

RE: Request for Urgent Humanitarian Protections for Palestinians

January 29, 2024

Dear President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, and Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to request that all humanitarian options are made immediately available to address the critically urgent and deadly humanitarian crisis in Palestine, including Gaza, and throughout the West Bank. We write with great urgency out of deep concern for the safety and lives of individuals who have been repeatedly victimized by daily bombardments, mass expulsions, and war crimes.

U.S. Citizens and lawful permanent residents with family members experiencing great violence and danger in Gaza and the West Bank need your urgent assistance and support. Implementing the Department of State Crisis Intake Form is welcomed, yet has proven to be limited in its impact. More is needed to directly ensure the protection and safety of Palestinian civilians who are facing bombardment, expulsion, and a humanitarian crisis.

The U.S. must lead with affirmative steps to ensure that the loved ones of U.S. Citizens (USCs) and Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) have immediate access to legal pathways and humanitarian relief to ensure safety and reunification. This can only be done with your leadership. Since the beginning of the current war on the Palestinian people, over 1.2 million Palestinians have been displaced, and over 23,000 Palestinians have been murdered, including more than 9,600 Palestinian children. It is estimated that over 8,000 civilians remain trapped under the rubble and destruction of homes and neighborhoods in Gaza. According to the [WHO](#)¹, [UNRWA](#)², [MSF](#)³, [ICRC](#)⁴, and several other international organizations, a human catastrophe is

¹ World Health Organization (WHO). "WHO calls for protection of humanitarian space in Gaza following serious incidents in high-risk mission to transfer patients, deliver health supplies." WHO, 12 December, 2023,

<https://www.who.int/news/item/12-12-2023-who-calls-for-protection-of-humanitarian-space-in-gaza-following-serious-incident-in-high-risk-mission-to-transfer-patients--deliver-health-supplies>.

² The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). "Remarks by UNRWA Commissioner-General Phillippe Lazzarini at Geneva Press Conference." UNRWA, 14 December, 2023,

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/remarks-unrwa-commissioner-general-philippe-lazzarini-geneva-press>.

³ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). "Inside Gaza: Staying alive is only a matter of luck." MSF, December 18th, 2023, <https://www.msf.org/inside-gaza-staying-alive-only-matter-luck>.

⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "[Israel and the occupied territories: President of the ICRC arrives in Gaza, calls for the protection of civilians](#)." ICRC, 4th December, 2023,

imminent. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, as of October 31st, 46 generations of Palestinians have been wiped out—meaning, their family lineages have been removed from the public registry.⁵ The Department of State has deemed the entire region of Palestine to be unsafe for U.S. citizens and their family members in a series of Travel Warnings as well.⁶

We urge the Administration to consider and implement all-of-government action to provide refuge for people impacted by the conflict. We urge the administration to immediately grant Humanitarian Parole (HP) to those seeking the benefit.

Humanitarian parole for the above-identified categories of individuals would allow families experiencing extreme hardship to find temporary relief and refuge through immediate entry into the United States.

For humanitarian parole to be meaningful for the people described above, we strongly urge the Administration to take action on the following requests in conjunction with HP:

1. Expedite the processing of HP applications for applicants; and
2. Include HP applicants' names on the evacuation list so that they may exit Gaza and wait for their applications to be processed in safety; and
3. Include the names of all beneficiaries on I-130 petitions filed by USCIs and LPRs for loved ones in Gaza and the West Bank on the evacuation List allowing for immediate authorized safe passage into Egypt and family reunification; and
4. Provide for a blanket fee waiver for all humanitarian parole applicants; and
5. Allow for document flexibilities for individuals whose personal identity documents; and biographic documents, and passports may have been destroyed or lost in the bombings;
6. Facilitate transportation and travel logistics from the Rafah crossing to the US Embassy in Cairo; and
7. Facilitate and provide Arabic language translation services to assist and support applicants as they interface with US Embassy staff and officials; and
8. Designate staff at the US Embassy in Cairo or any US Consulate in the world where families may safely reach to be processed for humanitarian parole; and
9. Appoint a special coordinator to help streamline the Administration's efforts to provide humanitarian protections for Palestinians in the United States and abroad.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/israel-and-occupied-territories-president-icrc-arrives-gaza#:~:text=%22The%20level%20of%20human%20suffering,alleviate%20the%20desperate%20humanitarian%20situation.>

⁵ Time Magazine. "Entire Families Have Been 'Wiped Out' by Israeli Airstrikes, Human Rights Group Says." Time Magazine, 31 October, 2003, <https://time.com/6330210/israel-hamas-gaza-families-amnesty-international/>.

⁶United States Department of State. "December 1st, 2023 Information for U.S. Citizens in the Middle East." United States Department of State. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/situation-in-israel-2023.html#:~:text=U.S.%20citizens%20should%20heed%20the,Gaza%20and%20the%20Gaza%20periphery.>

By offering humanitarian parole, the Administration would demonstrate a commitment to upholding human dignity and providing much-needed assistance to individuals facing extraordinary circumstances during this war. This act of compassion aligns with President Biden's and Vice President Harris' public statements that international human rights law and Palestinians' lives must be respected and protected. These humanitarian protection programs have long-standing roots and precedent in international law, including the recent implementation of the remarkably impactful U4U Uniting 4 Ukraine program.

We request the Administration's prompt attention and action on this matter. The alleviation of suffering and provision of aid to those in need is a testament to our shared humanity and commitment to justice. We urge the Administration to consider this request with utmost compassion and urgency.

Sincerely,

Abed Ayoub
Executive Director
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Signatories:

Organization Name (as it should appear on the letter)
Law Office of Maria Kari, PLLC
Khan Law Group PC
Al Otro Lado
Nigerian Center
Alianza Americas
Law Office of Maria Kari, PLLC
Tarjimly
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Immigrants Act Now
National Immigration Project
Free Migration Project
Law Office of Spojmie Nasiri, PC
ASM
Pax Christi New Jersey
Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)
Minnesota Peace Project
Hinsdale Law Group
Exodus Refugee Immigration
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)



Womxn of Color Collective at UCLA Law Inc
La Raza Community Resource Center (SF)
Hope Border Institute
Carolina Migrant Network
Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC)
African Advocacy Network
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill Philadelphia Pennsylvania
American Muslim Community Foundation
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
Progressive Democrats of America- Arizona
Oasis Legal Services
Faithaction International House
UCLA Law NLG
Students for Justice in Palestine, UCLA Law
Justicia y Esperanza
Palestinian American Community Center
CIMA
Justice Action Center
Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi
BEDAAH CORPORATION
Sarf
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Abdelhadi & Kaur Law Group LLC
Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War
New Jersey Forum for Human Rights
Haiti Solidarity Network of the North East
Pax Christi New York State
Pax Christi USA
Marianist Social Justice Immigration Team
Pax Christi USA Young Adult Caucus
UCLA Law Students for Immigrant Justice
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow
Pax Christi Southern California
Voces Unidas RGV
La Fuerza
Legal Services for Children
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Carreon Immigration Law
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
National Lawyers Guild at UCLA Law
Womxn of Color Collective at UCLA Law
Movimiento Cosecha New Jersey
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)



Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
Climate Refugees
CAIR New Jersey
Alianza Americas
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice
Immigrants Act Now
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Ghalib Law
Al Otro Lado
TPS-DED AAC
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
SplitSeed Productions
Acacia Center for Justice
National Partnership for New Americans
STRANGERS NO LONGER (Michigan)
National Immigrant Justice Center
MPower Change
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Self Help Credit Union
Unidad Latina en Accion NJ
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Hope CommUnity Center
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Immigration Hub
Florida Student Power Network
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta
African Public Affairs Committee
Estrella del Paso (Formerly Diocesan Migrant and refugee Services Inc)
Detention Watch Network
Detention Watch Network
Pax Christi Little Rock



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

April 23, 2024

Abed Ayoub
Executive Director
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
aayoub@adc.org

Dear Mr. Ayoub:

Thank you for your January 29, 2024 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

We acknowledge your request that DHS consider making humanitarian immigration relief options, including parole, available to Palestinians impacted by the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

Noncitizens outside of the United States may request parole on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit by filing Form I-131, Application for Travel Document.¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews every humanitarian parole request upon receipt on a case-by-case basis to determine whether there is a particularly urgent or time-sensitive reason for expedited processing. If USCIS determines expedited processing is appropriate, USCIS will prioritize adjudicating the parole request. USCIS is currently receiving an extremely high number of requests for parole.

Please also be aware that parole processing is not complete until the noncitizen appears at a U.S. embassy or consulate to verify their identity and submit their biometrics for additional vetting. Once background checks and security vetting are complete, eligible noncitizens are issued a travel document that permits them to appear at a U.S. port of entry and seek parole into the United States with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Due to the lack of U.S. consular services in Gaza, USCIS currently cannot complete processing of parole applications for individuals located in Gaza. In addition, the U.S. Government is presently able to request exit permission from Gaza only for U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and their immediate family members. The Department of State is responsible for managing U.S. Government requests for evacuation from Gaza. USCIS defers to the Department of State for questions or additional information.

¹ <https://www.uscis.gov/i-131>. For more information about the USCIS parole process, including evidence that should be included in support of a parole request, please visit our website at https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian_parole.

USCIS' webpage "Immigration Relief in Emergencies or Unforeseen Circumstances"² lists existing options that may be available upon request to eligible individuals.

We appreciate your suggestion to implement flexibilities regarding document requirements for individuals whose documents may have been lost or stolen during the conflict. DHS regulations 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b) provides guidance on submitting secondary evidence and affidavits when an otherwise required record does not exist or is unavailable.³

We note that on February 14, 2024, President Biden issued a Memorandum to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security authorizing Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) and employment authorization for 18 months for certain Palestinians who were present in the United States on February 14, 2024, and have continuously resided in the United States since February 14, 2024. On April 12, 2024, USCIS published a Federal Register notice to provide additional information about implementation of the president's memorandum.⁴

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ur M. Jaddou" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director

² <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/immigration-relief-in-emergencies-or-unforeseen-circumstances>

³ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-103/subpart-A/section-103.2#p-103.2\(b\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-103/subpart-A/section-103.2#p-103.2(b))

⁴ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/15/2024-07866/implementation-of-employment-authorization-for-individuals-covered-by-deferred-enforced-departure>