

RCUSA Communications Working Group

Toolkit for Media Response

to FY18 Presidential Determination

In light of President Trump announcing a refugee resettlement cap that is the lowest in U.S. history, RCUSA has prepared a multifaceted response for member organizations to help amplify a counter-narrative both at the national level and to share with their constituents across the country. The administration must be held accountable at a time when the world is facing the largest refugee crisis in recorded history, with over 22 million registered refugees, half of whom are children. We ask: how could our country abdicate our leadership role for this critical, life-saving humanitarian program? In this toolkit, you will find call scripts, sample tweets, and letters to the editor, urging the cap to be raised to at least 75,000 refugees.

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ACTION ALERT: Urgent Call to Increase the U.S. Refugee Admissions Goal!

Background: The Administration has now released their refugee admissions goal (officially known as the Presidential Determination), and it is the lowest in U.S. history. At a time when the world is facing the largest refugee crisis in recorded history, with over 22 million registered refugees, half of whom are children, how could our country abdicate our leadership role for this critical, life-saving humanitarian program? This decision means vulnerable refugees, including those who served our country in Iraq, torture survivors, unaccompanied refugee children, those with severe medical needs, and persecuted religious minorities, will be left in harm's way. This decision could needlessly push them into the hands of traffickers or worse. To do less means loss of life, deepening regional and global instability, and families torn apart.

We know that the United States is capable of doing far, far more – that's why WE NEED YOU to tell your members of Congress AND the President that you strongly support an admissions goal of at least 75,000 individuals being protected and welcomed in the coming fiscal year. Let's push the President and Congress to do what we know we're capable of.

Call both your Senators AND Representative at 1-866-940-2439

Please call three times to be connected with your Representative and both of your Senators.

AND don't forget to call the White House at 202-456-1111

Sample Script:

"I'm your constituent from (CITY/STATE), and I am calling to express my deep disappointment that the President set the lowest refugee admissions ceiling since the start of the U.S. refugee program. I urge (Member's Name) to publicly call on the President to raise the admissions ceiling for this year to 75,000, and to join other members of Congress in finding ways to encourage the President to do this. The world is experiencing the worst global displacement crisis in history – with over 22 million refugees, half of whom are children. How could we decrease our commitment to helping those in desperate need at such a moment?

My community welcomes refugees, and wants to help them – I encourage (Member's Name) to stand up for what is right, and protect this life-saving humanitarian program."

If you feel comfortable, share a personal story about why helping and welcoming refugees is important to you (your faith, your community, your business, your family or background etc.) Let them know the specific ways that refugees benefit and are welcomed into your community, and why refugee protection is so important to you. Make it personal!

Sample tweets

America has always been a safe haven for the world's most vulnerable refugees, @realDonaldTrump. This fiscal year, please #Welcome75K.

Let's celebrate the diversity and resiliency #refugees bring to our communities. Join me and urge @POTUS to #Welcome75K ! #GreaterAs1

The US has always been a global leader in the protection of refugees. We must continue to help make #RefugeesWelcome and #Welcome75K!

The US Refugee Resettlement Program is life-saving for #refugees with no other means of finding safety. #Welcome75K #GreaterAs1

U.S. refugee admissions are at risk of dropping to historically low numbers. Let's urge @POTUS to #Welcome75K because #AmericaWelcomes!

The U.S. refugee resettlement program embodies our most beloved American values and makes our communities better. #Welcome75K #GreaterAs1

General Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

[If you are responding to or referencing another article, you should reference it by writing the first sentence, then the title of the article, the name of the publication & the date it was published]. I wholeheartedly disagree with slashing refugee admissions numbers, as the recent Presidential Determination has done. At a time when those who have fled their homes due to war and persecution exceeds 20 million, it is shameful that our nation turn its back on these desperate people.

I am a [e.g. faith leader, community member, mother, student] and value this community as a welcoming place for refugees. The President's decision on refugee admissions does not reflect my values, the values of this community or those of our country. In fact, I have personally seen how our community benefits from taking in the most vulnerable refugees. [Give personal example of refugees' impact].

I encourage your readers to contact their elected officials in Congress and encourage them to create welcoming policies for refugees.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your City, State, Month, DD, YYYY]

Faith Leader Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

[If you are responding to or referencing another article, you should reference it by writing the first sentence, then the title of the article, the name of the publication & the date it was published]. My faith has taught and called me to welcome the stranger, stand with the vulnerable, and love my neighbor. For me, this also means welcoming refugees.

As a father, minister, and [Pennsylvanian or enter state], I am proud to demonstrate these values in my daily life and weekly sermons at [name of congregation]. Therefore, the recently announced Presidential Determination is not in line with my faith and values.

I wholeheartedly disagree with slashing refugee admissions numbers, as the Presidential Determination has done. At a time when those who have fled their homes due to war and persecution exceeds 20 million, it is shameful that our nation turn its back on these desperate people.

From the [earliest books] in the [Bible/Torah/Quran], our faith calls on us to show mercy and hospitality to those fleeing persecution. We are called to treat them with dignity, respect, and love, providing the same welcome that we ourselves would hope for.

I encourage your readers to contact their elected officials in Congress and encourage them to create welcoming policies for refugees.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your City, State, Month, DD, YYYY]

Refugee Leader Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

[If you are responding to or referencing another article, you should reference it by writing the first sentence, then the title of the article, the name of the publication & the date it was published]. My name is **[name]**, and I'm **[career, family, etc.]** I came to the United States as a refugee from **[country]** **[time]** years ago. My family and I were forced to leave everything behind after **[personal story]**.

Today, I wholeheartedly disagree with slashing refugee admissions numbers, as the recent Presidential Determination has done. At a time when those who have fled their homes due to war and persecution exceeds 20 million, it is shameful that our nation turn its back on these desperate people.

The President's decision on refugee admissions does not reflect my values, the values of this community or those of our country. As someone who understands the struggles of refugees firsthand, I am disheartened to see that my beloved new home is denying that same opportunity to others now facing similarly dangerous situations. In fact, I have personally seen how our community benefits from taking in the most vulnerable refugees. [Give personal example of refugees' impact].

I encourage your readers to contact their elected officials in Congress and encourage them to create welcoming policies for refugees. I continue now to believe in the importance of welcoming others--for others have welcomed me.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your City, State, Month, DD, YYYY]