

# Policy & Advocacy Report

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

### STORYTELLING AND REFUGEE ADVOCACY – JAN 21

On Thursday, January 21 at 1 PM EST, Refugee Council USA will host a free virtual panel titled “The Stories of Us: The Storyteller’s Journey.” For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### USCRI POLICY BRIEFING: THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S. & EUROPE – JAN 28

On Thursday, January 28 at 11 AM EST, USCRI will host a virtual panel discussion on the impacts of COVID-19 on human trafficking in the United States in Europe. The panel will feature Dr. Petya Nestorova of the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) headquartered in Strasbourg, France and Ms. Aquilina Soriano Versoza of Pilipino Worker’s Center of Los Angeles, California. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



## this issue

- U.S. Issue Updates **P.1**
- Around the World in International Migration **P.2**
- Whispers from Washington **P.3**
- Global Gigabyte **P.3**

## United States Issue Updates

### • New AG Determination in *Matter of A-B-*

On Thursday, January 14, Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen issued a new ruling in *Matter of A-B-*, which would further limit the use of asylum. *Matter of A-B-* concerns a claim for asylum by a Salvadoran woman on grounds of domestic violence and impunity. In June 2018, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions reversed a grant of asylum to Ms. A.B., a domestic violence survivor, and casting serious doubt on asylum eligibility for survivors of domestic violence, gang brutality, and other forms of abuse. Read the newest ruling [here](#).

### • 15-Day Asylum Rule Put on Hold

On Thursday, January 14, Judge Reggie Walton of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia stayed the Administration’s Final Rule titled “Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal.” The expansive rule would have instituted a 15-day filing deadline for asylum applications for most applicants, making it virtually impossible for many refugees to obtain counsel or fully develop their asylum claims; would have required immigration judges to reject asylum applications for even minor errors in completing the application form; and would have allowed judges to enter their own evidence in asylum cases, undermining impartiality. Judge Walton stayed the rule immediately following oral arguments. The Order can be read [here](#).

### • Administration Targets International Programs with Budget Rescissions

On Thursday, January 14, the outgoing Administration announced its rescissions package, with 73 proposed cuts that total \$27.4 billion. A rescission is a request to Congress to reverse funding allocated to certain programs, and freeze the programs in question for 45 days. The proposed cuts include \$1.7 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance, \$290 million from the Democracy Fund, \$7 billion to Global Health Programs in the Department of State.

## Upcoming Meetings & Events (cont'd)

### TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES FOR UCS – FEB 10

On Wednesday, February 10, the Family Focused Treatment Association will hold a webinar titled "With Open Arms: Exploring Trauma-Informed Services for Unaccompanied Migrant Children." For more information and to register, click [here](#).

## United States Issue Updates (cont'd)

### • **OIG Report on Family Separations Shows Administration Ignored Known Harms to Children and Legal Precedent**

On Thursday, January 14, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Justice released a report that detailed widespread failures in preparation, implementation, and basic competence for the Administration's so-called "Zero Tolerance" policy. "Zero Tolerance" separated children from their parents in an attempt at deterring migration. The report found that the Administration knowingly implemented separations without adequate systems in place to keep track of children, knew of and disregarded substantial information that the separations would cause trauma to children, and that key officials had "a deficient understanding of the legal requirements related to the care and custody of separated children." Read the report [here](#).

## Around the World in International Migration

### • **Indonesia Earthquake Displaces 18,000 and Counting**

Last Friday, a 6.2 magnitude [earthquake](#) hit Indonesia, causing several dozen aftershocks that were felt several miles out from its center. The earthquake caused large-scale damage to the city of Majene, including destruction of a large hospital and over three hundred homes. The quake has displaced over 18,000 already, but the United Nations expects this number to increase in coming days. Rescue efforts are underway to locate and extract those trapped in the rubble, as well as to unblock roads to ensure swift access to emergency aid.

### • **Tensions Between Sudan and Ethiopia Increase over Tigray Crisis, Border Dispute, and Dam**

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission [reported](#) last week that over 80 civilians were killed during fighting on the Ethiopia/ Sudan border. Sudan has claimed that the attack was perpetrated by Ethiopian forces, but the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has not identified the perpetrators. The escalating violence between the two countries comes as negotiations between Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt are breaking down over Ethiopia's construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Compounding tensions further, the violence in Ethiopia's Tigray region has led refugees to pour over the border into Sudan, which does not have the [resources](#) to support them. The United Nations has expressed concern, reporting that there have been military build-ups on both sides of the border.

### • **Jordan Becomes First Country to Vaccinate Refugees**

Jordan has set an [example](#) for the world by beginning to give Covid-19 vaccinations to its refugees. Jordan hosts several hundred thousand refugees, mainly from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. The Jordanian government is using a portal where anyone, including refugees, can register to get vaccinated. The country has about three million doses to start, and has already had 250,000 people register. Jordan has been commended by the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, for including refugees in its response to the pandemic since the very beginning. In reference to Jordan's progressive move, one UNHCR representative emphasized that in order to stop the spread of the virus, society's most vulnerable people must be prioritized for the vaccine.

# Whispers from Washington

## *Current Capitol Hill Considerations*

### **Immigration Advocates Debate the Best Way to Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

There is widespread debate among the immigration community about how the incoming Administration should approach immigration reform, especially given concerns that the impeachment trial of Donald Trump may slow the Senate down significantly in the Administration's first days. Some believe the best way forward is a piece-meal approach in which certain relief and a pathway to citizenship are incorporated into another coronavirus relief package. Proponents of this method believe that it is best to take advocacy opportunities as they come, and that attaching immigration reform to a widely supported relief bill will ensure that certain protections are passed. Others caution that this approach is not aggressive enough, instead advocating for a separate comprehensive immigration reform bill to address all the issues they are hoping to change. Proponents of both approaches agree that undocumented frontline workers should receive a pathway to citizenship.

## Global Gigabyte

Although Jordan allows refugees full access to its public health care system, resource strains and accessibility issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have left many refugees stranded.

In response to this issue, the Children of War Foundation has begun using smart glasses to set up video doctor's appointments for refugees. The Foundation's volunteers wear the glasses, which have cameras in them, and connect with doctors working remotely in other parts of the world.

The glasses allow doctors to assess patients by video consultation, giving them a somewhat more personalized experience. As a result, doctors have been able to "travel" around to visit patients in remote areas, covering more area and more patients than they could if they were physically on the ground.

Although doctors advise that the virtual appointments will at some point need to be followed up with in-person consultations, this technology provides the opportunity for temporary relief and the promise of filling a huge healthcare gap for some of the world's most at-risk populations.

To read more, click [here](#).

If you have any questions  
or comments, please  
contact  
the Policy Division at  
[policy@uscrimail.org](mailto:policy@uscrimail.org).

