



## Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### Presidential Determination for Fiscal Year 2018 Messaging Guidance and Talking Points

**Topline:** As a country, we can't turn our backs on the worst displacement crisis in history.

- We call on the Administration to resettle the **45,000** refugees they committed to resettling and urge the President to maintain the fundamentally non-discriminatory nature of the program.
- We can't forget that **this is not about a number – this is about saving lives.**
- Refugee resettlement is a life-saving option available to less than 1% of the displaced population who are unable to return home or stay in the country to which they fled.
- Since World War II, the U.S. has been the global leader in offering refuge to those escaping persecution, war, or violence in their home country.
- It is the very ideal our great nation was founded upon – offering freedom from religious and political persecution. It is the reason our country exists.
- Refugee resettlement is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do, advancing U.S. national and foreign policy interests.

**Values:** We are a nation of immigrants and refugees. Helping refugees who have fled their homes and whose needs simply cannot be met in the region is the right thing to do.

- The refugees that come here embody American values and helping refugees is essential to what it means to be an American.
- Refugees are fleeing the same kind of terror which we have seen unfolding around the world. We can't forget who refugees are – they are the families, the children, and the most vulnerable among us who have lost everything. They have lost friends and family. They have lost their home.
- What unites us as Americans is our deep respect for hard work and a shared commitment to the country we call home. Refugees are seeking a new place to call home and that is what the refugee resettlement program offers – a new home and chance to build a safe and prosperous life.

**National Security and Foreign Policy:** Resettlement is a critical tool to alleviate regional instability, maintain relationships with important allies, and advance our national security and foreign policy interests.

- National security experts have repeatedly said: the program advances our national security interests.
- It supports our allies in refugee host country and reinforces stability and liberty around the world – thereby contributing to our collective safety, security, and diplomatic missions.
- Moreover, it contributes to keeping our troops safe.

- Resettling refugees is tangible proof that the U.S. is a beacon of inclusion and hope that offers a strong counter-weight to the anti-American narratives of terrorist organizations.

**Vetting:** The United States handpicks the refugees who resettle here and there is no harder way to enter the U.S. Only after all security checks are completed successfully is a refugee cleared for travel, at their cost, to the United States.

- The refugee vetting process includes more than 20 steps conducted while refugees are overseas. The process includes eight different U.S. Federal Government Agencies along with numerous security data base checks, background checks, biometric security checks, and in-person interviews.
- This intensive and extensive vetting takes, on average, 18 to 24 months. And it is constantly being reviewed and enhanced.
- We can reliably and constantly evaluate the program's security while continuing to safely admit refugees. Our history has shown there is no need to choose, we can and must do both.

**Global Needs & Historic Precedent:** With over 65 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are children – now is not the time to stop, or shrink, this life-saving program.

- Last year, only 189,300 refugees were resettled in 37 countries with the U.S. resettling over 51% of all resettled refugees worldwide.
- For the U.S. to drastically reduce the number of resettlement spaces we offer, will mean vulnerable refugees, including those with severe medical needs, torture survivors, unaccompanied refugee children, and persecuted religious minorities, will continue to be in harm's way.
- The U.S. must continue to welcome refugees through resettlement, while also supporting ally countries who are themselves hosting millions of refugees and encouraging other countries to start or expand resettlement programs.
- At times of far less need, the U.S. has resettled far more (historic average of 85,000 refugees resettled each year and admissions ceiling set at 96,000 annually, on average, since 1980).