

August 7, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the 170 undersigned national, state and local Jewish organizations and institutions below, we write to express our shared grave concern about recent reports that the Administration is considering resettling zero refugees in the United States in FY2020. As Jewish organizations, we do not write today to convey our collective views on broader immigration policy, but we are committed to welcoming those fleeing violence, persecution, and war. We urge the United States to meet the resettlement admissions goal of 30,000 this fiscal year and return the Presidential Determination to historic norms for fiscal year 2020.

We are in the midst of the worst global refugee crisis since WWII. The global refugee population reached a record 25.9 million in 2018. Yet the Administration continues to cut its refugee resettlement admission targets and prevent those already approved to resettle in the United States from actually doing so. As a result, people fleeing for their lives with their families cannot find safety here.

The United States has historically distinguished itself as a beacon of hope and as a safe haven for those who most need it. For nearly 40 years, the refugee admissions target averaged 95,000 per year, with actual admissions averaging 80,000 refugees per year. Despite this, the Administration set the admissions ceiling to a historic low of 30,000 refugees in FY19. Furthermore, the U.S. fell behind Canada in 2018 as the top resettlement country, settling only 22,491 refugees. Resettling zero refugees in the U.S. in FY2020 would effectively gut the refugee resettlement program, violate our values as Jews and Americans, and abdicate the American promise of freedom and opportunity.

These actions – turning our backs on people fleeing for their lives – defy the proud promise indelibly inscribed on the Statute of Liberty. As Jews, we know all too well what happens when people fleeing for their lives have nowhere to turn. Our parents or grandparents, neighbors or community members once faced a similarly callous and unwelcoming world, with fatal consequences. The Jewish community has a particular moral responsibility that compels our commitment to welcoming refugees.

We urge the Department of State, in partnership with the other implementing agencies, to restore our country's refugee admissions cap to at least 95,000 for FY2020. The values of our nation and the safety and well-being of tens of thousands of refugees and their families depend on it.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

ACC (the American Conference of Cantors)

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League)

Agudath Israel of America
Ameinu
American Jewish World Service
Avodah
B'nai B'rith International
Cantors Assembly
CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis)
Foundation for Ethnic Understanding
Goldtree Training
Habonim Dror North America
HIAS
International Rabbinic Fellowship
J Street
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Women International
Jewish World Watch
Keshet
Men of Reform Judaism
NCJW (National Council of Jewish Women)
NCSEJ
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
New Jewish Outreach
Orthodox Union
Rabbinical Assembly
Reconstructing Judaism
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Society for Humanistic Judaism
The Jewish Federations of North America
T'ruah
Union for Reform Judaism
Uri L'Tzedek
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Rabbinic Network
Women's League for Conservative Judaism
Workmen's Circle

Local and State Organizations and Institutions:

Arizona

Arizona Jews for Justice!
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Phoenix
NCJW Arizona Section
Secular Humanist Jewish Circle, Tucson

California

Bet Tzedek Legal Services
Community Shul of Montecito and Santa Barbara
Congregation Kol Shofar
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Community Relations Committee of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
Jewish Family Services of San Diego
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Leo Baeck Temple
NCJW California State Policy Advocates
Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills

Colorado

Beth Ami - Colorado Congregation for Humanistic Judaism
Jewish Community Relations Council of Colorado
JEWISHcolorado

Connecticut

Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (JCARR)
Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven

Delaware

Jewish Family Services of Delaware

Florida

Beth Israel of Ocala, Florida
Congregation Beth Adam South Florida Center for Humanistic Judaism
Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation
NCJW Sarasota-Manatee Section
South Florida Zionesses
Temple Beth Shalom

Georgia

Jewish Educational Alliance
Savannah Jewish Federation

Illinois

JCFS Chicago, Illinois
Jewish Community Relations Council of Springfield

Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Jewish Federation of Springfield
Mishkan Chicago
NCJW South Cook Section

Indiana

Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council

Kansas

Jewish Community Relations Bureau, AJC
Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation

Kentucky

Jewish Community Relations Council of Louisville
Jewish Family & Career Services of Kentucky
NCJW, Louisville Section

Maryland

Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation, Bethesda
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington

Massachusetts

Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
Jewish Community Relations Council, Greater Boston
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS Boston)
Massachusetts Board of Rabbis

Michigan

Detroit Center for Civil Discourse
Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC – Detroit
NCJW Michigan Section

Minnesota

Adath Jeshurun Congregation
Adath Jeshurun Hesed Committee
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis
JHSUM
Mount Zion Temple
NCJW Minnesota Section
Shir Tikvah Congregation

Missouri

Central Reform Congregation
Congregation B'nai Amoona
Congregation Shaare Emeth
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis

NCJW St. Louis Section

New Jersey

Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest
Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey
Livingston Celebrates Israel
Temple Emeth, Teaneck

New York

Buffalo JCRC
Congregation Beth Abraham
Congregation Kolot Chayeinu
Congregation Mount Sinai
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee
Temple Beth Am
Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo
Temple B'rith Kodesh
Temple Chaverim of Plainview
Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York City
UJA-Federation of New York

North Carolina

Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte

Ohio

Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Council
Congregation Torat Emet
JCC Grannie Group of Akron
Jewish Family Services, Columbus
NCJW Cleveland Section
Rockdale Temple

Oklahoma

Jewish Federation of Tulsa

Oregon

Beit Haverim
Congregation Beth Israel
Havurah Shalom
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Kol Shalom

Pennsylvania

Beth El Temple
HIAS Pennsylvania

JEVS Human Services
Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) Pittsburgh
Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg
Jewish Federation of Reading
National Council of Jewish Women of Pennsylvania

South Carolina

Charleston Jewish Family Services
Charleston Jewish Federation
Community Relations Council of the Columbia Jewish Federation

Tennessee

Beth Sholom Synagogue
Congregation Micah
Jewish Community Partners, Memphis
Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee
Memphis Jewish Federation
Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable
Temple Israel
The Temple, Congregation Ohabai Sholom

Texas

Congregation Beth Torah
Jewish Family Service Houston
Jewish Family Service of Dallas
NCJW Austin Section
NCJW Greater Dallas Section
NCJW Texas State Policy Advocates
Temple Shalom
Tiferet Israel Congregation

Washington

Jewish Family Services of Seattle
Kol HaNeshamah
Temple De Hirsch Sinai

Washington, D.C.

Hill Havurah

Wisconsin

Beth Israel Sinai
Coalition for Jewish Learning – Milwaukee
Congregation Shalom
Milwaukee Jewish Day School
The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation