

April 16, 2021

Episcopal Church Statement on White House Refugee Resettlement Cap Decision

Today the Biden administration announced it would not increase the refugee cap for Fiscal Year 2021 from a historic low of 15,000 refugees to 62,500. Given that President Biden campaigned on increasing the refugee cap in FY2021 and took the necessary steps to make these changes in February, we express disappointment with the administration's decision to not follow through with these steps. The Episcopal Church has **called on** the United States and other wealthy nations to "contribute to resettlement, establish and maintain safe and orderly humanitarian protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other migrants seeking long-term solutions and safety." While we acknowledge that the administration made the right decision to commit to resettling 15,000 refugees by eliminating stringent requirements for the allocation of refugee slots set by the Trump administration, its final decision does not align with the Church's commitment to refugees worldwide.

"Today's decision left us both surprised and profoundly disappointed with the administration's commitment to protecting vulnerable migrants worldwide," said The Rev. Dr. C.K. Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond The Episcopal Church, "it will leave many refugees – including many who have gone through the stringent screening and vetting process – in vulnerable conditions." Despite this setback, the Church remains committed to ensuring that the administration fulfills its promise to resettle 125,000 refugees in FY2022. "Members of the Episcopal Church will participate in Refugee Council USA's Virtual Advocacy Days next week, giving them an opportunity to ask their members of Congress to provide the administration with the funding to meet these goals," said Rebecca Blachly, director of the office of government relations for The Episcopal Church. In addition to these efforts, the Church will continue to work through its coalition partners to ensure that the United States continues to welcome the stranger, especially the most vulnerable ones facing dire conditions overseas.