



Refugees
International

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Global Voices for Rights and Refuge

Refugees International advocates for lifesaving assistance, human rights, and protection for displaced people and promotes solutions to displacement crises.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIRS AND PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

We are proud to present our 2023 Annual Report. This year marks an important new chapter for Refugees International, with new president Jeremy Konyndyk at the helm, and expanding efforts across the organization to directly involve displaced people as partners in our global advocacy.

In April, the organization was proud to launch our first-ever cohort of Refugee Fellows. The Fellows program aims to deepen the expertise of refugee leaders in global advocacy while shaping and participating in Refugees International's advocacy efforts. Our first class of six fellows transformed the organization's work this year in myriad ways, and we look forward to welcoming a second cohort to our team in the year ahead.

And in June, Refugees International launched a new brand identity and website—the organization's first-ever brand refresh in its more than 40 year history. The new brand reflects our vision for the kind of organization that we aspire to be. It is rooted in ideals of our shared humanity and deliberately builds a platform with leaders and communities experiencing displacement.

The following report shows just a small snapshot of what we were able to achieve together in 2023—as crises proliferated and the number of displaced people worldwide continued to rise. The successes outlined in this report are bright spots amidst a challenging environment for advocacy for displaced people—and offer our team inspiration for the year ahead.

Because Refugees International does not take any government or UN funding in order to ensure our independence, we depend on supporters like you to power this work. We are so grateful, and we hope this report offers some inspiration for what is possible when we come together to build a more welcoming world.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Konyndyk
President



Maureen White
Board Co-Chair



Jeffrey Tindell
Board Co-Chair

OUR MISSION

Refugees International is dedicated to creating a **more welcoming world for people seeking refuge.**

Today, an unprecedented number of people globally have been forced to flee conflict, crisis, and climate impacts at home. As these challenges increasingly collide, international systems designed to protect and aid people in need have not kept up, aid funding is falling short, and the rise of exclusionary politics have eroded access to refuge. We know that a better world is possible. Refugees International is here to fight for rights and refuge for all.

Our Approach

Our experts work with partners around the world to investigate the challenges displaced people face, develop policy solutions, mobilize action, and hold the powerful to account.

Refugees International believes that people experiencing displacement must be at the center of the movement to advance solutions. We are dedicated to expanding the space for refugee and local leadership in our organization, in the public square, and in the halls of power.

To ensure the independence and credibility of our work, Refugees International does not accept government or UN funding. Our critical role helps us advance accountability and allows us to speak freely when others sometimes cannot.

Refugees International was started in 1979 as a citizens' movement to defend the rights of people fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Since then, we have expanded to become a globally focused organization, advocating wherever rights and refuge are at risk.



Portrait of a woman on Lesbos Island. Photo by Nicolas Economou/NurPhoto via Getty Images.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK IN 2023

Refugees International worked tirelessly throughout 2023 to advocate for rights and refuge for all. Here are just some of the highlights from our work over the year.

The Launch of the Refugee Fellows Program

In April 2023, Refugees International was proud to welcome its first-ever cohort of six refugee fellows from around the world who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership qualities and capabilities in global advocacy and have lived experience of forced displacement.

Refugees International at the Global Refugee Forum

Refugees International engaged at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2023 to bring refugee voices to the center of global decision making.

Localization Aid: Ukraine

In 2023, Refugees International helped drive tangible progress on localization of humanitarian aid in Ukraine and unlocked tens of millions of dollars for local partners with

the formation of the Ukraine Humanitarian Alliance, a new network of major Ukrainian NGOs that launched in September.

Refugees International's advocacy and convening has led to a significant increase in local funding via the UN country-based pooled fund (\$35 million in the latest allocation), and new direct donor grants to several major Ukrainian NGOs. This builds on Refugees International's overall advocacy on localizing the humanitarian sector.

Elevating Refugees at the UN General Assembly

Refugees International worked this year to bring refugee leaders to the table at major global gatherings. During the UN General Assembly high-level week, we co-hosted a provocative event highlighting the imperative of refugee leadership and creative solutions for the localization of humanitarian aid.



Left: Refugees International fellow Alaa El-Gaile speaks at a reception on “Refugee Political Participation, Representation, and Agency,” at the Impact Hub in Geneva during the Global Refugee Forum, 2023.

Below: Alongside R-Seat and The New Humanitarian, Refugees International cohosted a sideline event at the United Nations General Assembly called “Shifting Power: Examining the Agenda for Advancing Refugee Leadership and Localization.”

Director for Refugee Leadership and Partnerships Hourie Tafech spoke in the first panel on the importance of uplifting refugees in global governance.

Photos by Refugees International.





Defending the Rights of Rohingya Refugees in India

In early 2023, Refugees International collaborated with a New Delhi-based organization, The Azadi Project, to co-produce a report and short documentary film on the mistreatment and arbitrary detention of Rohingya refugees in India. This partnership led to an opportunity to challenge these arbitrary detentions before the Indian Supreme Court; the legal challenge is now pending before the Court.

Parole for Haitians Seeking Safety

In January 2023, in response to persistent behind-the-scenes engagement and advocacy by Refugees International and the publication of a major report on U.S. parole policy, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) created a new humanitarian parole program for Haitians (modeled on a program created for Ukrainians) that allowed over 100,000 Haitians to gain temporary protection in the United States in 2023. In August, DHS announced improvements to the Haiti and Cuba family unification programs in line with changes Refugees International recommended. Refugees International has also been closely involved in supporting the administration's expansion of parole programs against legal challenges.

Top: Daniel P. Sullivan (middle), Director for Africa, Asia, and the Middle East at Refugees International, and Priyali Sur (right), Director of The Azadi Project, speak to a Rohingya refugee in India as part of a series of interviews for their joint report [Shadow of Refuge: Rohingya Refugees in India](#). Photo by The Azadi Project.

Bottom: Jocelyn Perry, Senior Advocate and Program Manager of the Climate Displacement Program, speaks at a panel at COP28. Photo by Refugees International.

Fighting Deportations of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

After receiving reports of refoulement of Syrian refugees by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in April, Refugees International issued a strong statement condemning the practice and calling on the United States to re-examine its security aid to the Lebanese military in light of these violations of international law. Our statement, coupled with private advocacy, prompted the United States to raise concerns with the LAF, which then halted this round of deportations.

Refugees International at COP and Advocacy for Climate Displaced People

Our reporting on inclusion of displaced populations in National Adaptation Planning informed COP28 negotiations and is shaping national policy at the country level, including in Uganda and Somalia. And at COP28, our team—including displaced leaders—engaged extensively to ensure that displaced populations were recognized in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's Global Stocktake.

Refugees International was also instrumental in supporting the reintroduction of the Climate Displaced Persons Act in the U.S. Congress, and we supported the development of an amicus brief to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) to inform the Court's upcoming Advisory Opinion regarding States' human rights obligations in the context of the unfolding climate emergency.



Advocating for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

In July 2023, Refugees International published a major report on the United States' and Pakistan's failure to provide promised resettlement and protection for Afghan leaders and activists who are stranded without status in Pakistan. This helped drive renewed media and Congressional attention to the issue and led to close follow-up engagement between Refugees International experts and U.S. government personnel working to revive the resettlement operation.

In late August, the United States announced plans to restart the resettlement program, aligned closely with recommendations in Refugees International's report. Unfortunately, the Pakistani government enacted a new policy in the fall to deport all unregistered Afghans back to Afghanistan. Refugees International sprang into action to push back on these widespread forced returns and worked with the U.S. government to ensure Afghan refugees who were in the resettlement process received letters to protect them from deportation.

Speaking out on the Crisis in Sudan

Since the war in Sudan broke out in April 2023, Refugees International has led the charge calling for increased action from the U.S. government to confront the crisis and put an end to atrocities. Our staff also traveled to Sudan's borders with South Sudan, Egypt, and Chad to understand the needs of people fleeing the brutal conflict and set out an agenda for humanitarian action. In December 2023, the U.S. government made an atrocity determination about the nature of the crimes in Sudan—an important step toward accountability that Refugees International had called for.



Above: Fanta Harun, a Sudanese refugee. She has been living in Farchana refugee camp for almost 20 years, having fled the Darfur genocide that began in 2003. In November 2023, Refugees International traveled to Chad and spoke with newly arrived refugees from Darfur and refugees living for several years in the camps in eastern Chad. Photo by Refugees International.

Building the National Call to #LetAsylumSeekers Work

When people seeking asylum come to the United States, they want to work, earn a living, and support themselves and their families as they rebuild their lives. But a 180-day waiting period to gain work authorization and other hurdles mean that most asylum seekers cannot legally work for six months or more. This has devastating effects on people seeking safety, their communities, and the economy overall.

Refugees International joined more than 50 partners around the country to launch the #LetAsylumSeekersWork campaign. The campaign highlights the need for urgent Congressional action for a common-sense solution and builds a strong bipartisan and diverse tent of support from state and local elected officials, faith leaders, business leaders, affected community members, and others.



Celebrating Refugee Contributions

Refugees International's 2023 Advocacy Awards dinner celebrated the rich contributions refugees and forcibly displaced people make when they can rebuild their lives in welcoming communities. 2023 McCall-Pierpaoli Humanitarian Award honoree Ke Huy Quan and 2023 Richard C. Holbrooke Leadership Award winner South Sudan Women United spoke about the tireless efforts of refugee leaders and civil society activists who dedicate themselves to humanitarian causes.



Top Right: 2023 McCall-Pierpaoli Humanitarian Award honoree Ke Huy Quan delivers a powerful acceptance speech at our Advocacy Awards Dinner in New York. Photo by Greg Morris.

Bottom Right: Nyakan J. Gile, Co-Founder and Executive Director of South Sudan Women United, at the Advocacy Awards. She accepted the Richard C. Holbrooke award on behalf of her organization. Photo by Greg Morris.

Update from the Refugee Advocacy Lab

The Refugee Advocacy Lab is an initiative housed at Refugees International in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), and Refugee Congress to grow the movement for U.S. leadership on refugee protection and inclusion.

In 2023, the Lab trained hundreds of leaders—and specifically leaders who have experienced forced displacement—to more effectively communicate; supported local partners in building bipartisan support for inclusive policies, resulting in 12 legislative wins across the Lab’s network of states; expanded the platform for people with lived experience to share their insight and stories in public fora; and grew and mobilized a network of state and local elected officials, business leaders, and other stakeholder groups across the country on campaigns to raise awareness on critical issues facing people who have been forcibly displaced.

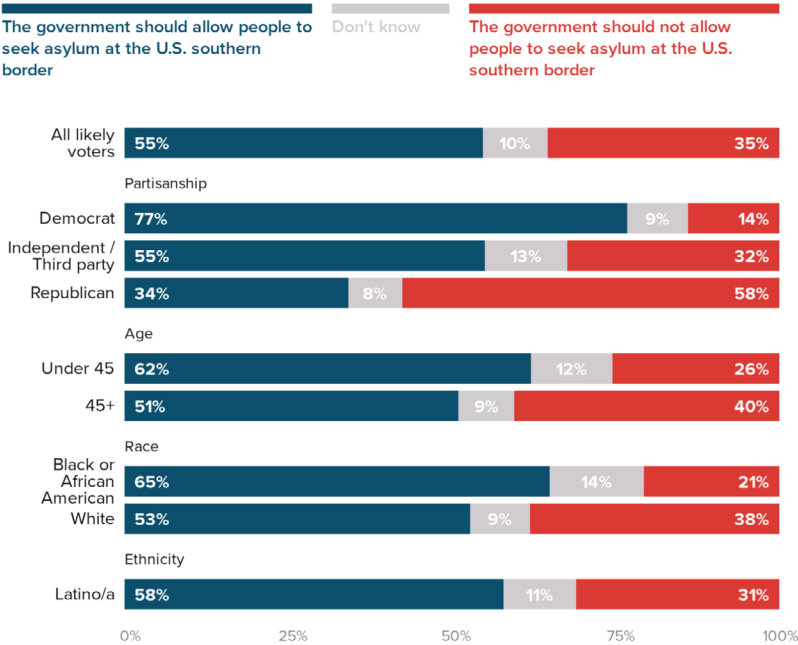
Polling by the Lab and Data for Progress also reaffirmed the broad support among U.S. likely voters for refugee resettlement and the asylum system—especially among people who personally know a refugee.

Source: [Voters Support Allowing Access to Asylum at the Southern Border](#), Data for Progress, 2023; [Voters Across Party Lines Strongly Support the U.S. Refugee Program, Especially if They Know Someone Who Is a Refugee](#), Data for Progress, 2023.

A Majority of Voters Support Allowing People to Seek Asylum at the Southern Border

Under current U.S. law, individuals who are leaving their country to escape war, violence, or persecution can apply for asylum, which grants them permission to remain in the United States. Individuals seeking asylum can apply by presenting themselves at the U.S. southern border.

Do you believe the government should allow people to seek asylum at the U.S. southern border?

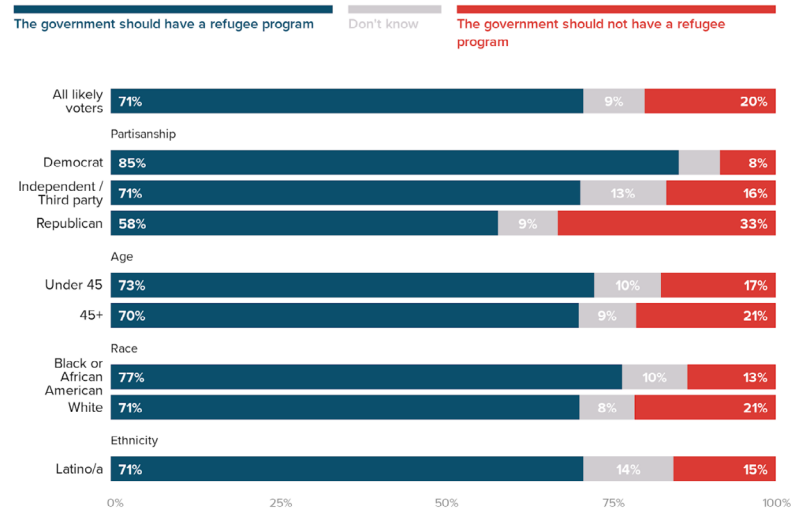


May 17–21, 2023 survey of 2,527 likely voters

A Vast Majority of Voters Believe That the U.S. Should Have a Refugee Program

A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, violence, or persecution due to factors such as their race, religion, or political opinion.

Do you believe the government should have a refugee program that helps bring some people seeking refuge to safety in the United States?



3 surveys of a total of 3,660 likely voters conducted between October 2022 and May 2023

Refugees International REFUGEE ADVOCACY LAB DATA FOR PROGRESS



A family of asylum seekers from Guerrero, Mexico, pose for a portrait. Photo by Sergio Flores for The Washington Post via Getty Images.

2023 SUPPORTERS

\$100,000+

Bloomberg Philanthropies
Center for Disaster Philanthropy
Center for Global Development
Democracy Fund
Elizabeth and Michael Galvin
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Humanity United
Open Society Foundations
Rattner Family Foundation
William Ritter
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

\$10,000–\$99,999

Ken and Anita Adams
Joy and Jonathan Alferness
Anonymous
Darcy Bacon
Sarah Hogate Bacon
Michael and Jeannien Berkman
Blue Moon Fund
Robert Bosch Stiftung
Katherine and David Bradley
Dr. Scholl Foundation
Eva and Glenn Dubin
Charles ‘Leonard’ Egan
Field Stephen Foundation
Bettina Freese
Paul Galvin Memorial
Foundation
Marianne Gimon and
Alessandro d’Ansembourg
The Beniam Haile Fund
Jolie-Pitt Foundation

Kathwari Family Foundation
Nick Kroll and Lily Kwong Kroll
Deborah Lucas
Mark Meiners
Darya and Vali Nasr
The Norton Foundation
Nancy Ordway
Martha and Robert Parke Fund
Phalarope Foundation
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Nina and Dino Saglimbeni
Saul Foundation for Progress Inc.
The Shapiro Foundation
Eileen Shields-West and
Robin West
Lise Strickler and Mark Gallogly
Swedeheart Family Fund
Jeffrey Tindell and
Cheryl Feigenson
James and Merryl Tisch
Philanthropic Fund
Sandra and Bruce Tully
George and Frederica Valanos
Brielle Valle and Louis Tedesco
Wah Charitable Fund
Jan Weil and Amos Avgar
Ai Weiwei
Western Union Foundation
David and Sherrie Westin
Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock

\$1,000–\$9,999

Thomas Adler
H.M Queen Noor Al-Hussein
Jean Anderson
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Asan Ariff
Arizona State Prison Complex -
Perryville (inmate fundraiser)
Jami Attenberg
Felix Auger-Aliassime
Babbitt Family Charitable Trust
Deborah Bain
Barth Giving Fund
Matthew Bechtel
Marcia Bernbaum
Eric Beversluis
Black Eagle Zine Force
Ann Brick Charitable Fund
Brindis Family Fund
Charles Brown
Cody Brumfield
Byron and Kathryn Calame
Michael and Jennifer Caputo
David and Linda Carlson
Chan Charitable Fund
Michelle Cheuk
Effie Clayton
Alex Cohen
David Cooley
Cambridge Rindge & Latin
School A Cappella Club
Niall Cunningham

Alexandra De Borchgrave	Ronald Kleyn	Rick and Mary Ann Randall
Doctor Family	Douglas and Alice Kraus	The Regeneration Fund
James Donald	William Krug	Anthony John Reidy
Usha Doshi	Mary Lach	Suzanne Rothschild
Patricia Duff	The Lake Family Fund	Mark J. and Samantha Sandler
Richard Easton	Erika Lee and Mark Buccella	Stefan Schafer
Mary Enright	Margaret Lenzner	Murry and Florence Schott
The Laura Faulkner Foundation	The Lev Foundation	Charitable Foundation
Loretta Feehan	Nancy Lindborg	Emily Scott
Flood-Gamble Foundation	Joseph Lipscomb and Laura Will	Ken and Jacqueline Sirlin
Amanda Foreman	Thomas Listmann	Janet Skinner
Nancy and Quinn Fox	Amy Lorion	Spira Lopez Family Charitable
Monica Gerard-Sharp	Theodore and Willa Lutz	Fund
Richard Gilbert	Lynx Investment Advisory, LLC	St. George Charity Fund
Richard Gluck	Kati Marton	The Richard and Denyse Stawicki
Carla Gordon	Natalie Martina	Fund
Leslie Graham	Grace Marvin	Libby and Donald Steckler
Anne-Marie Grey	Ihab Massoud	Sam Stein
Marc Haas Foundation	McCarter Family Fund	Richard and Harriet Steinberg
Rob and Karen Hale Charitable	Mary McGarry	Elizabeth Stern
Fund	Holly McGhee	Larry Stites
Rebecca Halperin and John	Ken Miller and Elizabeth Sweezy	Richard Strange
Storey	Linda Moriarty	Strauss Taylor Giving Fund
Nicole Harris	Vaithehi Muttulingam	Lutz Sukhija Family Foundation
Eric and Angie Haugen	NCheng, LLP	Arthur Sulzberger
Michael Hawkins	Nelson Mead Fund	Rebecca and Ted Swift
Hendershot Giving Fund	Lynn Nesbit	Shibley Telhami
Marlene Hess	Jennifer Nydahl	Louis Thalheimer and
James Holman	Hilary O'Connor	Juliet Eurich
Victoria Holt	Aaron O'Toole	Rahim Thobani
Maxine Isaacs	Maureen Orth	Matthew Turner
Mark Janke	Overbey Prible Giving Fund	Jason Ventresca
Maria T. Jennison	Pearl Family Charitable Fund	Wallack Giving Fund
George Jirack	Charlie and Betty Peer Advised	Austin Warner
Buchs Kalman Family Giving	Fund	Earl Wayne
Fund	Jim and Marian Pfohl Foundation	Natacha and Anthony Weiss
Michael Katz	Derek Phan	Ahlene and David Welsh
Imran and Jessica Kazem	Pinkert Family Foundation	Rebecca Wentland
Kaido, LLC	Yashar Pirzadeh	Wilson Central High School
Julia Kelly and Al Merry Fund	Lester Poretsky Family	Multicultural Club
Rich King	Foundation	Margaret Witty
Jill Kirkpatrick and Anthony	Lynn Povich and Steve Shepard	Jim Xhema
Connor	The Racemaker Charitable Fund	

OUR BOARD

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Maureen White, Co-Chair
Darya Nasr, Vice Chair
Amb. L. Craig Johnstone, Treasurer

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Sophal Ear
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Tom Malinowski
Kati Marton
Vaithehi Muttulingam
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Constance Milstein
Charles Monat
Sue Morton
Sally Paridis
Peta Roubin
Tom Sadoski
George Soros
Susan Goodwillie Stedman
Sandra Sennett Tully
Sam Waterston
Jan Weil
Amb. Frank Wisner



Passengers fleeing war-torn Sudan cross into Egypt. Photo by Khaled Desouki / AFP via Getty Images.

FINANCES

	2021 Total	2022 Total	2023 Total (preliminary pending final audit)
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Contributions	2,698,753	2,046,902	1,766,516
Foundation Grants	1,474,301	1,899,361	2,883,893
Contract Revenues	256,447	362,553	231,913
In-kind Donations	147,985	164,040	149,862
Income Sub-total	4,577,486	4,472,856	5,032,183
Investment Gain/(Loss)	402,144	(723,398)	397,936
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	4,979,630	3,749,458	5,430,119
Program Services			
Advocacy	2,624,328	2,623,999	3,244,152
Public Education	904,859		
Strategic Outreach	299,027	1,571,657	1,005,961
Total Program Services	3,828,214	4,195,656	4,250,113
Supporting Services			
General and Administrative	161,845	187,891	525,758
Fundraising	382,172	536,726	506,552
Total Supporting Services	544,017	724,617	1,032,310
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,372,231	4,920,273	5,282,423
Other Items	357,937	(94,422)	(99,471)
Change in Net Assets	965,336	(1,265,237)	48,225
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	5,093,322	6,058,658	4,793,421
Net Assets at End of Year	6,058,658	4,793,421	4,841,646



Ezidi women kidnapped by ISIS are reunited with their families after 9 years in Duhok, Iraq. Photo by Ismael Adnan Yaqoob/ Anadolu Agency via Getty Images.

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Facebook/LinkedIn: Refugees International

Design Credit: Eliza Leal, Digital
Communications Associate

Cover Image: Resettled Afghan refugee Ali, 36, spends time with his daughter Sutooda, 6, and newborn Serena on August 17, 2022 in California. Photo by Marcus Yam/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images.

