



**Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 17, 2013

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Social Justice Dream Team to Lead HIAS

(New York, NY) – HIAS, the leading international Jewish organization dedicated to welcoming and protecting the rights of refugees, has announced three additions to its senior management team with leaders from the Jewish social justice world, who will join recently appointed President and CEO Mark Hetfield.

Opening a new chapter in the nonprofit's 130-year history, Rabbi Jennie Rosenn is assuming the newly created role of Vice President for Community Engagement; Riva Silverman will join HIAS as Vice President for External Affairs; and Melanie Nezer is being promoted to Vice President for Policy and Advocacy.

"With their deep and diverse experience, Jennie, Riva and Melanie will breathe fire into our work for a world where those fleeing injustice, war and persecution find an outstretched hand, safety and freedom," said Hetfield.

The new appointments will allow Senior Vice President Sussan Khozouri, who joined HIAS in April, having worked at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), to focus on international and domestic program development. According to Hetfield, "Sussan will apply her talents to open new doors for HIAS to help refugees rebuild their lives, in the United States and around the world."

Rabbi Rosenn is a perfect fit for her role leading HIAS's community engagement strategy: From 2004 through 2012, as Director of the Nathan Cummings Foundation's Jewish Life and Values Program, she catalyzed the creation of several major new initiatives, including the Jewish Social Justice Roundtable, an unprecedented consortium of 29 organizations – including HIAS – working collaboratively to strengthen and elevate social justice in the American Jewish community.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to advocate for and serve the world's 42 million refugees and displaced persons. It builds on my extensive experience in leading strategic change in the areas of Jewish social justice, advancing Middle East peace and cultivating women as agents of change," said Rabbi Rosenn, referring to her work at the Nathan Cummings Foundation, where she managed a multi-million-dollar budget. "Both our values and history as Jews call us to advance the rights and lives of refugees, and no organization is more strategically and keenly focused on that goal than HIAS."

Silverman, the former director of development at American Jewish World Service (AJWS), has an amazing track record of accomplishment as a development strategist with deep expertise in the role of the Jewish community in international development and social justice. During her tenure at AJWS, its revenue doubled. More recently, the Clinton Foundation's Clinton Health Matters recognized her work tackling addiction at Shatterproof.

“There is no question that my passion to promote social justice grows out of my deep commitment to Jewish values and my understanding of what it means to be a member of the Jewish community in the 21st century,” said Silverman. “It is with great excitement and an enormous sense of privilege that I join this newly configured team at HIAS. Together, we will ensure that HIAS adapts to the challenges of a new chapter in Jewish history and remains the premier Jewish organization committed to protecting the world’s most vulnerable refugees and displaced persons.”

Melanie Nezer has worked in the HIAS Washington office for more than a decade, most recently leading it as Senior Director for Policy and Advocacy. Her portfolio has included education and advocacy on immigration, asylum and refugee protection issues. She is immediate past chair of the Advocacy Committee of Refugee Council USA and chairs its working group on the Americas.

“I am so pleased to be part of the elevated importance HIAS is placing on advocacy as a Jewish voice for refugees in Washington,” said Nezer.

From humble beginnings in a storefront on the Lower East Side of Manhattan to assist those fleeing anti-Jewish pogroms in eastern Europe in 1881, HIAS—formerly known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society—has repositioned itself as the world’s leading Jewish organization dedicated to protecting the rights of all refugees.

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HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit organization that protects refugees – including women and children, and ethnic, religious and sexual minorities – whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our values and history, HIAS helps refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocates to ensure that all displaced people are treated with dignity. Visit [HIAS.org](https://www.hias.org) to get involved and learn more.

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