BCE. However, the intersecting forces of colonization, civil war, and extreme weather have destabilized the country over the last century. These crises have displaced over 3 million Somalis in the last three decades, both within the country as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to neighboring countries as refugees.

### FEDERAL REGISTER COMMENTS: PROPOSED RULE; PROCEDURES FOR ASYLUM AND WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL – DUE OCT 23

The Department of Justice has proposed a rule that would severely impact the ability to seek asylum, including harsh consequences for filing an incomplete application, changes establishing a 15-day filing deadline for aliens applying for asylum in asylum-and-withholding-only proceedings, and changes related to the 180-day asylum adjudication clock. Comments are due on October 23 to the Federal Register. To read the rule and submit comments, click [here](#).

## United States Issue Updates

### • U.S. Supreme Court Denies Certiorari in Tennessee Refugee Case

On October 13, the U.S. Supreme Court denied certiorari, or review, to consider Tennessee's lawsuit against the federal government over refugee resettlement funds. The lawsuit made Tennessee the first in the nation to sue the federal government over refugee resettlement under the 10th Amendment, which guides the split of powers between states and the federal government. A federal judge had dismissed the original [lawsuit](#) in March 2018, followed by a similar rejection by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in July 2019. Attorneys for the state of Tennessee argued that the state argued faced a threat of losing billions of dollars in federal Medicaid funding if it refuses to cover costs associated with resettled refugees. Despite the state opting out of the refugee resettlement program in 2008, the federal government argued that Tennessee was still required to cover the Medicaid cost of eligible refugees, citing the 1996 legislation commonly known as the Welfare Reform Act.

### • Fourth Circuit Clarifies Asylum Nexus Requirement

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit handed down a [decision](#) Wednesday that clarifies the nexus requirement between an asylum seeker's membership in a particular social group (PSG) and the persecution the person faces as a result. When asylum-seekers claim persecution based on membership in a PSG, they must prove that their membership in the PSG was at least one main reason they were targeted for persecution. The petitioner in *Hernandez-Cartagena v. Barr* claimed her membership in the PSG of her nuclear family was the reason she specifically was persecuted by a gang that was extorting her parents for money. Both the Immigration Judge and the Bureau of Immigration Affairs focused on how her parents were targeted randomly for extortion, concluding that she did not meet the nexus requirement relating her family to the persecution.

The Fourth Circuit reversed, ruling that there was a significant nexus between the Petitioner's family membership and the reason she was targeted. The Court found that the "operative question is whether Petitioner's membership is a central reason why she, and not some other person was targeted." Although there was not a clear reason her family was targeted for extortion in the first place, the Court found that the Petitioner specifically was targeted because of her relationship to her parents who failed to pay the gangs. The Petitioner met her burden to establish the nexus between her PSG and her persecution, and her asylum application was granted.

# United States Issue Updates (cont'd)

## • USCIS Denies TPS to Lebanon

On October 5, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) formally denied Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Lebanese immigrants. In September, 148 organizations, including USCRI, wrote a joint letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Administration requesting TPS for Lebanon. The organizations cited years of increasing political unrest and economic crisis in the country, compounded by damage from the recent explosions in Beirut and the Covid-19 pandemic, as reasons TPS is both legally and morally warranted. The letter argued that supporting Lebanon is also in the United States' national interest of furthering peace efforts in the Middle East. USCIS responded to the letter by dodging the organizations' request and failing to promise any protections for Lebanese immigrants. Instead, the agency stated that it "mourns the loss of life" in Lebanon and pointed organizations to the USCIS website for basic information about TPS in general.

## • SFRC Report Describes Illegal DHS Involvements in Guatemala

On October 14, Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) Democratic staff released a report detailing how Department of Homeland Security agents illegally used State Department funding to deport Hondurans and others from Honduras. The report finds that DHS operated without mandated security and human rights safeguards, exposed the U.S. government to potential legal and financial liabilities, and violated its intra-agency agreement with the State Department. It further finds that "DHS lied to the State Department about how it misused INL funding and caused the State Department to transmit misleading information to Congress." Read the report [here](#).

## • Report Highlights Importance of Immigrants in Higher Education

On October 15, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration released a new [report](#) entitled *Immigrant-Origin Students in U.S. Higher Education*. The report found that, in 2018 more than 5.3 million students, or 28% of all students enrolled in colleges and universities, were immigrants or the children of immigrants. Moreover, in nine states, immigrant-origin students make up more than 30% of all students in higher education (CA, FL, HI, MA, NJ, NV, NY, TX, WA). There are 32 states with at least 20,000 immigrant-origin students in higher education. The report's findings reveal the growing proportion of first and second generation immigrant students in postsecondary education, the diversity of these students, and their importance for future U.S. labor growth.

# Around the World in International Migration

## • Ten Macedonians Arrested for Smuggling Migrants in from Greece

Ten Macedonian men were arrested Thursday for their participation in a migrant-smuggling ring that has brought in at least one hundred migrants this year. Most of the migrants are from the Middle East and were heading through North Macedonia in hopes of reaching other parts of Europe. The border between Greece and North Macedonia has been closed in recent months due to the pandemic, but border authorities say this has not stopped migrants from trying to enter the country through similar smuggling schemes. The men arrested on Thursday were charging migrants 825 USD per person for the journey. If they are convicted for their participation in the ring, they could each face over a decade in prison.

## • Refugees in Uganda Face Starvation as Humanitarian Resources are Depleted

A [new study](#) of food security in Uganda reveals dire predictions for its refugee populations over the coming months. The dual forces of the Covid-19 pandemic and massive cuts to humanitarian aid have already left 500,000 refugees without enough to eat. However, according to the study, over 1.2 million refugees will face acute food insecurity between now and January 2021. These populations are at a high risk of starvation in the coming months if funding for humanitarian aid does not drastically improve. The World Food Programme, which provides food to Ugandan refugee camps, has estimated that it needs an immediate influx of at least \$15 million to feed refugees through the end of the year.

# Around the World in International Migration (cont'd)

## • Syria and Russia Found to Have Committed War Crimes in Idlib

Human Rights Watch released a [report](#) last Thursday documenting numerous military airstrikes against civilians in the Syrian city of Idlib. Idlib is one of the last large areas in Syria still controlled by rebel forces, and Syria began an offensive in March 2019 to reclaim the territory. Both Syrian and Russian forces perpetrated the attacks, although both deny that they were trying to target civilians. It is a war crime for military forces to purposely target civilians and civilian infrastructure in military strikes. Human Rights Watch documented at least forty-six attacks on civilian targets during the 11-month offensive on Idlib. Notably, none of the strikes were even remotely aimed at any military personnel or infrastructure. The strikes killed over 200 people and injured 561 others. They damaged healthcare facilities, schools, homes, markets, and religious buildings. Human Rights Watch is calling on the United Nations to sanction Syrian and Russian forces, and continue to document and investigate human rights abuses and war crimes in the conflict.

## • Far-Right Groups Harass Refugees Under False Belief They Are Causing Housing Crisis

A wave of new videos created by far-right extremist organizations in the UK shows organization members entering hotels where refugees and asylum-seekers are being temporarily housed and interrogating them. The members have been demanding that these migrants answer questions about their countries of origin and who is paying for their housing in the UK. Extreme right organizations are spreading false information that refugees and asylees are taking up public housing that would otherwise be given to UK citizens. Immigrant rights groups have clarified that these populations do not qualify for public housing, and are instead being housed in hotels as an emergency and temporary measure during the pandemic. The harassment and interrogations have left many of those staying in the hotels fearful to even open their doors.

# Whispers from Washington

## *Current Capitol Hill Considerations*

### **PRM Gives Concerning Interpretation of Administration Report**

During a call with resettlement agencies last Wednesday, the State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) gave the agencies cause for concern in its interpretation of the Administration's Report to Congress on Fiscal Year 2021 refugee admissions. The biggest issue raised was that there would be no general "other" category that would allow refugees not fitting into specific quotas to still be admitted into the country. While there are small allocations set aside for specific "other" categories such as refugees referred by an embassy and those submitting follow-to-join petitions, the lack of a general "other" category will greatly limit the number of unaccompanied refugee minors and Congolese refugees who can enter the country, among others.

PRM's interpretation of the Report reveals contradictions between the Administration's stated intentions and the real consequences of its proposal. While the Administration claims it has accounted for the backlog of refugees who were unable to travel in 2020 due to the pandemic, around half of these refugees will still be barred from entering the United States in 2021 due to the proposed category restrictions. In fact, although the Administration proposed an overall cap of 15,000 refugees, in reality the quotas will likely allow far fewer to resettle in the United States.

# Global Gigabyte

Saeed Mohamed, a Somali refugee residing in South Africa, has started an initiative with his Somali neighbors to give back to South African communities in need during the pandemic.

Mohamed and his group have distributed over 600 [food packages](#) to people who are out of work in some of South Africa's poorest neighborhoods.

The group was inspired to initiate this project because they remember what it was like to struggle and to be hungry based on their own experiences as refugees several decades ago. They have taken this opportunity to give back to the host communities that welcomed them when they first arrived in the country.

The project has set off a domino effect, with many South Africans themselves joining the fight against hunger by giving back to those with the greatest need.

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or comments, please  
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