

## **U.S. Catholic Bishops' Chairman and Catholic Leaders Deeply Concerned about Historically Low Refugee Resettlement in Time of Global Humanitarian Need**

March 27, 2018

WASHINGTON—Yesterday, Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State urging dialogue on the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Halfway through this fiscal year, the U.S. federal government has welcomed approximately 9,600 refugees, fewer than 25% of the refugees allowed for this year by the 2018 Presidential Determination. For Fiscal Year 2018, the Presidential Determination was set at 45,000 refugees, marking the lowest number since the Refugee Act of 1980 was created.

In part of the letter, Bishop Vásquez explained, “The current level of refugee arrivals leaves thousands of vulnerable people in harm’s way and searching for protection.” He continued, “Most often they are at-risk women and children who are too vulnerable to remain in the region and/or in situations too dangerous for them to wait in the host country until the conflict at home has ended.” Bishop Vásquez further stated, “As Christians, our concerns for refugees is integral to our life of faith.” He concluded, “In this spirit, we urge the Administration to renew a bipartisan commitment to resettlement for refugees, including religious minorities.”

The full letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security can be found here:

<https://justiceformigrants.org/2016site/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Refugee-Letter-to-DHS-Sec-Nielsen.pdf>.

Additionally, over 1600 Catholic organizations, women and men religious and lay leaders, also voiced their concern over the state of the USRAP. That letter can be found here:

<https://justiceformigrants.org/2016site/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Letter26March2018inclSigners2.pdf>.