

Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Needs for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), a coalition of non-governmental organizations committed to protecting and assisting refugees, recommends the following levels of funding in fiscal year 2011 for Migration and Refugee Assistance, Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, and the International Disaster Assistance accounts to assist those fleeing as a result of conflict and natural disaster:

MRA: \$2.3 billion for the Department of State's Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account. Funds Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

The principle line items on the Migration and Refugee Assistance account are Overseas Refugee Assistance and Refugee Admissions.

➤ **Overseas Refugee Assistance: \$1.8 billion**

Unfortunately, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has risen in recent years and millions continue to lack access to the most basic life-saving services—including health care, safe shelter, clean water and education. Conditions have significantly deteriorated for displaced persons in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo and several African countries. Several million Iraqis remain displaced, and the Colombia displacement crisis continues to be one of the largest in the world. Efforts to prevent and respond to violence against displaced women and girls are inadequate and underfunded. Despite the great level of need in Africa, PRM funding for humanitarian assistance in that region was reduced in fiscal year 2009. In fiscal year 2010 it is projected to fall even below fiscal year 2008 levels.

In 2010, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees will request an additional \$1 billion to better address humanitarian needs identified through its recent global needs assessment exercise. RCUSA's fiscal year 2011 recommendation would allow the U.S. to respond to UNHCR's revised budget requirements, increase its support for other international organizations and non-governmental organizations providing essential aid and services, and continue its leadership on humanitarian assistance.

We believe at least \$1.8 billion is needed to address both new and protracted refugee situations.

➤ **Refugee Admissions: \$415.2 million**

President Obama set the refugee admissions goal for fiscal year 2010 at 80,000, and has not yet set the 2011 admissions goal. To admit 80,000 refugees, as well as 5,000 Iraqis and 1,500 Afghans and their families who enter through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, will require \$415.2 million in FY2011. Were the U.S. to admit 100,000 refugees in 2011, as RCUSA recommends, this line item would require \$511.2 million. UNHCR estimates that for over 700,000 refugees around the world resettlement to a third country is the only solution to their displacement. Providing safe haven and welcoming communities for refugees who do not have an option of returning home and are not welcome in their country of asylum has been an important feature of U.S. humanitarian policy to which other governments look for leadership. These funds would help both increase the number of people admitted and the ability of local communities to provide them a successful welcome.

ERM A: \$200 million for the Department of State's Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account. Funds unforeseen displacement emergencies.

RCUSA recommends increasing the authorization from the current \$100 million to \$200 million and an appropriation that fully funds the new \$200 million ceiling. Escalating violence and instability in many parts of the world have placed increasing demands on this emergency draw-down account. ERMA provides an important "safety valve" option during emergencies. The ERMA ceiling has not been increased since the mid-1990s.

Increasing the ceiling will enhance our country's ability to respond quickly and effectively to unanticipated crises. In addition, the Secretary of States should be given the authority to certify ERMA draw-downs. The current process requires presidential certification, which is cumbersome and often results in unnecessary delays.

IDA: \$1.6 billion for the U.S. Agency for International Development's International Disaster Assistance account. Funds humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons.

This recommendation for the International Disaster Assistance account reflects the need for significantly greater funding to respond to the needs of persons internally displaced by conflict and in the aftermath of natural disasters. Our recommendation also assumes a stronger commitment to funding for education in emergencies, prevention of violence against women and girls, and emergency food assistance. This recommendation includes an additional \$600 million to fund cash-based emergency food assistance.