

Refugee Council USA

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ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED BUDGET STRENGTHENS REFUGEE PROTECTION, COMES CLOSER TO ADDRESSING PRESIDENT'S REFUGEE GOALS

Refugee Council USA – the nation's leading coalition of refugee resettlement, human rights, and humanitarian organizations – commends the White House for making refugee assistance a priority in the President's fiscal year 2006 (FY06) budget proposal, and urges further support for the world's most vulnerable populations.

The proposed increase for the Department of State's Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account comes as humanitarian assistance and protection needs around the world are increasing and when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is being called upon to strengthen its protection mandate. The President's proposal also includes increases for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Emergency Refugee and Migration Account (ERMA), from \$30 to \$40 million, makes allowance for assistance to refugees fleeing unpredicted tragedies.

With the President's request, the United States would offer refuge to an estimated 63,000 refugees in the coming year, increase assistance to refugees in their camps of first asylum, and more effectively promote self-sufficiency among refugees resettled in the United States.

But additional funds will be needed above the President's request if the full scope of the President's goals for refugee protection and assistance are to be realized in the coming year. The Refugee Council USA pledges to work with the Administration and Congress in the coming months to ensure additional funds are made available to offer protection and a new life of freedom to thousands more refugees. Specifically, the Refugee Council USA proposes that Congress provide \$982 million for MRA, which would fund 90,000 admissions; \$667 million for ORR; and \$50 million for ERMA.

The world's refugee crisis persists, with nearly 12 million refugees — 80 percent of whom are women and children – in need of durable solutions, and living without sufficient food, clothing, and shelter.

“The Refugee Council USA is pleased that the Administration has bolstered its commitment to refugee protection, assistance and resettlement by proposing funding increases over last year. The President's budget clearly demonstrates the Administration's commitment to protecting people around the world who have been forced from their home countries,” according to Max Niedzwiecki, Vice Chair of the Refugee Council USA.