

# National Day of Jewish Action for Refugees | February 12, 2017



## Planning Guide for Local Actions

Since President Trump issued his ban on refugees, we have heard the cries of resistance from around the world and from ports of entry here in the United States. **There has never been a more critical moment to show the Jewish community's support for refugees, and on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, we will demonstrate the breadth and depth of our solidarity.**

On that day, HIAS is convening a major rally in New York City in Battery Park, overlooking the Statue of Liberty – our nation's most powerful historical symbol of hope for those seeking safety and freedom in the United States. We hope you will join us in holding your own action on the 12<sup>th</sup> and offer this guide to assist in local planning.

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### Core Messages:

There are three core messages that we suggest your action should communicate:

- 1) As a community, we are outraged by the cruelty of this ban, which is a betrayal of our American and Jewish values.
- 2) We are devastated by and mourn the suffering and potential loss of life that will occur as a result of the Executive Order. It is all too familiar to us as a people who have been refugees for most of our history.
- 3) We – our local community, and the Jewish community writ large – are going to fight this, together. Our history and our values as Jews and Americans compel us to do so. We are a powerful force and will raise our voices together about what is right and just, and hold our elected officials and our government accountable.

### Date/Location:

We are planning fast, friends! Ideally, your action will take place on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> to coincide with other actions around the country, but if it isn't possible on that day, we encourage you to plan one anyway.

Every city and town has an iconic gateway, arch, or door. Pick a photogenic location in front of a gate or door, where you can legally hold a gathering. Request permits or permissions as necessary for that location. **NOTE:** *You may need to rush your request for a permit. This is essential to explore immediately.*

## **Program Content:**

HIAS' New York City action will include speakers, a powerful Jewish ritual moment, music, chants, and more. We are crafting a program that will address Jewish historical experience and Jewish values, and will include a galvanizing call to join the Jewish movement for refugees. Think about inviting speakers who can communicate their moral outrage about the ban with passion, from a Jewish perspective. Consider rabbis, representatives from local Jewish organizations, local Jewish politicians, people who were refugees or whose families were refugees and people who are deeply involved in refugee work, including staff members from local resettlement agencies.

HIAS has a supplementary content guide document, with resources for the program including talking points, suggested readings and poems, as well as instructions for a powerful Jewish ritual moment (see below). When you contact us to let us know that you are planning an action, we will send these additional resources.

## **Ritual Moment:**

At the New York City action, HIAS will facilitate a ritual moment based on the custom of *kriyah*, the mourning ritual that involves rending a garment or a piece of cloth attached to a garment. We encourage you to incorporate this ritual into your local action as well. More details about how to frame the ritual, as well as text for the ritual itself, are in the content guide (referenced above). In preparation, we recommend that you contact your local Jewish funeral home to collect 5-10 *kriyah* ribbons for action.

Additionally, you may want to encourage participants to bring their own *yahrzeit* candles or to purchase and distribute them at your action, depending on your budget/projected size of the action.

## **Promotion of the Action:**

*First and foremost, please let HIAS know if you are planning an action [by filling out this short form](#).*

All of the actions taking place around the country are listed on the HIAS webpage at [www.hias.org/day-of-action](http://www.hias.org/day-of-action).

We recommend that you set up a Facebook event for your local action and will provide an image for you to use (the same one that can be seen as the background photo in the [NYC Facebook event](#)).

We strongly encourage you to [check the list of Welcome Campaign congregations](#) on the HIAS website to identify other synagogues in your area and partner together on your action – this is a moment for collaboration in order to amplify our collective power.

We also recommend reaching out to local Jewish communal organizations to co-sponsor and promote the event. The National Day of Jewish Action will also be co-sponsored by a number of national Jewish organizations and that list will appear on the webpage referenced above.

Finally, advertise! Reach out to community groups, post on local listservs, email your congregations and use social media.

### **Collateral Materials:**

Signs that say “Refugees Welcome” and “My People Were Refugees Too” can be accessed and downloaded [here](#). We encourage you to consider having them professionally printed.

HIAS stickers are available until they run out! Please indicate your interest in the form referenced above.

If you will be incorporating the same ritual moment as HIAS, make sure to get *kriyah* ribbons and *yahrzeit* candles. If you are doing another ritual, make sure you have any ritual objects that you need.

### **Photos, Media, and Social Media:**

This is a National Day of Jewish Action for Refugees, and HIAS would like to showcase all of the events taking place nationwide. Please designate someone to take photos of your action.

We encourage you to promote your event on social media, using the hashtags #JewsforRefugees, #RefugeesWelcome, and #NoBanNoWall. The content guide includes additional guidance on amplifying your event online.

And finally, invite local secular or Jewish media to cover your action.