



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Iowa Division

Advocacy News

MAY 2022

## The United Nations Response to the War in Ukraine



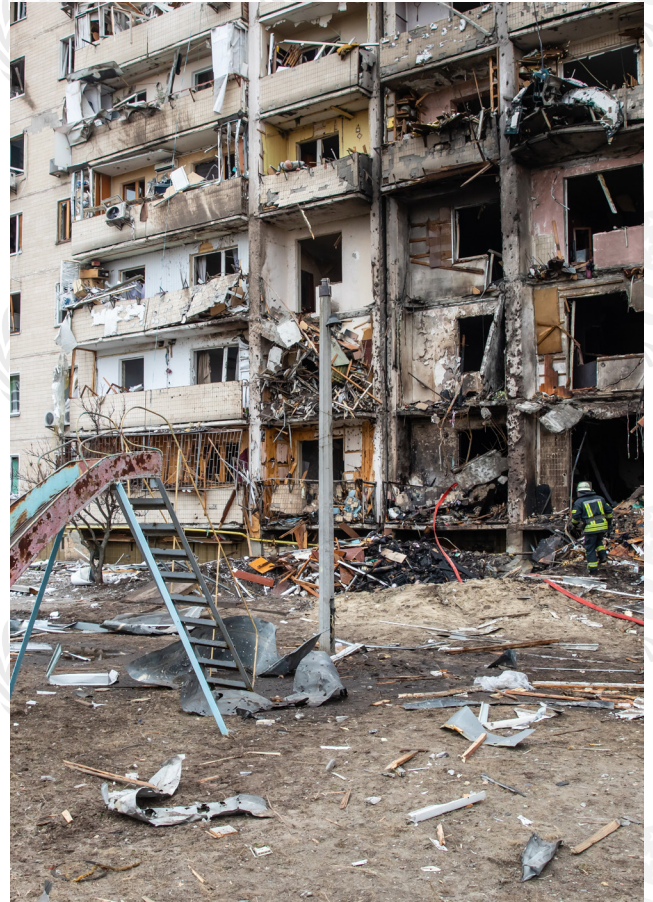
Debra DeLaet

*Executive Director, Iowa United Nations Association.*

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a military offensive in Ukraine, violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's invasion of Ukraine violates the core principle of non-intervention enshrined in Article 2 of the [UN Charter](#). This crisis represents a critical test of the international institutions built up in the aftermath of World War II.

Because Russia is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5), the Security Council has been unable to respond assertively to Russian aggression. [Chapter 5 of the UN Charter](#) provides the P5 with veto power in all Security Council decisions. Thus, the Security Council is unable to exercise its authority to approve enforcement action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression under [Chapter 7](#) of the UN Charter. Russia vetoed a [draft Security Council resolution](#) brought forward on February 25 that would have condemned Russian aggression and would have called for Russia's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Ukraine. Russia's status as a P5 member of the Security Council with veto power will continue to thwart Chapter 7 enforcement action. Russia's status as a nuclear power also fundamentally constrains the military options available to the international community as it responds to this crisis. World leaders are responding with caution as they seek to exert pressure on Russia via economic sanctions while not escalating militarily.

On Wednesday March 2, the UN General Assembly strongly and unequivocally condemned Russia's aggression in a historic vote during an emergency special session on Ukraine, the first emergency session held by the General Assembly since 1982. The [GA Resolution](#) deplored the Russian invasion and called for an immediate ceasefire and Russian withdrawal of military forces. Under [Chapter 4 of the UN Charter](#), General Assembly resolutions are non-binding. Unlike the Security Council, the General Assembly does not have jurisdiction to authorize enforcement action. Nevertheless, the General Assembly vote represents a [striking indication of international resolve](#) to isolate Russia diplomatically. The resolution was supported by 141 of the 193 members of the UN. Only five countries—Russia, Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, and Syria—voted against the resolution. Thirty-five countries, including China, abstained on this vote. The overwhelming support in the General Assembly for this resolution is a sign of Russia's isolation. Notably, even Serbia, traditionally an ally of Russia, voted for the resolution. China's abstention is also noteworthy. The widely-supported global condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine also aligns with [broad economic sanctions](#) against Russia, supported by over 30 countries. The hope is that political isolation and economic sanctions will exert pressure on Russia to engage in diplomacy and peaceful resolution of this conflict.



## ADVOCACY NEWS IS GOING GREEN!

In alignment with our commitment to sustainability, Iowa UNA is prioritizing the electronic distribution of our advocacy newsletter. We will distribute Advocacy News via email and also will publish it on our website and social media platforms. If you prefer to receive a hard copy, please email [debra@unaiowa.org](mailto:debra@unaiowa.org).



Beyond the realm of diplomacy, the United Nations is playing an essential role in responding to the devastating humanitarian crisis resulting from Russia's aggression. To date, [over 3 million refugees](#) already have fled Ukraine. This number will continue to rise as long as the violence continues. The [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) estimates that upwards of [12 million displaced people in Ukraine and 4 million refugees](#) in neighboring countries will need assistance. UN institutions are playing a critical role in responding to the developing humanitarian and refugee crisis. In the immediate aftermath of Russia's invasion, UN Secretary-General António Guterres released [\\$20 million](#)

[from its Central Emergency and Response Fund](#) to be used to respond to the crisis. The [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are coordinating an emergency appeal to raise \$1.7 billion from member states to respond to the humanitarian crisis. UN agencies, in addition to raising funds, are also active in providing humanitarian and refugee assistance on the ground in Ukraine. These efforts include work by the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#), the [World Food Programme](#), and the [UN Population Fund](#).

The United Nations will continue to work on two tracks as it responds to the war in Ukraine. In the realm

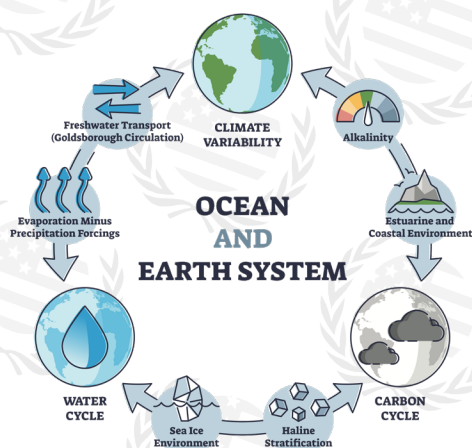
of peace and security, the United Nations will continue to amplify the broad global condemnation of Russia's aggression as it strives to advance international diplomacy. In the realm of humanitarian and refugee assistance, the UN will follow the core humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality as it provides assistance to innocent civilians on all sides of the conflict.

The Iowa United Nations Association encourages Individuals who would like to support the UN's humanitarian relief efforts to consider making a donation to the [Ukraine Humanitarian Fund](#). All donations contribute directly to the UN's humanitarian work in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND OCEAN STRATIFICATION

Jozef Figa

IUNA Advocacy Committee Member



There has been a serious change in the upper 200 meters of oceans. A [study](#) published in the journal [Nature Climate Change](#) stated that ocean stratification increased by nearly 6% between 1960 and 2018. This means that stratification became more rigid and made it more difficult for carbon dioxide, heat and oxygen to be transported from the oceans' surface into the oceans' depths. This is one of the consequences of climate change.

Ocean stratification is not unusual. It depends on the density of water. Less dense water is on the surface of oceans, more dense water is deeper. The problem is that the layers have been becoming more rigid, which makes it difficult for the water from different layers to mix. Consequently, the circulation of heat, coal, oxygen, and nutrients is becoming more

difficult and even impossible. The reason is the growing concentration of greenhouse gasses, with the resulting accumulation of energy. Over 90% of this energy ends up in the oceans, primarily heating surface waters because these waters absorb sun rays. This results in surface waters' expansion which, in turn, causes their loss of density. Therefore, it takes a longer time for the heat to reach deeper levels of the oceans; this results in an increase of the differences in degrees of density between various ocean levels. Of this increase, 71% takes place in surface waters, and 90% of it has been caused by temperature changes. This entire process slows the thermohaline circulation, that is, the replacement of deep water with surface water.

The combination of the two processes has very serious consequences. First, less heat going into depths of oceans translates into the faster heating of the Earth's surface, accelerating global warming. Second, carbon dioxide dissolves more slowly in warm water than in cold water. When oceans absorb less CO<sub>2</sub>, more of it remains in the Earth's atmosphere. Third, warm waters absorb less oxygen and less of the mixing of water from various layers, resulting in the weakening of transportation of oxygen into lower layers of oceans and increasing the number of dead zones in oceans. Fourth, because of the rigid stratification, fewer nutrients from ocean depths reach ocean surfaces. This affects the plankton, krill, fish, sea mammals and, ultimately, the fishing industries. Finally, the increase of the heat of ocean surfaces strengthens and extends cyclones.

The worst-case scenario suggests that the rigid ocean stratification will affect El Nino-La Nina cycles resulting in El Nino becoming the permanent state of the Pacific. The slowing of the thermohaline circulation will result in the increase of surface waters along the American Eastern sea coast, a faster increase of temperatures in East coast cities, and a faster rise of sea levels along the East coast.

**We have been warned.**





## Ukraine Crisis Drives Global Hunger



Alice Dahle

*Former treasurer and president of Linn County IUNA Chapter.*

Adequate food and nutrition is recognized as a human right in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(Art. 25\)](#) and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(Art. 11\)](#).

However, as the world is mesmerized by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a growing hunger crisis in many other parts of the world is being exacerbated by the conflict. The World Food Program (WFP) has referred to Ukraine as [“the bread-basket of the world”](#) and relies on Ukraine for 50% of the grain it distributes worldwide.

Here are just a few of the countries that will suffer the effects of the conflict in Ukraine:

**Afghanistan:** [95% of Afghans are not getting enough to eat](#). That number rises to almost 100% in fe-

male-headed households. Hospital wards are filled with malnourished children, and since January 2022, about 13,000 newborns have died of malnutrition and hunger-related diseases. Under the Taliban, women have been forbidden to work in most jobs. Restrictions have been put on their access to education, health care and freedom of movement and speech, even as the economic crisis created by the collapse of the banking system has left more than 80% of the population in debt. The price of food has risen significantly, and a severe drought is likely to yield another bad harvest this year.

**Yemen:** After 8 years of civil war, Yemen is almost entirely dependent on food imports, and 30% of the wheat it imports comes from

Ukraine. An estimated 17.4 million people in Yemen are in need of food assistance, and [161,000 face outright famine](#). 2.2 million children, including 538,000 who are already severely undernourished, and about 1.3 million women are likely to be malnourished by the end of the year. Nearly 4 million are likely to lose access to clean water and sanitation by then. Due to funding shortages, the WFP has already had to reduce food rations to 8 million people. The Russian war in Ukraine has diverted attention and funding for aid to Yemen, and caused price hikes in food and fuel.

**Northern Ethiopia:** In another conflict, the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea have imposed blockades on the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions in northern Ethiopia.



Because of the roadblocks, insecurity and violence in the area, the UN and other humanitarian aid organizations have been unable to provide the emergency food and medical supplies that are desperately needed in areas under siege. In addition to the local people, [140,000 Eritrean refugees](#) have fled persecution and abuses in their home country and have settled in refugee camps in northern Ethiopia. Humanitarian aid is unable to reach them, and they now face rising attacks and hunger. Many have been forced to flee again.

**Egypt:** The price of bread in Egypt has long been heavily subsidized, and whenever the government announces a reduction of the subsidy, protests break out. [Egypt, Lebanon and Libya are among Ukraine's top importers](#) in the Middle East and North Africa region. In 2021, Ukrainian wheat accounted for 10.7% of Egypt's total imports. To avoid social unrest, Egypt has scrambled to stockpile as much wheat as possible and locate alternative sources of wheat as Russia prepared to invade Ukraine.

**Ukraine:** Before the Russian invasion, Ukraine was

[WFPs largest supplier of food commodities](#) by volume, amounting to 880,000 tons of wheat and split peas in 2021. As invasion became more and more likely, WFP raced to deliver emergency food supplies to warehouses in Ukrainian cities at risk of coming under siege. WFP's goal is to provide food for 3.1 million people in Ukraine. However, humanitarian convoys are now threatened by fighting and indiscriminate attacks. Warehouses are deliberately bombed. Ukrainian truck drivers are afraid of attacks and being conscripted to fight at check points along the road. This year's harvest in Ukraine is likely to be very difficult due to massive displacement of the population and agricultural workers. Food prices in the country have reached an all-time high due to high demand and transportation costs.

The consequences of the conflict in Ukraine are likely to push more people in countries around the world into poverty and hunger. An end to the invasion of Ukraine is urgent, and the member states of the UN must provide the funding necessary for the World Food Program and other UN agencies to carry out their life-saving work.

## FOREVER CHEMICALS MUST GO



Nancy Porter

*IUNA Advocacy Committee Chairwoman and  
Iowa City Community School District Educator*

The 66th session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) took place between March 14-25, 2022. In addition to governmental meetings, [CSW66](#) offered a parallel program of events sponsored by non-governmental organizations. One of these events, held on March 17, 2022, was a [virtual workshop](#) on the impact of forever chemicals on girls and women sponsored by UNA Women, an Affinity Group of [UNA-USA](#). Presenters included [Dr. Maria Neira](#), (Director of Public Health and the Environment Department, [World Health Organization](#)) and UNA-USA champions [Himaja Nagireddy](#) and [Teena Halbig](#).

The panelists explained the harmful health consequences of [PFAS](#)—short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. These toxic chemicals are found in everyday products,

such as Teflon pans, certain waterproof and water-repellant products, and personal care products. PFAS are referred to as “forever chemicals” because they persist in the human body and the environment for a long time. In addition to being found in everyday products, PFAS have been found in the drinking water supplies of major U.S. cities. These forever chemicals are presumed to have devastating health consequences, including causing an increased risk of cancer. Dr. Neira also discussed research indicating that high levels of PFAS were correlated with a higher incidence of death and severe illness in individuals with Covid. You can watch the entire program [here](#).

More research is urgently needed on this topic. In the meantime, here are some things you can do. Be a wise consumer, and reduce your consumption of products with PFAS. Prioritize the use of cotton, linen, wool, and natural fabric. Talk to others about forever chemicals. Inform yourself, inform others. You also can support the efforts of UN bodies to advocate for [the global elimination of toxic chemicals](#). Pay attention to local connections to this global issue. Due to increased and improved testing, officials at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources [expect to find more PFAS in Iowa water sources](#). Global advocacy efforts must focus on state policy as well as national policy and international law.



## BECOME A MEMBER!

**You can help the United Nations build a better world by becoming a member of the Iowa United Nations Association. Help us to continue to educate, inspire, and mobilize Iowans in support of the lifesaving work of the United Nations. [Join here!](#) You may join our Iowa Division or our chapters in Johnson County, Linn County, or the Cedar Valley. Individuals under the age of 26 years are eligible for free membership.**



# Narrative Plentitude and the Deserving Immigrant



Jane Shuttleworth  
Educator and  
Human Rights Advocate

The horrific images of Ukrainians fleeing their country further illuminated the horrific condition of our asylum system when many Ukrainian migrants who made it to our southern border seeking safety were stopped. Restrictions put into place over the past several decades to stop the flow of migrants - including the more recent [Title 42](#) (migrant expulsion based on the pandemic) and the [Migrant Protection Protocols](#) - were now adversely impacting Ukrainians. Though the Ukrainians were originally blocked from U.S. entry, a few days later the Office of Homeland Security told border officials that Ukrainians may be exempt from asylum limits. Reports emerged that Ukrainians were being allowed in the U.S. on humanitarian parole for one year. Media coverage of discrepancies between the treatment of Ukrainians in comparison to other asylum seekers coincided with a [U.S. Court of Appeals ruling](#) that the United States may not return migrants to countries where they may face torture or persecution without an asylum hearing. Following these political and legal developments, the

Biden Administration [rescinded the Title 42 order](#). The CDC will implement [the termination of Title 42](#) on May 23, 2022.

The [Title 42 exemptions granted to Ukrainian asylum-seekers](#) has raised questions about preferential treatment and [racial disparities in U.S. immigration and refugee policy](#). This brings up the question, who is a deserving migrant?

This question of the deserving migrant made me think of the phrase 'narrative plentitude' coined by [Viet Thanh Nguyen](#), Pulitzer prize winning author and Vietnamese American. [Narrative plentitude](#), he says, is when all the stories are about you. Compare that to narrative scarcity. That is when there are not enough stories about you. While Nguyen invented the phrase to describe his experiences as a minority and refugee growing up in the U.S., the concept applies to the need for a plentitude of stories about the deserving migrant. In a recent *Tucson Sentinel* editorial, immigration attorney Mo Goldman offered a plentitude of stories about what makes a deserving migrant.

· Is it the migrant fleeing MS-13 gangs and economic oppression in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America?

· Is it the migrant coming to the United States to seek safety from political and other forms of persecution in Africa?

· Is it the migrant wishing to reunite with family through a relative-based petition?

· Is it the migrant forcibly displaced by violent actions beyond their control, such as we are seeing in Ukraine, Afghanistan and in other places around the world?

· Is it the undocumented immigrant who works tirelessly, every day, on behalf of U.S. businesses to the benefit of the majority of our citizens?

To his list, I add this: Is it the migrant who lost his home and crops due to severe weather induced by climate change?

Goldman concludes "You cannot pick or choose which immigrant or migrant is more deserving. Every immigrant deserves a fair process and an opportunity to be heard." It has been heartwarming to see the humanitarian response to Ukrainians. Now, may the benefits of narrative plentitude be extended to all migrants who have a right and deserve a chance to be heard as they seek asylum.

## Sponsor Circles for Afghan Families



Carol Lyons  
IUNA Board Member and  
Advocacy Committee Member

Refugees from Afghanistan are getting help in a number of ways as they arrive in the United States. One of those ways is the [Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans](#), set up through the [U.S. State Department](#) contracting with [Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors](#). Individuals or groups can join together to form a circle to sponsor an Afghan person or family. The individual or group must raise \$2,275.00 per sponsored person. Sponsors also commit to helping new arrivals to find housing, transportation, and jobs and to acquire clothing, food, household goods, and other basic necessities. Sponsors also assist arrivals in getting connected with the appropriate governmental programs. The commitment a sponsoring group makes is for a minimum of three months.

Sponsor Circles are an alternative to the non-profit resettlement agencies that work with the State Department. In Eastern Iowa, our resettlement agency is the [Catherine McAuley Center](#) in Cedar Rapids. The [Unitarian Universalist Society](#) in Coralville, [Faith United](#)



[Church of Christ](#) in Iowa City, and [Adamantine Spine Moving](#) in Iowa City are forming one of these Sponsor Circles to help relocate an Afghan family to the Iowa City area this spring. In addition to the physical support, helping these new residents feel welcomed and comfortable in their new environment is an important aspect of sponsorship circles.

The [United Nations](#) is working hard to support the people still living in Afghanistan who are facing great difficulties, including food insecurity and internal displacement. Sponsor Circles are one way Americans can do our part here to assist those refugees who have been admitted to the United States.



# Viet Than Nguyen: Refugees or Immigrants?



Carol Lyons

IUNA Board Member and  
Advocacy Committee Member

Notes from a speech at Sinclair Auditorium, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, IA 2/16/2022

[Viet Than Nguyen](#) won a Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Sympathizers*, and is also a best-selling author of *The Refugees*, *The Displaced*, and now *The Committed*.

In his talk, Nguyen distinguished between immigrants and refugees in terms of how people feel about themselves. Most prefer to be called immigrants since there is a stigma attached to being a refugee: coming here for a handout, a free ride, to take "our" jobs. On the other hand, the United States is often referred to as "a nation of immigrants."

As a result, Nguyen always positions himself as a refugee for the specific purpose of humanizing refugees. He tries to point out the complexities of being a refugee. He was 4 years old when his family arrived in the United States as refugees, and he and his brother were separated from their family and put into foster homes for quite a few years. Nevertheless, he is now a journalist and a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and his brother graduated both from Harvard and from Stanford Medical School.

The [model minority myth](#) significantly affects the experience of Asian men. This myth stands in tension with negative treatment of Asian immigrants in U.S. history, including the [Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882](#) in U.S. immigration policy, the general perceptions of Asian immigrants as the "[yellow peril](#)", and the [Japanese internment camps](#) during World War II. More recently, we have witnessed [racially-biased rhetoric](#) in descriptions of Covid-19 as the "Chinese Virus" or the "Kung Flu". We also have seen an [increase in violence against Asian women](#) in this country. Nguyen challenged the model minority myth and noted that "Refugees have the right to be mediocre."

Colonizers of Vietnam include China (for 1000 years), France, and the United States. But Vietnam did colonizing of its own. Colonizers have always thought they were more human than anyone else. As a result, refugees have always had to prove their humanity. In Vietnam, as everywhere else, actually both sides committed atrocities, and Nguyen

writes about people who are complex, exhibiting "both humanity and inhumanity." In Vietnam, people felt victimized by both Communists and anti-Communists. Everyone has "selective memory," such as the United States regarding slavery.

There are 52 ethnicities in Vietnam, so Nguyen, clearly Asian, is the "white guy" in Vietnam. In France, his books are classified as Anglo-Saxon literature. Nguyen asks, "Who gets to use violence?" A gun in the hands of a white man is good; in all other hands, it is terrorism, he says.

Perhaps the overall point of his talk: "If it is possible to hate people we have never met, then it's also possible to love people we have never met."



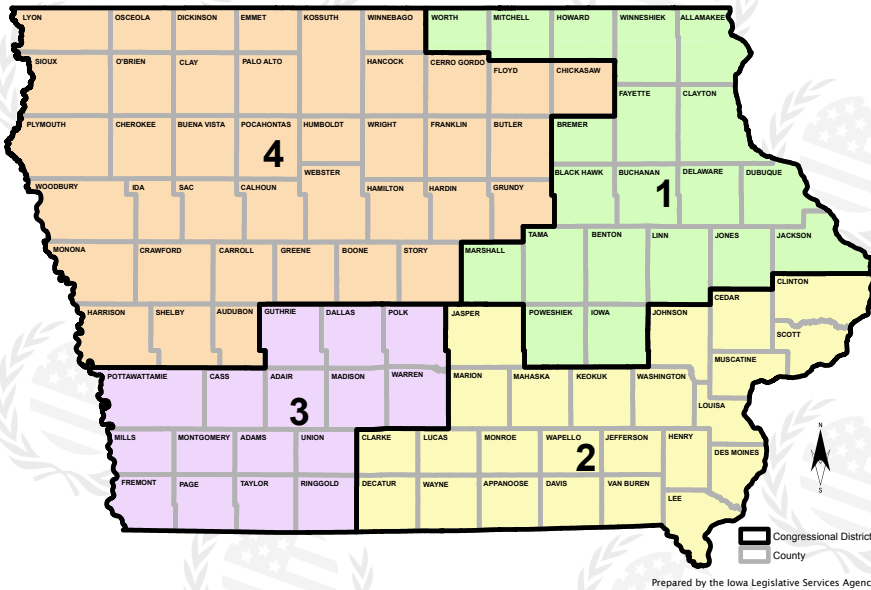
Special thanks to Chairwoman Tina Clair, Eric Adae, and Katie Clair of our Communication Committee and Chairwoman Nancy Porter, Ed Cranston, Alice Dahle, Jozef Figa, John Fraser, E.J. Gallagher, Caryl Lyons and Jane Shuttleworth of our Advocacy Committee!

Also, a huge shoutout to the two Drake School of Journalism and Mass Communications students, Nash Linley and Delaney Borja, for putting together this newsletter and enhancing the Iowa United Nations brand!



## IOWA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

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Washington D.C. 20510  
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