

U.S. Bishop Chairmen Voice Opposition to Proclamation That Further Restricts Immigration and Family Reunification

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WASHINGTON — The President issued a proclamation Friday restricting the issuance of immigrant visas to people from Burma (Myanmar), Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria. People from Sudan and Tanzania will no longer be eligible for certain visas to come to the United States, commonly called “Diversity Visas.”

Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton and chairman of the USCCB’s Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento and chairman of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., along with Sean Callahan, president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, and Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA issued the following statement strongly disagreeing with the administration’s latest action:

“The proclamation restricting immigration further undermines family reunification efforts and will make ensuring support for forced migrants in the designated countries more difficult. This proclamation also serves as a painful reminder of the 2017 ban which threatened our country’s founding principle of religious freedom. Over the last three years, waivers to allow visas from current travel ban nations based on undue hardship (such as family illness) were supposed to be available but were almost never authorized. We note with particular sadness and have witnessed firsthand the trauma of family separation that occurs with travel bans, which will only increase with this new proclamation.

“We respect that there are challenges in assuring traveler documentation and information exchange between countries as a means to ensure the safety of citizens. However, we also believe that ill-conceived nation-based bans such as this injure innocent families. As the bishops’ conference president Archbishop José Gomez [has stated](#), ‘Welcoming families has allowed our country to integrate successive immigrant generations into the fabric of American life, allowing them to contribute their faith, values and talents to make this country great.’

“We urge the administration to reverse this action and consider the human and strategic costs of these harmful bans.”