



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

November 16, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

In the aftermath of Friday's terrorist attack on Paris, which took the lives of at least 129 innocent people and injured 352 more, reports surfaced that at least one of the attackers entered France by claiming to be a refugee hoping to escape the conflict in Syria.

As governor of a state that plays a small role in administering part of the federal refugee resettlement program, I have concerns with the vetting process of refugees from conflict-zones, specifically Syria.

After reviewing recent public statements and personally speaking today with intelligence officials, it is my understanding that while our national security agencies are working tirelessly to vet potential refugees, there remain gaps in available intelligence for those fleeing Syria. This lack of historical and verifiable intelligence with many Syrian refugees makes it difficult, if not impossible, to thoroughly vet individuals seeking to enter the United States as a refugee.

Therefore, until I can be assured that all potential refugees from Syria have no ties to terrorist organizations, I am requesting that the State Department not resettle any Syrian refugees in South Carolina.

As Governor, it is my first and primary duty to ensure the safety of the citizens of South Carolina. We are a state that has proudly welcomed refugees from around the world as part of the United States' Refugee Resettlement Program. Refugees are forced to flee their home countries for the most awful reasons, such as religious persecution, and under the most hectic circumstances, such as in the midst of civil war. While I agree that the United States should try to assist individuals in such dire situations, it is precisely because of the situation in Syria that makes their admission into the United States a potential threat to our national security.

For that reason, I ask that you honor my request and not resettle any Syrian refugees in South Carolina.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nikki R. Haley", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nikki R. Haley

cc: The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
The Honorable Tim Scott
The Honorable Jim Clyburn
The Honorable Joe Wilson
The Honorable Trey Gowdy
The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
The Honorable Jeff Duncan
The Honorable Mark Sanford
The Honorable Tom Rice