

RCUSA Funding Needs for Refugee Support and Humanitarian Assistance FY 2027 Department of State Accounts

Since 1812, the United States has invested in lifesaving humanitarian assistance and sustainable solutions for displaced people in accordance with strategic interests and national values. As of 2025, [more than 117 million people](#) around the world have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to persecution, conflict, war, and violence. Refugees and other forcibly displaced people often lack access to basic necessities, including healthy food, clean water, safe shelter, education, healthcare, and legal protections. Forcibly displaced people, particularly women, and children, also face evidenced risks to their safety, including sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. The presence of large populations of refugees places stress on host countries and regions. U.S. assistance saves lives, stabilizes security threats, and relieves pressures that drive further displacement and human suffering.

Cuts to Humanitarian Assistance and Misuse of Appropriated Funds: Despite commitments to the contrary, the administration has ended vital programs providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance, and refused or delayed disbursement of nearly \$4 billion in congressionally-appropriated foreign-aid funding in FY 2025. Non-government and inter-governmental implementing partners have significantly scaled back their capacity and lost technical expertise. UNHCR reports the brutal funding cuts have endangered [millions of lives](#), and risks of trafficking and child labor have increased dramatically. Funding for accounts like the “Migration and Refugee Assistance” account and the “Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance” account [have been repurposed](#) to support the administration’s stated agenda of deportation, refoulement, and repatriation – back to persecution or risks of harm in third countries where they have no ties.

State of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and Refugee Protection: The administration’s indefinite refugee ban remains in place. Few refugees are being processed or resettled outside of white Afrikaners, who continue to be the only ones granted exceptions to the ban. The refugee admissions ceiling for this fiscal year was initially set at 7,500, the lowest in the history of the program. On May 21st, an emergency presidential determination raised the FY26 refugee ceiling by 10,000 slots, even more explicitly allocated exclusively to Afrikaners from South Africa. Other pathways for humanitarian entrants are also halted. The ongoing (and expanded) travel ban has halted visa issuance to Afghan SIVs – even those who have received Chief of Mission approval. Despite Congress authorizing the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) through 2027 through the FY 2025 NDAA, the Office has been effectively dismantled, relocations have been terminated, and the last remaining CARE Platform is being discontinued. The State Department’s Reception & Placement (R&P) support provided to resettled refugees and SIVs has ended, and has been replaced by the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s [Program for Initial Resettlement](#) (PIR). Meanwhile, the Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration has restructured, dedicating a large part of its capacity and resources to a new objective focused on voluntary repatriations and returns.

Refugee Integration & Success Programs	FY 2026 Enacted Level	FY 2027 President’s Budget Request	FY 2027 RCUSA Request
Migration and Refugee Assistance	(combined into IHA)	-	\$2,400,000,000
International Disaster Assistance	(combined into IHA)	-	\$3,000,000,000
International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) Total	\$5,400,000,000	\$5,400,000,000	\$5,400,000,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000

Accompanying Bill and Explanatory Report Language:

International Humanitarian Assistance Account:

Justification: *RCUSA urges the Committee to build on guardrails on the proper use of assistance funds established in FY 2026 appropriations bill, including by preventing funds from being used for deportations, refoulement, and repatriations and ensuring a minimum amount of funds is dedicated to subsections of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act that ensure support for refugees and contributions to IOM, UNHCR, and other relevant international organizations – as well as to maintain and stabilize capacity among national resettlement agencies and refugee-serving organizations.*

Bill Text: For necessary expenses to enable the Secretary of State to carry out the provisions of section 491 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for international disaster relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction assistance; section 2(a) and (b) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (22 U.S.C. 2601), and other activities that assist in the protection and support of refugees and migrants; salaries and expenses of personnel and dependents as authorized by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.); allowances as authorized by sections 5921 through 5925 of Title 5, United States Code; purchase and hire of passenger motor vehicles; and services as authorized by section 3109 of Title 5, United States Code, \$5,400,000,000 to remain available until expended. That of the funds appropriated under this paragraph, not less than \$2,400,000,000 shall be made available to carry out section 2(a) and (b) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (22 U.S.C. 2601). Provided further, that not later than 30 day safer the date of enactment of this Act and at the start of each quarter thereafter until September 30, 2027, the Secretary of State shall submit a spend plan to the Committees on Appropriations detailing the planned use of funds, obligations, and disbursements as described under this heading in the explanatory statement. Provided further, that funds made available under this paragraph may not be used to facilitate the return of migrants from the United States to their country of origin. Provided further, that funds made available under this paragraph shall be made available to organizations providing services pursuant to 8 U.S.C. section 1522 to maintain existing capacity.

Explanatory Report Language: The Committee affirms the primary purpose of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (Pub. L. 87-510), and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in administering such programs, to respond to refugee crises overseas and process and admit the most at-risk refugees to the United States.

Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program and the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts:

Justification: *This request supports providing 20,000 visas for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. Congress must continue our support for the Afghan SIV program so that the executive branch is able to issue visas to Afghans who face imminent threats from the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other hostile groups because of their service to the United States. [Section 602(b)(3)(F) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) in the matter preceding clause (i) by striking “50,500” and inserting “70,500”.]*

Bill Text: Section 602(b)(3)(F) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

- (1) in the matter preceding clause (i), in the first sentence, by striking “50,500” and inserting “70,500”; and
- (2) in clause (ii), by striking “December 31, 2025” and inserting “December 31, 2029”

Explanatory Report Language: The Committee commends the Department of State’s thorough work vetting and relocating eligible wartime allies through Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) for Afghans Who Were Employed by/on Behalf of the U.S. Government (the Afghan SIV program). This national security program secures Afghan allies who put their lives at risk in service to American values and the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. The Committee is concerned that the program, including vetting in the Chief of Mission (COM) and final reviews, has been suspended without communication to Congress on the criteria for reopening the program’s full operations. Therefore, the Committee requests that the Department of State, in consultation with the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, report to Congress within 90 days of enactment of Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2027 presenting the specific steps the agency will take to restore the Afghan SIV program’s operations including vetting, COM decisions, and SIV issuance.

The Committee commends the Department of State’s work to uphold our commitment to those patriotic Afghan allies who risked their lives fighting for freedom from the Taliban. The Department’s Office of the Coordinator on Afghan Relocation Efforts (SCA-CARE) has made heroic strides to move these allies out of Taliban control. Given Congress’ action to authorize the CARE office through 2027, the Committee is concerned that the CARE office and efforts have been effectively dismantled despite congressional intent in the FY 2025 NDAA. The Committee recommends that the Department maintain operational staffing levels at SCA-CARE to facilitate the continued vetting and safe relocation of eligible Afghan allies, including on the casework and platform teams. The Committee requests that the Department of State, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, report to the Committees on Appropriations within 180 days of enactment of Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2027 presenting the specific steps the agency will take to maintain operational staffing levels in the SCA-CARE office through Calendar Year 2027.

Lautenberg Amendment:

***Justification:** The Lautenberg Amendment has allowed tens of thousands of religious minorities from Iran and the former Soviet Union countries, individuals who have experienced discrimination and/or persecution due to their faith, to find safety in the United States. Religious liberty— the freedom to practice one’s faith— is a core American value and should belong to all people. With growing numbers of individuals persecuted on the basis of their beliefs around the world, it is critical to continue reauthorizing the Lautenberg Amendment, as it must be, and has been, done every year.*

However, at the end of 2026, the [administration shuttered](#) the Resettlement Support Center (RSC) in Austria that processed the Iranian caseload, essentially shutting down the pathway even though the program was reauthorized and extended by Congress. This leaves more than 14,000 people in the Iranian Lautenberg pipeline stranded. Congress could and should codify its support of international religious liberty with a broader, more permanent authority to designate certain persecuted populations as eligible for resettlement.

Bill Text: CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY. The Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1990 (Public Law 101–167) is amended— (A) in section 599D (8 U.S.C. 1157 note)— (i) in subsection (b)(3), by striking “and 2026” and inserting “2026, and 2027”; and (ii) in subsection (e), by striking “2026” each place it appears and inserting “2027”; and (B) in section 599E(b)(2) (8 U.S.C. 1255 note), by striking “2026” and inserting “2027”.

Explanatory Report language: In FY 2026, Congress re-authorized the Lautenberg-Specter Program to provide resettlement opportunities for persecuted religious minorities in the former Soviet Union and Iran who have sponsors in the United States. However, the Committee is concerned by the closure of the

Refugee Support Center in Vienna that was the only processing site for religious minorities from Iran. The Committee understands that more than 14,000 eligible religious minorities in Iran with sponsors in the United States remain in the pipeline. Within 90 days of the date of enactment and quarterly thereafter, the Department of State shall brief the Committee on its implementation of the Lautenberg-Specter program, including its efforts to continue processing of eligible religious minorities from Iran, especially in light of the growing threats to these communities given the violence and instability in Iran.

Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Account:

***Justification:** The ERMA account was established as a flexible, draw-down account to allow administrations to respond rapidly to emerging refugee crises. The Trump administration has proposed using the account to add to the tens of billions of dollars already appropriated to facilitate its deportation and repatriation agenda. RCUSA urges the Committee to ensure the account is used for its intended purpose to support refugees and migrants fleeing emergent crises.*

Bill Text: For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of section 2(c) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (22 U.S.C. 2601 (c)), \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, that amounts made available under this paragraph may not be used to facilitate the return of migrants from the United States to their country of origin.

Explanatory Report Language: The Committee affirms the primary purpose of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (Pub. L. 87-510), and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in administering such programs, to respond to refugee crises overseas and process and admit the most at-risk refugees to the United States.

Additional Explanatory Report Language:

U.S. Refugee Admissions Program: The Committee reaffirms that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is an important element of both refugee protection and durable solutions when repatriation and local integration are not possible. A robust and efficient refugee admissions program is further essential in the promotion of U.S. foreign policy priorities, including in the achievement of the stability, economic prosperity, and sustainable peace of regions and countries of strategic interest. The Committee notes with concern the ongoing suspension of USRAP and its impact on approved and pending refugee applicants worldwide. The Committee provides funding under this Act to support the prompt and orderly resumption of refugee processing, and travel through international organizations and nongovernmental partners. The Committee expects the Department of State, in consultation with the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, to take all necessary steps to resume full USRAP operations and prioritize resettlement of refugee populations who face particular or significant humanitarian concern, including unaccompanied refugee minors, certain Afghan refugees, pending family reunification cases, and refugees from countries with the largest number of approved refugee cases already in the refugee pipeline.

The Committee notes that over 100,000 refugees have been approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and received an I-590 stamp as of January 20, 2025. Countries of origin with over 5,000 approved refugee cases in the processing pipeline as of January 20, 2025 include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Burma, Syria, and Somalia.

Not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall provide a briefing to the Committees on Appropriation detailing: (1) the number of approved refugee cases by nationality and

processing stage; (2) the status of security and medical clearances and travel arrangements; (3) steps taken to prioritize vulnerable populations and pending family reunification cases.

The Committee affirms P.L.96-212 section 101(b) and nondiscriminatory framework rooted in its legislative history.

The Committee further affirms that within the context of 8 U.S.C. section 1159(a)'s specific purpose, the phrase "return or be returned to custody" does not permit the arrest and detention of unadjusted refugees that have not been charged with any ground of removability (see P.L. 96-212 section 209).

Exemption Process: The Committee affirms the importance of resettlement for those most at risk, those waiting in the USRAP pipeline for several years, and those waiting family reunification. Pending the full resumption of USRAP operations, the Committee expects the Department of State, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, to implement a transparent, expedient, case-by-case exemption process under the ongoing suspension for approved refugee applicants facing urgent humanitarian circumstances. The Committee further expects the Department to provide a mechanism for Members of Congress to elevate specific cases for review and to respond in a timely manner regarding the disposition of such cases.

Prohibition on Use of Funds for Deportations and Repatriations: The Committee reaffirms the primary purpose of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (Pub. L. 87-510), and the mission of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration is to provide protection, life-saving assistance, and durable solutions for persecuted and uprooted people around the world. None of the funds appropriated under this Act for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration may be used to support or facilitate forced, nonvoluntary repatriations, removals, or deportations. The Committee directs the Department of State to provide a report to the Committees on Appropriations not later than 90 days after enactment of this act detailing whether and to what extent funds appropriated under the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Account, the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account, or the International Humanitarian Assistance Account in Fiscal Years 2023 through 2026 have been used to facilitate repatriations, deportations, or returns of migrants from the United States to their country of origin or a third country. Such report shall include:

- The legal authority cited for any use of such funds
- The total amount obligated or expended
- The implementing partners involved
- The number and nationality of individuals impacted
- The criteria used to decide to which country each individual would be removed
- The manner in which the U.S. government informed the individuals' U.S. ties or U.S.-based family members