



## THE NEED

The world is facing a humanitarian crisis the likes of which we have not witnessed since World War II, with nearly eight million refugees fleeing from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan alone. Given the political climate and increased xenophobia in the United States and elsewhere, particularly in the wake of the current administration's efforts to deny safe haven and freedom to thousands of refugees, legal advocacy on behalf of refugees is more important than ever.

## IRAP MODEL

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) has created an innovative model that saves refugees' lives, assures their passage to safe destination countries, and shapes thought and practice in the United States and around the globe to ensure fair and humane treatment of refugees.

IRAP's approach is grounded in three distinct but interrelated strategies.

- 1 IRAP has created a "virtual public interest law firm"—a firm that is not impeded by geographic boundaries and uses technological solutions to deliver high-quality representation to people living in, and fleeing from, war, persecution, and political upheaval around the world. Its representation relies on a cadre of volunteers—1,200 students from 29 law schools in the United States and Canada and pro bono attorneys from over 75 international law firms and multi-national corporations—assisting thousands of refugees on urgent registration, protection, and resettlement cases. The model is scalable, leveraging every \$1 donated into \$10 of life-saving legal aid.
- 2 Through extensive policy advocacy, IRAP is creating solutions to overcoming the legal and bureaucratic impediments in the resettlement process and developing an enforceable system of legal and procedural rights for refugees and displaced persons worldwide. As the only organization that guides refugees through every step of the resettlement labyrinth, IRAP is often able to identify obstacles of which other institutional players are unaware. Its unique model utilizes lessons learned in individual casework to advocate for systemic changes that benefit broader refugee populations.
- 3 Finally, a crucial prong of IRAP's approach is to train the next generation of international human rights advocates. These advocates are essential to assuring fairness, decency, and adherence to the rule of law throughout the refugee resettlement process.



# IRAP RESPONSE TO THE EXECUTIVE ORDER

IRAP is on the front lines of the fight against the discriminatory Executive Order signed by the President on January 27, which freezes the refugee program and bans people from seven majority Muslim countries from entering the United States. By mobilizing an emergency task force of legal advocates and leading the fight in the courts and the press, IRAP is playing a critical role in protecting the rights of thousands of affected refugees and immigrants. The day after the Executive Order was signed, IRAP was instrumental in securing an emergency Temporary Restraining Order, preventing the nationwide deportation and detention of immigrants and refugees affected by the Order. IRAP is also the lead plaintiff in the only lawsuit challenging the entirety of the Executive Order as unconstitutional. While the battle may be far from over, IRAP will continue pushing for the continuation of the refugee program in the United States through legal aid, litigation, policy advocacy, and communications.

## IRAP OUTCOMES

In the eight years since its establishment by a group of five Yale Law School students, this young and visionary organization has become a world leader in the treatment and resettlement of the world's most vulnerable refugees. Among its notable achievements are:



- Helping to resettle over 3,200 refugees and displaced persons to 15 different countries, and providing legal assistance through its online advice hotline to more than 20,000 individuals.
- Playing a leadership role in enacting six pieces of Congressional legislation, creating life-saving visas and legal protections for over 129,000 displaced people.
- Recently winning a groundbreaking precedent that permits IRAP—the first NGO in nearly a decade—to receive authority to refer refugee cases directly to the United States, thereby entirely bypassing the UN referral system.
- Winning a landmark lawsuit against the Departments of State and Homeland Security on behalf of Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa applicants, who bravely served the U.S. during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, but are mired in case processing limbo for years while being threatened with violence or death in their home countries.

The humanitarian crisis confronting the world demands immediate and bold action. IRAP plays a major role in ameliorating the crisis, by innovating smart and durable solutions that prove that the plight of refugees is anything but hopeless.