RCUSA External Talking Points on DC National Guardsmen Shooting and Trump Administration's Policy Attacks on Our Neighbors

Populations Covered: Afghans, Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants

December 2, 2025

Short link to this document: https://tinyurl.com/HatePolicyMessageGuidance

Background: On November 26th, 2025, an Afghan evacuee who arrived in August 2021 via Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) allegedly shot two National Guard members in Washington, D.C. (one killed, one critically injured). In the days following the attack, the Trump administration used this tragedy as pretext for intensifying an already extreme anti-refugee, anti-asylum, anti-immigration policy agenda. In an alarming move toward collective punishment, we are witnessing the vilification of entire communities based on the actions of one individual.

In addition to the sweeping re-review of *all* refugee arrivals under the Biden administration (reported November 24th), these announcements included the following harmful policies:

- The halting of all asylum application decisions, as well as halting visa issuances and "immigration related requests" for Afghan nationals (USCIS director here, CBS report here).
- A call for "re-examination" of all Afghans who came to the United States during the Biden administration (Reuters report here).
- USCIS issued new guidance about use of country specific information during vetting of noncitizens from 19 countries on the travel ban (USCIS here, Press Secretary here).
- State Dept has halted issuance of visas for Afghan nationals (State Dept here).
- USCIS halted processing of "immigration related requests" for Afghan nationals (here).
- POTUS called for "review" of all asylum grants under Biden (USA today, here).

RCUSA, Member, and Partner Resources:

- ➔ Factsheets
  - ◆ Factsheet: Trump Immigration Crackdown After National Guard Shooting (CWS)
  - ◆ Key Facts Regarding the DC Shooter and U.S. Afghan Relocation Programs (AfghanEvac)
  - ◆ Asylum Updates (USCCB)
- ➔ Statements
  - ◆ Refugee Council USA (RCUSA)
  - ◆ Project Anar
  - ◆ Welcoming America
  - ◆ CWS
  - ◆ Evacuate Our Allies
  - ◆ CVT
  - ◆ AfghanEvac (here and here)
  - ◆ Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area

- ➔ Action Alerts
  - ◆ RCUSA Action Alert
  - ◆ CWS Action Alert
- ➔ Client-Facing Resources
  - ◆ USAHello Immigration Guide
    - USAHello's multilingual explainer on the refugee review
    - Arabic, Burmese, Dari, French, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, and Ukrainian
  - ◆ IRAP: What do the recent U.S. immigration changes mean for Afghans?
  - ◆ IRAP: What do recent immigration policies mean for asylum seekers and people from countries on the travel ban list?
  - ◆ IRAP Explainer on New Trump Administration Policies Impacting Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Afghan Nationals, and Immigrants from Countries Listed in the Travel Ban
  - ◆ IRAP: I live in the US and I have refugee status. What should I know?
  - ◆ IRAP: What happens when I get to the airport in the United States?
- ➔ Messaging Guide & Best Practices (Afghans for a Better Tomorrow)

MESSAGING GUIDANCE

Xenophobic rhetoric, bigotry, and discrimination have no place in American policy.

- The violent attack is an unimaginable tragedy, and we mourn with their grieving families.
- We call for justice and accountability for the alleged perpetrator.
- Hate must not beget hate, and violence must not beget violence.

The Trump administration is exploiting this tragedy to intensify an already-extreme anti-refugee, anti-asylum, anti-immigrant policy agenda.

- The barrage of policy announcements are cruel and hateful, vilifying entire communities of our neighbors. This includes policies attacking Afghans in the U.S. and abroad, asylum seekers awaiting asylum decisions, immigrants from the nineteen travel ban countries (and potentially around 30 countries), in addition to the USCIS re-review of all refugees who arrived during the Biden administration.
- Exploiting a tragic shooting to demonize entire populations does nothing for public safety. Instead it targets some of the most at-risk populations fleeing violence and persecution.
- Many of these policies were already in development by the administration; the shooting simply serves as a pretext to cast blame on Afghans, refugees, and immigrants – and to amplify anti-Afghan, anti-Muslim, anti-refugee sentiment.

Refugee resettlement and humanitarian protection strengthen U.S. national security.

- Scapegoating Afghans, refugees, or immigrants writ large for the action of one individual is not sound national security policy, and it does not bring justice to the grieving families.

- These policies hurt all Americans, our military and diplomatic interests, and global security goals, as they betray promises we make to those who stand alongside U.S. missions overseas.
- Welcoming the persecuted supports geopolitical stability, serves critical national security interests, supports democratic principles by exposing the falseness of terrorist propaganda and countering the warped division of extremists.
- We have a compelling national security interest in ensuring efficient, fair, and robust refugee and asylum processes that do not leave forcibly displaced populations trapped in hopeless circumstances.
- Afghans, refugees, and immigrants are not just "vetted" cases – they are our neighbors, known to Americans in their communities. They are our nurses, teachers, food delivery workers or rideshare drivers.
- Afghan allies are especially known to veterans who served alongside them and aid workers who spent time in Afghanistan. They are pillars in their respective communities in almost all 50 states and Washington D.C. They are heroes who sacrificed in order to seek safety here in the U.S.

Twisting U.S. policy to cast blame on the world's most at-risk populations is a massive waste of limited resources.

- The U.S. government subjects all refugees and Afghan allies to every layer of security vetting available — biometric, biographic, intelligence-community, DHS, DoD, FBI, and repeated, years-long continuous screening.
- A tragic, isolated act by one individual does not mean there was a systemic, vetting breakdown, or a flaw in the security processes that protect the United States.
- It is particularly shocking to see your administration call for such sweeping suspensions in refugee, asylum, and immigration programs – while at the same time employing a highly unusual and rapid process to adjudicate and resettle Afrikaners through the very same refugee program. Many of these Afrikaners have been processed and approved in a fraction of the time it took for those who are now subject to this re-review.

By every metric, newcomers enrich and benefit American communities and make our country stronger – economically, culturally, and spiritually.

- They are small business owners, tax contributors, and job creators.
- The data is unequivocal at the local, federal, and even international level. For example, an HHS report found that over a fifteen year period, refugees and asylees brought in over 124 billion in fiscal revenues than they cost (the survey replicated a Trump administration report with a similar result).
- The refugee program in particular has resettled 3.5 million refugees, many of whom have gone on to be entrepreneurs, medical professionals, teachers, and political leaders.

BEST PRACTICES

- Center the voices of impacted Afghans, refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and community organizations – *when safe to do so*. If you are talking to reporters, encourage them to speak to us.

- If you are telling the story of those impacted, do so with informed consent or anonymize their identity.
    - Here's an example: AFBT co-director Halema Wali talks on BBC about how her family was directly impacted by Trump's refugee ban, explains policy and makes an emotional connection. [Link]
- Use caution when discussing security vetting to avoid assuming newcomers are inherent security risks. Pivot to positive framing that reminds us that newcomers are known neighbors and pillars in our communities.