



March 8, 2022

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives

Rep. Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives

Rep. Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee

Majority Leader Charles Schumer
U.S. Senate

Sen. Patrick Leahy
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate

Sen. Richard Shelby
Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee

CC: Secretary of State Antony Blinken
U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Samantha Power

RE: Integration of anti-trafficking efforts into U.S. humanitarian response to Ukraine refugee crisis

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby:

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine as armed conflict grips their nation. ATEST applauds the initiative already underway by the U.S. government to provide humanitarian assistance to the more than 1.5 million people who have fled their homes and are now part of one of the largest refugee crises this century in Europe.

Human traffickers exploit vulnerable populations, and refugees from Ukraine will be targets for exploitation in the short, medium, and long term. Families displaced to foreign countries, whose livelihoods have been disrupted, lack economic and social safety nets. Traffickers posing as helpful labor recruiters will be targeting these refugees. Many of the displaced families are mothers and their children, as men have been required to remain in Ukraine to fight. News correspondents have observed cases of unaccompanied children among the refugees. These conditions increase vulnerability to forced labor, debt bondage and sex trafficking, as well as online child sexual exploitation.

We are also deeply concerned by the disturbing reports coming from African, South Asian and Middle Eastern migrants in Ukraine and in border countries about being denied the right to cross the border safely. The racist treatment of non-European and/or non-white migrants is in direct violation of international refugee law, and increases these migrants' vulnerability to traffickers as well.

Significant funding of \$5 billion for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development has been included in the Administration's FY2022 supplemental appropriations request for critical assistance for Ukraine. ATEST applauds this request and urges Congress to approve this humanitarian funding. Both departments have unparalleled in-house expertise in anti-trafficking program development, through the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking (J/TIP) and USAID's Counter Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) Team within the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation. We urge the Administration and Congress to ensure these offices are consulted and empowered as part of this supplemental funding request to initiate emergency anti-trafficking programs in countries receiving Ukrainian refugees.

The time to act is now, before unscrupulous employers and traffickers gain a substantial foothold among the refugee and Internally Displaced People (IDP) populations. Countries neighboring Ukraine that are receiving substantial refugee inflows should be commended, but also better supported given they have had difficulty combating human trafficking even before the current crisis. The 2021 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report indicated that Poland's effort to "identify and protect child victims and to identify forced labor victims remained inadequate." The report identified "corruption, particularly in law enforcement and the judiciary," in Moldova. The report indicated that Romania's government "did not adequately screen for trafficking indicators or identify victims among vulnerable populations, such as asylum-seekers." The Administration should also strongly push these neighboring countries to provide equal protection for all refugees, regardless of race or ethnicity.

It is vital that anti-trafficking programs run by governments, civil society organizations, and international institutions such as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labor Organization are strengthened as part of a comprehensive response. This is more than a humanitarian imperative. Many forms of human trafficking are conducted by transnational criminal gangs, which has a corrupting influence on international security and the rule of law.

ATEST stands ready to assist the State Dept.'s J/TIP and USAID's C-TIP offices, and others, with detailed recommendations for emergency anti-trafficking programming to be integrated into America's humanitarian response. Please contact ATEST Director Terry FitzPatrick: terry.fitzpatrick@ATEST-US.org, Cell: 571-282-9913.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking

ATEST is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world. We advocate for lasting solutions to prevent forced labor and sex trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, ensure justice for victims and empower survivors with tools for recovery. Our collective experience implementing programs at home and abroad provides our coalition an unparalleled breadth and depth of expertise.

ATEST member organizations include: Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), Free the Slaves, HEAL Trafficking, Human Trafficking Institute, Humanity United Action (HUA), McCain Institute for International Leadership, National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, United Way Worldwide, Verité, and Vital Voices Global Partnership.