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**REFUGEE ACTION COALITION OF COLORADO UPHOLDS WELCOMING VALUES IN THE FACE
OF TERRORIZING FEDERAL TACTICS**

**ADVOCATES URGE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TO ASSERT
HUMANITARIANISM & REFUGEE RIGHTS**

Denver, CO—Members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado (RACC) are raising the alarm about the harmful federal immigration enforcement initiative, [Operation Post-Admission Refugee Reverification and Integrity Strengthening \(Operation PARRIS\)](#), mobilized in Minnesota earlier this month. We are appalled by [reports](#) of Minnesotans being targeted with aggressive enforcement actions, including detention and forced transportation to locations in other states thousands of miles away from their homes, and disgusted by President Trump’s [xenophobic and racist public remarks](#) denigrating Minnesotans of the Somali diaspora.

We assert that bigoted and fallacious generalizations against any ethnic group are fanatical and deeply offensive. It is totally unacceptable and intrinsically unpatriotic to disparage refugee neighbors from Somalia or to vilify Americans of Somali descent.

We also reject the premise that further vetting of already-admitted refugees, no matter their country of origin, is a reasonable, responsible, or well-intentioned practice. Instead, disinformation is being circulated as supposed justification. The Trump Administration repeatedly and disingenuously claims that scrutinizing immigrants and disrupting pathways to immigration are key strategies for ensuring American public safety, yet in truth [immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S.-born individuals](#), immigration is associated with safer communities, pathways to immigration are already extremely limited but bureaucratically cumbersome, and enforcement measures are flagrantly targeting noncriminals. Unfounded suspicion of refugees is particularly convoluted and cruel since, by definition, they have endured persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution resulting in forcible displacement from their country of origin. Refugees throughout the world seek peace, dignity, and basic safety. Those relative few who are [recommended for resettlement in the U.S.](#) (very few proportional to the number of refugees worldwide) embrace opportunities afforded by this country’s democratic principles and patriotic ideals. That is why decades of both Republican and Democratic officials—President Trump glaringly excepted—have championed the welcoming of refugees as fundamental to our country’s global humanitarian leadership.

The reexamining of thousands of refugee cases through “new background checks and intensive verification of refugee claims” under Operation PARRIS not only goes against humane and patriotic values, it is a patently unnecessary waste of resources. Only the world’s most vulnerable refugees identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) are ever recommended for resettlement in the U.S. (or a few other select countries). Those recommended for U.S. resettlement must then apply to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and undergo [extensive vetting](#) amounting to approximately two years of processing through screenings by eight federal agencies, multiple in-person interviews with the Department of Homeland Security, various security database and biometric security checks, and medical screening. Applications for U.S. resettlement have historically been limited to those falling into three principal categories prioritizing specially referred cases and making selections based on assessment of relative humanitarian urgency. The Trump Administration’s other actions have only [curtailed an already rigorous process](#), infusing chaos into the national resettlement network and stranding thousands and thousands of individuals already approved for resettlement but not yet admitted to the country. Baseless revetting of those who have already been rigorously screened and admitted just adds to the injudicious upheaval.

“The very idea that refugees, people who have endured horrors most of us can barely imagine, are being re-traumatized by the United States government for zero rationale is simply horrific,” says Paula Schriefer, President & CEO of [Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning](#), a founding member of RACC. “We must do all we can—as a state and as a nation—to embrace and protect refugees, starting with reestablishing and strengthening immigration pathways rather than scapegoating and attacking the most vulnerable who are restarting their lives as our neighbors.”

The idea that refugees pose a threat to American prosperity is also grossly misguided, as refugees play a vital role in our economy by providing state and local taxes, generating economic growth, and strengthening public services. In Colorado, refugees generate \$1.68 in economic activity for every \$1 provided to them in assistance, according to a [report by the Colorado Department of Human Services](#). In 2023 alone, [refugee Coloradans](#) paid \$127.1 million in state and local taxes and had a combined household income of \$1.4 billion. Their immense contributions to our state’s vibrant social and cultural fabric are unquantifiable and invaluable.

Since passage of the *Refugee Act of 1980* and establishment of USRAP, 80,000 refugees have resettled in Colorado. **RACC affirms Colorado’s humanitarian commitment to welcoming those fleeing danger in other parts of the world and we uplift the tremendous social, cultural, and economic benefits of refugee inclusion. Indefensible, irresponsible, and terrorizing initiatives such as Operation PARRIS have no place in Colorado or anywhere in our country.** We urge Coloradans, including all members of our Congressional delegation and our General Assembly, to:

- Join in [RACC’s mission](#) and contribute to advocacy by member organizations and individuals affirming Colorado’s welcoming values, celebrating the positive influence of refugees on our patriotic vitality, and seeking to strengthen the local resettlement network;
- Embrace and uplift the [diverse perspectives and insights of refugee Coloradans](#);
- Promote basic knowledge and understanding of [refugee immigration status](#) and the Constitutional rights of refugees in the U.S.;
- Stand in solidarity with allied national and international experts offering critical analysis, campaigns denouncing the federal administration’s anti-refugee rhetoric and harmful policy actions, and legal defense of refugees such as [Refugee Council USA](#), [Refugee Congress](#), [Refugees International](#), [Refugee Advocacy Lab](#), [International Refugee Assistance Project](#), [We Are All America](#), [Church World Service](#), [Migration Policy Institute](#)—and more; and
- If you witness action by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or another immigration authority in Colorado, call the [Colorado Rapid Response Network \(CORRN\)](#) hotline: 1-844-864-8341. Report any federal agent misconduct using the Attorney General's [complaint filing system](#).

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The [Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado \(RACC\)](#) advocates for and with refugees to promote a welcoming community and to advance opportunities where refugees thrive. [Learn more](#), [apply to join RACC](#), and connect on [Facebook](#).