



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS
Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation
www.maryknollogc.org

June 13, 2019

Dear Members of the US Senate and House of Representatives,

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is very concerned about the shrinking rate of refugee resettlement in the United States. The Administration has reduced the refugee resettlement admissions goal for 2019 from a historic average of 95,000 to just 30,000, and they aren't even meeting that goal. **We urge you to hold the Administration to its goal of 30,000 refugees resettled this year and to demand a goal of at least 95,000 in FY2020.**

Our Office represents Maryknoll missionaries living and working with vulnerable communities in more than 25 countries around the world. As Catholic Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Missioners, we believe we are called by our faith in Jesus to welcome migrants and refugees, and as U.S. citizens we adhere to our country's values and tradition of welcoming people seeking safety and freedom from countries where they are oppressed and persecuted.

As the trend of chronic violent conflicts continues, Maryknoll missionaries are encountering more and more vulnerable people on the move—in Myanmar, Thailand, South Sudan, Uganda, Haiti, El Salvador, and Guatemala, to name a few. Resettlement is a refugee's last option for safety. To be considered for resettlement, a refugee must first receive a refugee status determination by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) by proving they are fleeing persecution based on their ethnicity, nationality, religion, political opinion, or social group. Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted individuals in the United States.

Once here, refugees are known to have a positive impact on their new communities, with higher workforce participation and entrepreneurship than the national averages. Outside of the United States, refugee resettlement has a positive impact on U.S. foreign policy by promoting regional stability and demonstrating solidarity with allies.

On June 20, as we commemorate World Refugee Day, let us honor refugees' strength and resilience, and recommit our nation to providing leadership in response to the global refugee crisis and to funding refugee resettlement in the United States. We call on you to demand that the Administration meet its FY2019 goal to resettle 30,000 refugees and to press the Administration to commit to resettle 95,000 refugees in FY2020.

We invite you to join your colleagues in co-sponsoring two bills currently before both Houses of Congress.

- The GRACE Act, S.1088 & H.R.2146, which would set a minimum refugee admissions goal of 95,000;
- The NO BAN Act, S.1123 & H.R.2214, which would repeal the Muslim bans, refugee bans, and asylum ban, and prevent the Administration from setting such bans in the future.

Together we can be champions for refugees and seek to fulfill our moral obligation and the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger and care for those in need (Matthew 25).

Sincerely,

Susan Gunn
Director

Maryknoll Sisters • Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers • Maryknoll Lay Missioners

200 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202)832-1780 phone
(202)832-5195 fax
ogc@maryknoll.org

P.O. Box 311
Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545
(914)941-7575 phone
(914)923-0733 fax

777 First Avenue, 10th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10115
(212)973-9551 phone