March 28, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th St, SW
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken,

As 562 faith leaders and 138 faith organizations across traditions dedicated to upholding the rights of all people seeking protection, we write to urge 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,

Faith Organizations
ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
African American Ministers In Action
All Saints' Church, Palo Alto, CA
Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Auburn Seminary
Benedictine sisters
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
Bethany House of Hospitality
Bethel UCC
Carmelites Vedruna CIJPIC
Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ
Catholic Rural Ministry
Catholic Charities Bureau, Inc.
Catholic Charities of Diocese of St. Augustine
Chizuk Amuno Congregation and Schools
Christ Church UCC
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church Council of Greater Seattle
Church Women United in New York State
Collegiate Church of New York
Congregation Kol Ami
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Dominican Family
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Dranesville Church of the Brethren
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles - Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service (IRIS)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faith Action Network
Faith in Public Life
Felician Sisters of North America
Fellowship Southwest
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson, AZ
First Congregational Church, San Jose
First Congregational Church, Sonoma
First Congregational UCC
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn
Franciscan Peace Center
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Franciscans for Justice
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
Guadalupe Presbyterian Church (USA),
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Holy Union Sisters US Province
Hope Border Institute
IFC
InterFaith Council of the Wabash Valley
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
JAMAAT -- Jews and Muslims and Allies Acting Together
Jesuit Refugee Service
Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Long Island Immigration Clinic, Sisters of St. Joseph
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA)
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Medical Mission Sisters
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
New York Justice for Our Neighbors, Inc.
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Orient Congregational Church
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Pacific School of Religion
Painesville Church of the Brethren
Pax Christi Lansing
Peace and Justice Team Congregation of Saint Joseph
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Precious Blood Missionaries - Kansas City Province
Presbytery of the Pacific, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presentation Sisters San Francisco
Provincial Clerics of St. Viator
Raj Khalsa Gurdwara
Rime Buddhist Center
Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ - Utah
Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ - Wyoming
Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ - Colorado
Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ/ North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ/NACCE
Saint Patrick Church - Kankakee
Santa Cruz Welcoming Network
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Providence
Sisters of St Joseph of Rochester
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt
Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity
Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Sisters of the Holy Cross
Sisters of the Holy Family
Sisters of the Holy Names. of Jesus and Mary, U.S, Ontario Province
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Presentation of the B. V. Mary
Society of Helpers
Sojourners
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc (SAFEST)
Southern Christian Coalition
St Camillus/Pax Christi Los Angeles
St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Laramie
St. Philip the Apostle Episcopal Church
St.Anthony’s Social justice Ministry
Temple Sinai of Stamford
Teresian Association
Teresian Institute if Florida
Texas Impact
The Episcopal Church
The Freedom BLOC
The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
Truah
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
Unity Unlimited, Inc
Welcome the Stranger, Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ
Wenatchee, Brethren Baptist Church
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, JPIC Office
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Women's Alliance For Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Faith Leaders and People of Faith

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Brian Frederick - Gray, Disciples Peace Fellowship
Brian McLaren
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Jill Haberman, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
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Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ
LaDonna Manternach, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Laura Kigwega James, The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church
Leslie Watson Wilson, African American Ministers In Action
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Mary Beth Klingel, Sisters of Providence
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Michael Zizzi, United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
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Michael Zoosman, L’chaim! Jews Against the Death Penalty
Noella Poinsette, Sisters of St. Francis (Oldenburg)
Ruth Battaglia, Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
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Traci Blackmon, United Church of Christ
Vivian Zoller, SSND

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Sister Mary Black, CSJ
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Sandra Sypherd, Grace United Methodist Church

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Sandra Sypherd, Grace United Methodist Church

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