

## **USCCB PRESIDENT CONDEMNS THREAT OF WIDESPREAD ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AND NEW RULE DRASTICALLY LIMITING ASYLUM**

July 16, 2019

WASHINGTON—Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, made the following statement in response to the climate of fear created by the Department of Homeland Security's announced immigration enforcement actions and the Administration's new Interim Final Rule to drastically limit asylum, which was published today:

"Enforcement actions like those anticipated this week by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency separate families, cause the unacceptable suffering of thousands of children and their parents, and create widespread panic in our communities. I condemn such an approach, which has created a climate of fear in our parishes and communities across the country. I recently wrote the President asking him to reconsider this action.

A stated intent of these actions is to deter Central Americans fleeing for their lives from seeking refuge in the United States. This is both misguided and untenable. It is contrary to American and Christian values to attempt to prevent people from migrating here when they are fleeing to save their lives and to find safety for their families.

And, in addition to this climate of fear, we have seen the Administration today take further unacceptable action to undermine the ability of individuals and families to seek protection in the United States. The Administration's new rule on asylum eligibility presents a similar enforcement-only immigration approach. The rule adds further barriers to asylum-seekers' ability to access life-saving protection, shirks our moral duty, and will prevent the United States from taking its usual leading role in the international community as a provider of asylum protection. Further, while still reviewing the rule, initial analysis raises serious questions about its legality.

I urge the President to reconsider these actions, the new rule, and its enforcement-only approach. I ask that persons fleeing for their lives be permitted to seek refuge in the U.S. and all those facing removal proceedings be afforded due process. All who are at or within our borders should be treated with compassion and dignity. Beyond that, a just solution to this humanitarian crisis should focus on addressing the root causes that compel families to flee and enacting a humane reform of our immigration system.

Pope Francis, in his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2019, reminds us that "the presence of migrants and refugees – and of vulnerable people in general – is an invitation to recover some of those essential dimensions of our Christian existence and our humanity that risk being overlooked in a prosperous society."