



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

DHS Announces Additional, Enhanced Security Procedures for Refugees Seeking Resettlement in the United States

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New Risk-Based Measures Will Bolster Public Safety and National Security

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen announced additional security enhancements and recommendations to strengthen the integrity of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. These new measures are part of the administration’s ongoing efforts to intensify screening and vetting for all persons seeking to travel to the United States, and they are designed to keep nefarious and fraudulent actors from exploiting the refugee program to enter the United States.

The changes are the result of a 90-day review in which the Secretary was required to determine whether to modify or terminate any actions taken to address the security risks posed by refugee admissions. During those 90 days, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with other departments and agencies, conducted a review to determine what additional safeguards, if any, are necessary to ensure that the admission of nationals from 11 high-risk countries does not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States.

“It’s critically important that we know who is entering the United States,” said Secretary Nielsen. “These additional security measures will make it harder for bad actors to exploit our refugee program, and they will ensure we take a more risk-based approach to protecting the homeland. The United States must continue to fulfill its obligation to the global community to assist those facing persecution and do so in a manner that addresses the security of the American people. ”

The enhancements and security recommendations include:

- Additional screening for certain nationals of high-risk countries.
- Administering the USRAP in a more risk-based manner when considering the overall refugee admissions ceiling, regional allocations, and the groups of applicants considered for resettlement.
- A periodic review and update of the refugee high-risk country list and selection criteria.

The Department of Homeland Security previously [announced](https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/10/24/improved-security-procedures-refugees-entering-united-states) (<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/10/24/improved-security-procedures-refugees-entering-united-states>) the application of enhanced vetting measures for refugee applicants in October 2017, in response to Executive Order (EO) 13780.

On October 24, 2017, the President issued EO 13815, *Resuming the United States Refugee Admissions Program With Enhanced Vetting Capabilities*, in which he authorized the general resumption of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The resumption followed a 120-day pause during which enhanced vetting measures were identified and subsequently implemented to improve the security of the program. Section 3 of EO 13815 required that within 90 days the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, determine whether to modify or terminate any actions taken to address the security risks posed by refugee admissions, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

DHS will co-administer the USRAP with the Department of State in a manner consistent with these determinations and its statutory authorities as well as applicable court orders.

Actions will be undertaken consistent with the nationwide injunction issued by the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington. In addition, any commitments made by the United States to implement the injunction will be honored.

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Topics: [DHS Enterprise \(/topics/dhs-enterprise\)](https://www.dhs.gov/topics/dhs-enterprise), [Homeland Security Enterprise \(/topics/homeland-security-enterprise\)](https://www.dhs.gov/topics/homeland-security-enterprise)

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