

HIAS WELCOMES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PLAN FOR IMMEDIATE IMMIGRATION REFORM

HIAS, the global migration agency of the American Jewish community, applauds President Obama for his critically important speech today in Las Vegas. The President stated that “most Americans agree that it’s time to fix the system that’s been broken for way too long.” HIAS is appreciative that his plan includes dealing with the 11 million individuals who are here illegally with an earned pathway to citizenship and modernizing our legal immigration system so that families do not have to wait years to be united.

The [fact sheet](#) released by the White House following President Obama’s address highlights the need to better protect “those fleeing persecution by eliminating the existing limitations that prevent qualified individuals from applying for asylum.” It also emphasizes the importance of encouraging integration by promoting “earned citizenship and efforts to integrate immigrants into their new American communities linguistically, civically, and economically.”

HIAS President and CEO (Interim) Mark Hetfield stated: “We are thrilled that the President acknowledges that comprehensive immigration reform is an opportunity to fix a broken system that adversely affects immigrants in the U.S., including refugees and asylum seekers. Immigration laws enacted in 1996, intended to crack down on undocumented migration, also included all kinds of artificial, technical barriers that deny asylum to persecuted people who have already fled to the United States. Now is the time to fix the laws that have undermined America’s leadership in providing safe haven to the persecuted.

“With this announcement from President Obama—and a similarly positive bipartisan announcement yesterday on a Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform—we in the immigration and refugee community are more encouraged than we have been in years that our leaders will finally create a just system for immigrants and refugees.”