



March 27, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Faith Letter for Ukraine, The Refugee Crisis

Dear Sirs,

I join with All Saints Church and the many faith organizations and faith groups across traditions that are dedicated to upholding the rights of all people seeking protection in urging you to robustly respond to the protection needs of displaced and at-risk populations as the conflict in Ukraine escalates. We lament the suffering related to mass displacement and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and acknowledge the pain of third country nationals in Ukraine, of Ukrainians, as well as that of Ukrainians and Ukrainian Americans here in the U.S. who fear for their loved ones overseas. Our prayers are with everyone impacted by this conflict, their loved ones, and all who aid in their protection.

We are deeply concerned over the humanitarian impact of this conflict on both the people of Ukraine and those refugees and asylum seekers who have sought safety there. The escalation of conflict in Ukraine has triggered an immediate and steep rise in humanitarian needs as essential supplies and services are disrupted and civilians flee. As of March 10th, the number of refugee arrivals from Ukraine since February 24th surpassed 3 million. UNHCR has indicated that the situation looks set to become Europe's largest refugee crisis this century and that 12 million people inside Ukraine will also need humanitarian assistance.

We commend your March 3rd announcement designating Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and your request to supplement our response to the humanitarian crisis. We are heartened to see the passage of the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus funding package that includes over \$4.5 billion in emergency appropriations for humanitarian efforts overseas. However, we urge you to continue to robustly respond to the protection needs of displaced and at-risk populations. Every single person fleeing conflict has the right to seek safety in other countries and is entitled to protection without discrimination. Now is a time to display strong, moral leadership to stand with and protect vulnerable and displaced Ukrainians and at-risk populations, including displaced individuals of Black and African-descent denied equitable access to protection, stateless people, among others.



We urge you to heed indications of what lies ahead – a profound humanitarian crisis with millions of displaced individuals inside and fleeing Ukraine who need relief and protection. For this reason, we urge you to:

1. Do everything in your power to see that the United States continues to invest in humanitarian and displacement assistance and to support UNHCR’s emergency response efforts to ensure people have access to shelter, food, medicine, and other forms of humanitarian aid in Ukraine and neighboring countries;
2. Ensure swift processing of pending refugee applications for Ukrainians, and non-Ukrainians who had been in Ukraine, at all potential processing locations and especially in Ukraine’s neighboring countries;
3. Facilitate family reunification processing to reunite loved ones, such as by processing Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians who had been displaced in Ukraine with pending I-130 family petitions through the U.S. resettlement program;
4. Support non-governmental organizations in Ukraine and neighboring countries to assist internally displaced individuals or individuals seeking asylum in Ukraine and other host countries;
5. Recognize unique barriers encountered by stateless persons displaced in and fleeing Ukraine and better identify and protect such individuals; and
6. Immediately designate Special Student Relief (SSR) to protect Ukrainian students in the United States.

We are guided by our faith values to honor the dignity of each person, to welcome the stranger, and to recognize the importance of family unity. Our faith calls us to take action in solidarity with those fleeing violence, injustice, and disaster. As you respond to the crisis in Ukraine, we urge you to grant the same urgency and attention to all people seeking safety, regardless of their place of birth, race, creed, ethnicity, or sexual orientation and gender identity. We urge you to build and support a robust system through which the world’s most vulnerable, including individuals and families from Cameroon, Mauritania, Ethiopia, and other African and majority Black countries, as well as Afghanistan, can access pathways to safety and are welcomed with dignity.

We are called by our sacred texts to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. Our places of worship have historically played key roles in assisting refugees for rapid and effective integration into U.S. communities. Our places of worship and faith communities stand ready to welcome all in need of refuge.

Sincerely,

(Sign & Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_