



U.S. Not Screening Refugees for Extremist Views

During a hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest convened by committee chairman Senator Jeff Sessions (shown, R-Ala.) on September 28, Simon Henshaw, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, admitted that, during the vetting process for refugees, U.S. immigration officials make no effort to learn if they harbor extremist views.



A report about the committee hearing (entitled “Oversight of the Administration’s FY 2017 Refugee Resettlement Program”) posted at the LifeZette website noted that Sessions questioned Henshaw about the procedures for screening refugee applicants, asking: “Do you make any inquiry about practices that we reject in the United States, like female genital mutilation? Do you say, ‘Do you believe in that and when you come to the United States will you comply with the laws of the United States on that kind of question?’”

Henshaw said U.S. officials explain American law and customs but admitted that they do not inquire about refugees’ political beliefs to determine if they might be extreme or radical. “On all questions, we make it clear to refugees that we’re a nation of laws and that they need to comply with our laws,” Henshaw said.

Sessions then pursued his line of questioning by citing a Justice Department report indicating that the United States last year experienced 27 “honor killings,” a practice that is widely accepted in some Muslim-dominated countries that practice Sharia law.

Henshaw responded by making a distinction between Muslim refugees and previous Muslim immigrants who might have approved of such honor killings. “I’m not sure those honor killings took place among the resettled refugee community in the United States,” he said.

“Senator, I see no evidence to show that refugee communities are bringing these values into the United States,” Henshaw continued. “I see that they’re becoming good American citizens, members of the military, members of our police ... people that have U.S.-American values.”

LifeZette reported that Sessions noted that the perpetrators of Muslim honor killings come from the same cultural backgrounds as refugees and also observed that 40 refugees have been charged with terrorism-related crimes in the United States.

“So you’re not perfect in your admission, I have to admit,” Sessions said.

Another subcommittee member, Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), was very direct in his criticism of the way our refugee program is being managed. “Our immigration laws are not a suicide pact,” Cruz said. “Our refugee program should not become a vehicle for terrorists to come [into the country] and murder innocent Americans.”

Another official testifying at the hearing, León Rodríguez, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration



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Services, defended our government's vetting process, stating, "We are committed to deterring and detecting fraud to maintain the integrity of the refugee resettlement program, and we continue to employ the highest security measures to protect against risks to our national security."

However, another subcommittee member, Senator David Vitter (R-La.), was not so impressed with Rodríguez' testimony. He noted that 18 percent of ISIS prosecutions in the United States have been of refugees or asylum seekers, and that Rodríguez had admitted that refugees have been caught committing terrorism offenses.

Vitter said that not only did the director contradict his earlier statement that "only those who do not pose a risk to national security" are allowed into the country via the refugee resettlement program, but he also confirmed that the vetting process relies on U.S. intelligence and that potential terrorists won't be flagged "if they have not appeared in our intelligence databases."

AP reported last April that because of a spike in Middle Eastern refugees needing placement, the Obama administration had decided to rush their vetting process, reducing the processing time to three months, from the original 18-24 months.

"While the resettlement process usually takes 18 to 24 months, the surge operation will reduce the time to three months," observed the report.

In our [article posted on September 21](#), we asserted that the Obama administration's policies amount to importing Middle East terrorism to the United States. To support that assertion, we noted that the administration had already begun to put a plan into place to dramatically increase the number of refugees from Syria — large portions of which are presently controlled by ISIS.

The White House press office posted a statement on September 20 that made it clear that the increase in refugees being admitted to our country will escalate, despite the fact that migrants from the Middle East have participated in multiple terrorist attacks in our nation, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the 2015 mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. Stated the White House: "President Obama announced that the United States will welcome more refugees from around the world, increasing the number of people we receive by 40 percent over the next two years, to 100,000 in 2017."

Senator Sessions addressed that Obama administration plan in his opening statement at the September 28 hearing, stating, "The American people strongly oppose these policies."

Elaborating on some of his principle objections to the Obama refugee plan, Sessions said:

The Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Secretary of Homeland Security have acknowledged that terrorists could infiltrate the refugee population. Their concerns are valid, as it is clear that terrorists have done so successfully in the past....

There are now nearly 10,000 open terrorism-related investigations across the country. There is an active investigation in every state. Our dedicated law enforcement officers carry a tremendous burden to keep our country safe every day. But it is impossible for them to bear that burden if the Obama Administration does not even recognize the fundamental challenges we face today and continues to admit those who carry significant risks of becoming involved with terrorism after their admission to the United States.

Near the end of his statement, Sessions made an important point: "Certainly, no one has a



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constitutional right to demand entry into the United States. It is our choice [to let people in] and we should do it in a way that furthers our country.”

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