

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **World Relief Denounces Proposed FY2020 Refugee Cap of 18,000**

*Global Christian humanitarian organization mourns the proposed Presidential Determination and urges the White House not to abandon refugees*

**BALTIMORE, Md.** – Today, the Trump administration announced its intention to set a refugee ceiling of just 18,000 for FY 2020. World Relief strongly opposes this cut to the nation’s refugee resettlement program, which would mean slashing the number of refugees allowed to the U.S. beyond the historically low ceiling set for FY 2019. In doing so, the administration betrays our national commitment to offering refuge and religious freedom to persecuted Christians and other religious minorities and it abandons individuals whose lives are at risk because of their service to the U.S. military.

**World Relief CEO Tim Breene** responded: “We are heartbroken by the devastating ripple effect this drastic reduction in the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. will cause around the world. If America continues to systematically shutter the program designed to welcome and offer safe haven to human beings made in the image of God, we fear that other countries will continue to follow our example, doing less at a time when the number of refugees in need of protection globally is increasing. This proposed cut to the refugee resettlement program not only denies safety and freedom to people fleeing religious persecution, war and genocide, but also further dismantles our ability to demonstrate Christ-like hospitality toward the vulnerable.”

Also today, President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) requiring that, within 90 days, the administration implement a process requiring the written consent of each state and locality in which a refugee may be resettled. By giving a veto to states and municipalities on where refugees are resettled, many refugees who have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. will be unable to be resettled in the same communities as family members already in the U.S. Unless the federal government intends to erect walls or checkpoints between cities, any refugee will still be free to move to any community within the U.S., but in doing so they may not have the support of a resettlement agency that provides vital integration support. This policy undermines families and is counter-effective toward the goal of promoting economic self-sufficiency.

These drastic changes comes at one of the most vulnerable points in the refugee crisis; over 70 million people are forcibly displaced throughout the world, 26 million of whom are refugees. In FY 2020, the U.S. will, at most, welcome 0.07% of those refugees to rebuild their lives in the U.S., a dramatic decline from our historical norm. The average refugee ceiling over the past four decades has been more than 90,000.

This decision directly contradicts the administration’s previously stated commitment to protect persecuted and oppressed Christians around the world; Christians have accounted for the majority of all refugees resettled to the U.S. in the past five years, but now will – along with the persecuted of other faiths – be largely shut out. This reduction also is likely to mean a further decline in the resettlement of refugees who have served the U.S. military as interpreters and in other capacities and whose lives and families are now threatened by terrorists as a result.

**World Relief President Scott Arbeiter** commented: “The fact is, almost all Americans come from a history and family lineage of immigrants. Whether our leadership remembers it or not, we’ve all been afforded the blessing and honor to live with certain protections, freedoms and opportunities in this country that others can’t imagine and that should never be taken for granted. While the U.S. has historically been the most generous and welcoming country toward refugees in the world, our current administration’s dramatic change in stance is extremely troubling. We ask the church to respond by praying and taking action to stop this injustice.”

This further reduction to the U.S. refugee resettlement program also is likely to further decimate the national infrastructure of faith-based and non-profit organizations that have proven extremely effective at helping refugees to resettle and integrate into the American community. This infrastructure, built over more than 40 years of public-private partnership, is being dismantled by the abrupt shift in federal policies, and it will not be easily rebuilt. Like our peer organizations, World Relief has had to make the difficult decision to close offices in several U.S. cities in the past two years.

Despite these changes, World Relief will continue to operate in the U.S. and remains committed to its mission of empowering local churches to serve the vulnerable, including refugees, asylum-seekers and other vulnerable immigrants within the U.S. While we have already had to make difficult organizational changes to the scope and physical locations of our work within the U.S., and further changes may be necessary, we are committed to empowering local churches to serve vulnerable immigrants in as many locations and as many ways as possible.

While we continue to advocate for the arrival of new refugees at a historically normal level such as 95,000 per year, World Relief continues to serve refugees already in the United States as well as asylum seekers and other vulnerable immigrants. Learn how you can respond at [worldrelief.org](http://worldrelief.org).

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*About World Relief:*

*World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization that seeks to overcome violence, poverty and injustice. Through love in action, we bring hope, healing and restoration to millions of the world’s most vulnerable women, men and children through vital and sustainable programs in disaster response, health and child development, economic development and peacebuilding, as well as refugee and immigration services in the U.S. For 75 years, we’ve partnered with churches and communities, currently across more than 20 countries, to provide relief from suffering and help people rebuild their lives.*

*Learn more at [worldrelief.org](http://worldrelief.org).*