



## OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION ISSUES

The 222th General Assembly  
(2016)  
On Responding to Our Sisters and  
Brothers Who Are Refugees or  
Internally Displaced

### Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

222th General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resolves to do the following:

1. Respond to the ancient biblical directive to provide for the stranger and the sojourner by directing appropriate PC(USA) agencies, offices and staff (e.g., the Stated Clerk, the Office of Immigration Issues, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) to provide leadership for the whole PC(USA) in diligently advocating for and seeking to improve matters related to United States government refugee resettlement policies and related issues.

This would include, but not be limited to advocacy for:

a. A shortened overseas processing period—one measured in months not years—for

refugees approved for admission to the United States. Beyond security checks, the process should include an expanded plan for reuniting families in this country.

b. Increased federal funding to support necessary services for an expanded number of refugees—especially the most vulnerable.

c. Admitting refugees as lawful permanent residents to increase their personal security and to ensure that they not slip through administrative gaps in the immigration system.

2. Direct appropriate PC(USA) entities and staff to urge the United States government and other member nations of the United Nations to honor and increase their funding to support humanitarian agencies, international refugee camps, and direct financial support that is often indispensable for internally displaced families in countries such as Iraq and Syria, and the multitude of other people, forced by fear and violence, to flee their national boundaries. This would include, but not be limited to:

a. Integration by the United States Refugee Resettlement Office of all services provided for refugees such as medical assistance, job training, job placements, micro enterprise loans, and mental health services in addition to living expenses. Such integration would promote charting the actual cost of refugee resettlement and give guidance for realistic funding based on the number of refugees admitted per year.

b. Establishment of trauma services for refugee children. Trauma is epidemic in refugee camps, and funding is inadequate to address needs. Also, since only about half of refugee children live in refugee camps, similar assistance should be made available through appropriate service agencies and responsible governmental entities where refugees live outside of camps.

c. Increase support by governments, religious entities, private organizations, and individuals for direct refugee services.

3. Joining denominational entities and staff named above, PCUSA presbyteries, sessions, and pastors should encourage congregations to host, co-sponsor, and/or support refugee families.

a. Churches can provide basic support such as clothing, housing, furniture, language teaching, and food.

b. Churches can provide a social connection for refugees to assist their acclimation to the community—including a welcoming voice for Muslims and persons of all other religious views.

4. Direct PC(USA) entities and staff to work with PC(USA) mission partners in affected countries and regions to advocate for political resolutions to situations that displace people internally or force them to become refugees.

5. Direct PC(USA) entities, including the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to advocate for an end to and prevention of conflicts that cause people to be internally and externally displaced from their homes.

6. Reaffirm the actions taken on immigration by the 216th, 217th, and 220th General Assemblies (2004), (2006), and (2012).