

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 503

Recognizing June 20, 2016, as “World Refugee Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 20, 2016

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. REED, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Recognizing June 20, 2016, as “World Refugee Day”.

Whereas World Refugee Day is a global day to acknowledge the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children who are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, and persecution;

Whereas according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this preamble as “UNHCR”)—

(1) there are more than 65,300,000 displaced people worldwide, the highest levels ever recorded, including almost 21,300,000 refugees, 40,800,000 internally displaced people, and 3,200,000 people seeking asylum;

(2) children account for 51 percent of the refugee population in the world, millions of whom are unable to access basic services including education;

(3) nearly 4,800,000 refugees have fled Syria since the start of the Syrian conflict and more than 6,600,000 people are internally displaced within Syria;

(4) since January 2014, more than 3,300,000 Iraqis fleeing violence have been internally displaced, and 277,000 refugees have fled to neighboring countries;

(5) ongoing conflict, violence, and persecution have resulted in the displacement of millions across South Sudan, Ukraine, Colombia, and the Central African Republic;

(6) since April 2015, sporadic outbursts of violence in Burundi have prompted more than 265,000 Burundians to flee to the neighboring countries of Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(7) violent insurgent attacks in Nigeria have forced 220,000 people to flee to the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, and have internally displaced nearly 2,200,000 people;

(8) between January and June of 2016, more than 206,000 refugees and migrants have crossed the Mediterranean Sea attempting to reach Europe and at least 2,800 women, men, and children have died during such crossings or are missing after such attempts; and

(9) approximately 95,000 women, men, and children, including many persecuted Rohingya refugees from Burma, have departed on the boats of smugglers in the Bay of Bengal since 2014, more than 1,100 of whom have died at sea;

Whereas refugees who are women and girls are often at a greater risk of sexual violence and exploitation, forced or early marriage, human trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence;

Whereas the United States is the largest donor to UNHCR and provides critical resources and support to international and nongovernmental organizations working with refugees around the world; and

Whereas since 1975, the United States has welcomed more than 3,000,000 refugees who are resettled in communities across the country: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) reaffirms the commitment of the United
3 States to promote the safety, health, and well-being
4 of the millions of refugees, including the education
5 of refugee children and displaced persons who flee
6 war, persecution, or torture in search of peace, hope,
7 and freedom;

8 (2) calls upon the United States Government—

9 (A) to continue its international leadership
10 role in response to those who have been dis-
11 placed, including the most vulnerable popu-
12 lations who may endure sexual violence, human
13 trafficking, forced conscription, persecution, or
14 exploitation;

15 (B) to find solutions to existing conflicts
16 and prevent new conflicts from beginning;

1 (C) to provide humanitarian and develop-
2 ment support to countries around the world
3 that are hosting millions of refugees to alleviate
4 social and economic strains placed on host com-
5 munities; and

6 (D) to encourage the international commu-
7 nity to increase resources to address current
8 and projected refugee crises;

9 (3) commends those who have risked their lives
10 working individually and for nongovernmental orga-
11 nizations and international agencies such as
12 UNHCR who have provided life-saving assistance
13 and helped protect those displaced by conflict
14 around the world; and

15 (4) reiterates the strong commitment of the
16 United States to protect and assist millions of refu-
17 gees and other forcibly uprooted persons worldwide,
18 consistent with the values of the United States and
19 with the interests of national security.

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