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December 16, 2020

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World Relief Testifies in the Senate on U.S. Refugee Policy and Hong Kong Residents

BALTIMORE – Today, Jenny Yang testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing “Supporting Hong Kong’s Pro-Democracy Movement through U.S. Refugee Policy.” Jenny spoke on behalf of World Relief and Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), a coalition of 29 US-based nongovernmental organizations representing a diverse group of nonprofits that advocate for and with refugees. The hearing’s first panel of speakers included Senators Robert Menendez and Marco Rubio, who spoke about their Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act bill. The second panel featured Jenny Yang, who spoke on U.S. refugee policy with four witnesses: constitutional law professor Julian G. Ku, and Hong Kong activists Ms. Joey Siu, Mr. Samuel M. Chu and Mr. Nathan Law.

As Jenny noted in her testimony, the passage of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region threatens Hong Kong’s autonomy and the lives and freedoms of its people. The law, which came into effect on June 30, 2020, makes it easier to punish protestors and gives Beijing Orwellian-level power to dictate life in Hong Kong. Residents of Hong Kong now fear for their future.

“As a coalition that promotes protection and welcome for refugees, asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced populations, Refugee Council USA (RCUSA) encourages the Trump administration to find ways to help people impacted by the situation in Hong Kong, as well as other persecuted peoples in the region,” said **Jenny Yang, World Relief’s VP of Policy and Advocacy and Co-Chair of RCUSA’s Advocacy Committee.**

The inclusion of residents of Hong Kong in the FY21 Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions is commendable, and the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is a critical safety net for those without any other means of protection. The U.S. cannot provide effective protections to these jeopardized refugees without the administration operating the USRAP in good faith so that those who seek asylum in America from Hong Kong are granted entrance pursuant to international and U.S. law.

“The most important steps that Congress and the administration can take to prepare for and operationalize refugee resettlement from Hong Kong are to restore the USRAP to historical norms and to rebuild and robustly support USRAP overseas processing and domestic resettlement capacities,” Jenny said. “Congress should work with the administration to increase capacity for U.S. Embassy and NGO referrals, schedule ongoing USCIS circuit rides to the region, and break through other logjams in processing.”

The current administration's severe reduction in the refugee ceiling for FY2021, currently set at a historic low of 15,000, has left asylum seekers previously approved for U.S. entry stuck in camps, waiting for a safe harbor and reunification with their families. In her testimony, Jenny stated that "RCUSA urges the administration to return the USRAP to historic norms and strengthen its capacity, which will be essential to implementing any resettlement program for refugees from Hong Kong and responding to emerging needs like this in the future." To ensure refugees fleeing Hong Kong are not falsely denied asylum in the United States, World Relief and RCUSA strongly believe that the administration must rescind its regulations and policies that ban or block asylum to refugees, including bans or proposed rules that deny asylum to refugees who passed through other countries before arriving in the U.S.

These policy and programmatic amendments, including reimagining procedures for the resettlement of refugees from Hong Kong, are prerequisites for meeting the humanitarian and foreign policy goals of international protection. World Relief and RCUSA will work in unison with Congress and the administration to meet these objectives and protect the world's most vulnerable people.

About World Relief

World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world's greatest problems – disasters, extreme poverty, violence, oppression, and mass displacement. For over 75 years, we've partnered with churches and community leaders in the U.S. and abroad to bring hope, healing and transformation to the most vulnerable.

About Refugee Council USA (RCUSA)

RCUSA is a diverse coalition advocating for just and humane laws and policies, and the promotion of dialogue and communication among government, civil society, and those who need protection and welcome. Individual RCUSA members do not all address all refugee-related issues, nor do all individual members approach common refugee-related issues identically.

Learn more at worldrelief.org and [RCUSA](https://rcusa.org).

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