

**OFFERING REFUGE:  
A DISCUSSION GUIDE  
FOR FAITHFUL AMERICANS  
ON IMMIGRATION POLICIES  
AND PRACTICES**



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FRONT COVER: The French photographer and street artist JR created this artwork along the border fence in the Mexican city of Tecate in 2017, about an hour southeast of San Diego. The smiling toddler it depicts peeking out of his crib to the US side is named Kikito.

BACK COVER: A cross-border picnic takes place on French photographer and street artist JR’s “Giant Picnic” table. The long strip photo that makes the table’s design is meant to depict the eyes of Mayra, a DACA “Dreamer.” It appeared over the U.S.-Mexico border in Tecate, Mexico in October 2017.

Attendees from both sides of the border shared a meal across the border and through the fence.

Cover photos are ©JR Photographer. See: <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/migrants-picnic-across-the-border> and the video explaining the project: <https://vimeo.com/410614239>.

October 2020

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up this booklet and considering these matters.

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants. Except for the indigenous peoples that were here before St. Augustine, Jamestown, or Plymouth, and those brought as slaves, every one of us is an immigrant or the child of immigrants. I know, because I am one.

I am a proud American. I am a faithful Sikh. I am a thankful leader in the movement for interfaith cooperation and care deeply about how we approach immigration.

Immigration is repeatedly listed in surveys as being amongst the top five issues Americans want to talk about and address. We are still struggling to understand what it means to keep open that golden door of hospitality. Differing ideas about how we should approach immigration issues can divide neighbor against neighbor.

Religions for Peace USA, where I have the privilege of serving as the Executive Director,



works to engage Americans to join with one another across lines of difference, religious and otherwise. We are our nation's broadest coalition of religious communities and leaders working together for peace.

This booklet is designed to serve as a helping guide for Americans of faith willing to engage in respectful discussions about immigration. In these pages, persons in intentional community with one another can thoughtfully explore together faithful responses to refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons.

We are non-partisan, so we aren't trying to have you decide on any specific political position. At the same time, we are faith-committed, so we believe that each of our respective faiths calls us to act from our shared values – such as hospitality, family, and dignity. This fact compels us to act in loving ways towards our neighbors.

With appreciation for your willingness to discern and discuss these matters with your neighbors, I am,

Yours sincerely,

T. S. Butalia

Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia  
Executive Director  
Religions for Peace USA

October 2020

Dear Reader,

Assalamu alaikum.

Greetings of peace to each of you.

Like my colleague Tarunjit, I, too, am a proud American. I am a faithful Muslim. The issue of faith and immigration is one of grave importance to Muslims across the globe, and to myself. The Islamic tradition speaks clearly of the right to seek refuge in the face of persecution, as well as to the duty of providing asylum. Thank you for considering this resource and for taking seriously the issues surrounding immigration. We hope you will be intentional in taking time to participate in using this guide with others in your faith or interfaith community. We trust that God will be with you in the process of your learning together and discernment.

Change takes time and faith. Change happens at the speed of relationships. Relationships take time and faith. Relationships move at the speed of trust. Trust takes time and

faith. Trust takes time to develop and is shaped by context and conditions. By even considering using this resource in a faithful community, you have already taken some of the first vulnerable steps in trust and relationships that can create change. Thank you for doing so.

Thank you for making the space to discuss the matters of immigration with your neighbor. May a spirit of generosity come between you in seeking to understand together.

In Peace,



Mr. Naeem Baig

Moderator

Religions for Peace USA

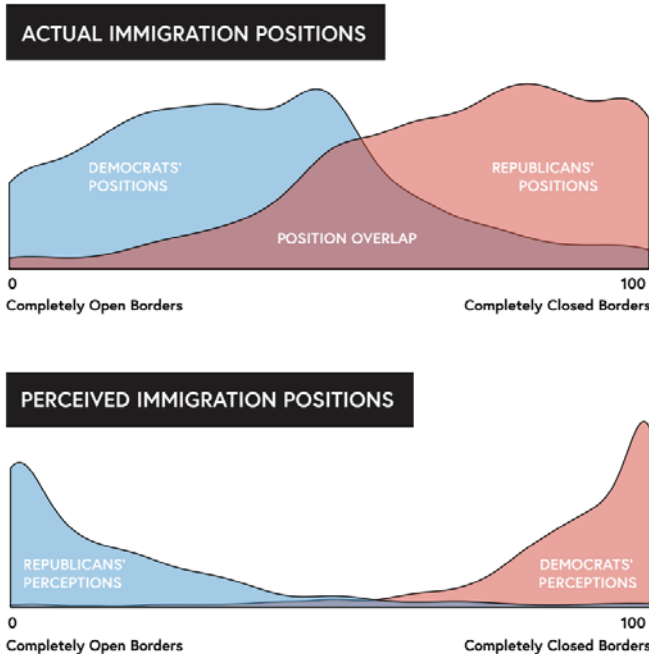


October 2020

Dear Reader,

## ACTUAL VS. PERCEIVED DISAGREEMENT ON IMMIGRATION

Figure 4



Good, decent, and well-meaning people can have differences, even sharp ones, about what the best course of action is in handling any political or religious matter. Each of us too easily tends to speak past one another, stay in our bubbles, or avoid talking about difficult matters altogether. It is our very human tendency towards fight, freeze, or flight to protect ourselves. It is the belief that neither religion or politics are supposed to be talked about in polite company.

So we must be crazy to think religious people should talk together about the political matter of immigration. It is contentious. A recipe for disaster, right? No. Actually, we believe it is a necessity and the only path forward is through talking about it openly, listening to each other deeply, and discerning faithful positions on the matter together. We have to talk about difficult matters and lean in. Immigration is a moral matter.

As Beyond Conflict<sup>1</sup> has recently shown with their research (see illustration to the left),<sup>2</sup> Americans are actually much closer to agreements on positions about immigration than we think we are. Reality is likely far better than our perceptions.

This guide was designed to be used in small study cells within communities of faith. It was created to provide you with:

1. Some suggested ground rules,
2. Short introductions to some key issues on immigration,

<sup>1</sup>“America’s Divided Mind: Understanding the Psychology That Drives Us Apart,” by Beyond Conflict, June 2020. Accessed September 15, 2020: <https://beyondconflictint.org/americas-divided-mind>.

<sup>2</sup>Actual vs. Perceived illustration is from p.16 of “America’s Divided Mind: Understanding the Psychology That Drives Us Apart,” by Beyond Conflict, June 2020. Accessed September 15, 2020: <https://beyondconflictint.org/americas-divided-mind>.

3. Thought provoking questions and stories for your discussions,
4. Good resources to look for more and dig deeper, and
5. Compelling stories that provide windows into faith actors working on immigration.

It assumes that you might have up to an hour per week to look at each section with your peers, and it is designed to be used over several weeks.

Thank you for taking time to engage these resources and consider starting a conversation in your community.

If you have questions or want to share insights, drop us a note at [refuge@rfpusa.org](mailto:refuge@rfpusa.org). We would love to hear from you.

In Peace,



Alisa Roadcup  
President  
Chicago Refugee Coalition



The background of the entire page is a low-angle, close-up photograph of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown, set against a clear, bright blue sky. The statue's face is looking upwards and to the right. The crown's spikes are prominent, and the texture of the stone is visible. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

## MISSION

The mission of Religions for Peace USA (RFPUSA) is to inspire and advance common actions for peace through multi-religious cooperation among our nation's religious communities.

## VISION

Religions for Peace USA envisions a nation in which people of faith and goodwill live together in respect and mutual support, creating paths to peace and justice.

## ABOUT RELIGIONS FOR PEACE USA

Religions for Peace USA (RFPUSA) is the largest and most broadly-based representative multi-religious forum in the United States, with participants from more than 50 religious communities, representing diversity within each of the major faith traditions and many of the minor ones.

RFPUSA identifies shared commitments among religious communities in the U.S., enhances mutual understanding among these communities, and facilitates collaboration to address issues of common concern. The current foci are: protecting religious minorities and advancing religious freedom; advocating for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants; addressing racial and ethnic tensions; and defending creation and challenging climate change.

RFPUSA seeks to contribute to the well-being of civil society and to advance peacebuilding efforts and reconciliation in the United States and throughout the world.

RFPUSA is a national interreligious council of Religions for Peace, which supports a network of nearly 100 national and regional global affiliates. Religions for Peace came into formation in the 1960's in response to an editorial to *The New York Times* by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath.





Originally dubbed the World Conference on Religion and Peace, by 1970 it came together as a multi-nation global organization, established itself formally in the US, and was situated to interface with the United Nations and work together as faiths on challenges such as violent conflict and the need for nuclear disarmament. US actors who worked on the global growth of what eventually became named simply Religions for Peace started an independent affiliate in the US in 2000.

Most of the communities affiliated with RFPUSA have national constituencies, which affords the ability and potential to carry out programs in every locality. RFPUSA has done work in dozens of local US communities, as well as led national campaigns.

RFPUSA enjoys support from member communities, individuals, and foundations. Foundations and partners have included: Rockefeller Foundation, United Nations Foundation and Better World Campaign, Henry Luce Foundation, David and Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation, UNICEF, International Shinto Foundation, El-Hibri Foundation, GHR Foundation, Betty and Bernard Werthan Foundation, William and Mary Greve Foundation, First Community Foundation & RFP International.



# A JOINT STATEMENT

## from U.S. Religious Leaders and Communities Regarding U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policies and Practices

*Washington, D.C.*

*October 19, 2020*

We – people of faith and religious and spiritual leaders from diverse traditions throughout the United States – are urgently joining to express our shared concerns regarding current U.S. immigration policies and practices.

We are from religious traditions small and large, young and old. We are Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Indigenous, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Unitarian Universalist, Zoroastrian, and many others. We herald from great faith “families” of the world – Abrahamic, Eastern, Native and Earth-Based, and Asian.

We uplift our moral voices and make plain the imperatives of our respective traditions that call us to act together. We are called to love our neighbors, protect the vulnerable, and care for the sojourner. We are compelled by faith to advocate for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.

We join together to express our profound dismay and concern over the actions of the current administration. There is an intentional and ongoing dismantling of traditional US commitments towards refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. This includes an abandonment of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, and failure by the administration to consult with Congress, as required by U.S. law, about the 2021 refugee admissions goal, known as the “Presidential Determination” (PD). The PD for 2021 was proposed at an

all-time historic low of 15,000.

The global need to aid and resettle displaced persons is at its highest point and yet our country’s administration has dropped our commitment to the most vulnerable to the lowest level of response in history.

Our long-held trust and working relationship with the U.S. government to provide hospitality and refuge to the stranger has been allowed to lay fallow. The diminution of the refugee program leaves out hundreds of thousands of vulnerable individuals around the world who deserve America’s protection.

We pledge the renewed support of our communities and offices to address this crisis and affirm our sense of urgency and priority in addressing these issues.

The United States was effectively founded as a place of refuge for those escaping persecution, including religious persecution. It rose as a nation to become a world beacon in protecting religious minorities and religious freedom. Concern and hospitality for the stranger are at the theological core of each of our respective traditions.

We have a moral responsibility to love our neighbor, protect the vulnerable, and care for the sojourner, both as people of faith and as Americans. We pledge to advocate for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. We do this by championing causes which uphold the dignity and sacred worth of every person and protect families and human security.

## A JOINT STATEMENT | CONTINUED

We cannot afford to be misled by fear or distracted by scapegoating. We will not accept short-sighted solutions. We pledge a priority to this work, to remain vigilant, and to uphold a series of commitments, re-engaging our faith communities in advocacy for vulnerable displaced persons.

We pledge to work together with urgency and priority to:

1. Restore our country's historic commitment and leadership in aiding refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants to meet the pressing needs of these individuals for a safe and viable community to live and thrive.
2. Champion the humane and fair treatment of unauthorized immigrants including providing a pathway to citizenship and permanent protections for participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders. Urge respect for and compliance with national and international asylum and protection laws.
3. Advocate for an end to funding of the border wall, deportations, prolonged detention, and inhumane ICE enforcement operations and an increase in funding for the humane treatment of unauthorized immigrants.
4. Support the well-being of families and the protection of the inherent dignity and value of human beings in all of our actions. Support the Sanctuary Movement.
5. Conduct frequent engagements with our elected officials and relevant government agencies to demand greater accountability.
6. Stand in firm and visible solidarity with persecuted minorities, especially our religious neighbors, doing so in our houses of faith and communities and at detention centers, courts, and the halls of power.
7. Challenge the fearmongering and xenophobia that is being fomented, redirecting ourselves and our neighbors to examine verifiable causes for our challenges and championing workable and humane solutions.
8. Call ourselves and our individual faith communities to engage in purposed and careful consideration of immigration issues through study and prayerful reflection with the aim of making ongoing commitments to social action.
9. Uplift the mandates of our respective faiths to address migration related issues.
10. Work for comprehensive immigration reform to alleviate stresses on the system and advance security in effective and healthful ways.

Organizations who wish to sign on to the Joint Statement and join in the Pledge, may do so by responding to this [Google Form](#).

Individuals who wish to sign on to the Joint Statement and join in the Pledge, may do so by responding to this [Google Form](#).

*Updates on signatories/endorsers can be found at: <https://www.rfpusa.org/immigration>.*

# MEMBERS OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE USA

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Islamic Congress  
Armenian Church of America  
Buddha's Light International Association  
Buddhist Churches of America  
Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry of Disciples of Christ  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Federation of Jain Associations of NA  
Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of NA  
Focolare Movement USA  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Hindu American Seva Charities  
Hindu Community of South Carolina  
Hindu Temple Society of North America  
Imam Al-Khoei Benevolent Foundation  
International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Islamic Circle of North America  
Islamic Society of North America  
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation  
Karuna Tendai Dharma Center  
Konko Church of Vancouver  
Maryknoll Sisters  
Mosque Cares  
Muslim American Society  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States  
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States  
Orthodox Church in America  
Paulist Fathers  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Reformed Church in America  
Rissho Kosei-kai  
Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus  
Servite Fathers  
Sikh Council for Interfaith Relations  
Syrian Orthodox Church  
Tendai Dharma Center  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Women's Islamic Initiative for Spirituality & Equality  
Won Buddhist International

# BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

*The following definitions will aid you in establishing common footing in your understanding of migration-related issues. The definitions are drawn from the global agencies that track and aid displaced persons: United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN-affiliated International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>3</sup>*

## ASYLUM SEEKER:

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker. In the U.S. context an asylum seeker must present themselves at a port of entry or inside the U.S., in order to effectuate the process to make a claim.

## DACA AND “DREAMERS”:

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a form of administrative relief from deportation in an effort to protect eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States when they were children. DACA gives young undocumented immigrants: 1) protection from deportation and 2) a work permit. There are a series of requirements about their age at the time of entry, their entry date, etc. The group of people eligible for DACA are known as “Dreamers.” As of June 30, 2019, there were 660,880 active DACA recipients in the U.S, according to the USCIS.

On June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of Dreamers and the DACA program and rejected the Trump administration’s 2017 attempt to terminate the program.

## DISPLACEMENT:

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.<sup>4</sup> Displaced person is a broader term than refugee or asylum seeker.

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON:

(IDP) Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See: “Key Migration Terms” at <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, annexed to United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Francis M. Deng, Submitted Pursuant to Commission Resolution 1997/39, Addendum (11 February 1998) UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, 5, para. 2 of the introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, annexed to United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr Francis M. Deng, Submitted Pursuant to Commission Resolution 1997/39, Addendum (11 February 1998) UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, 6.

### EMIGRANT:

From the perspective of the country of departure, the person who leaves their own country in order to settle permanently in another. When they are coming into your country they are an immigrant. The entire process is called migration.

### EMIGRATION:

From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

### IMMIGRANT:

From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.<sup>6</sup>

### IMMIGRATION:

From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

### MIGRANT:

A uniform legal definition of the term 'migrant' does not exist at the international level. An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who

moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.

### MIGRATION:

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

### NON-REFOULEMENT (THE PRINCIPLE OF):

The prohibition for States to extradite, deport, expel, or otherwise return a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would risk being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, or would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance, or of suffering another irreparable harm.

### REFUGEE:

A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (derived from the 1951 Convention).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 (1998) p. 10, definition of "long-term migrants."

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees ((Adopted July 28, 1951, entered into force April 22, 1954) 189 UNTS 137) Art. 1A(2).

### TPS (TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS):

The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States. Eligible individuals without nationality who last resided in the designated country may also be granted TPS. As of October 2020, TPS countries recognized by the United States include: El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

### UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANT:

There are approximately 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States. Persons who work with immigrants prefer to use the terminology “unauthorized immigrant” instead of “illegal immigrant” or “undocumented immigrant.” Why? The latter two terms are misleading at best and more likely to be both inaccurate and insulting. The fact is that U.S. law requires that individuals present themselves at a port of entry or within the US in order to be considered for asylum. Their presence in the U.S. while they go through the review process is both appropriate and legal. Moreover, they most often have some documentation for their case. Therefore, the terms “illegal” and “undocumented” are just misleading.

### XENOPHOBIA:

No universally accepted definition of xenophobia

<sup>8</sup> Sourced from “Declaration on Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Against Migrants and Trafficked Persons” (Adopted by the Asia-Pacific NGO Meeting for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Tehran, 18 February 2001). See: [www.hurights.or.jp/wcar/E/tehran/migration.htm](http://www.hurights.or.jp/wcar/E/tehran/migration.htm). Accessed September 15, 2020.

exists, though it can be described as “attitudes, prejudices, and behaviour that reject, exclude, and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society, or national identity.”<sup>8</sup>



### *Washington Synagogue Becomes a Sanctuary to Protect Asylum Seeker and Son*

Faith communities that become part of the New Sanctuary Movement do not necessarily provide physical shelter to unauthorized immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. Rather they promise to become involved in the needs and interests of immigrants and act as advocates for them. Becoming a physical sanctuary is a mature step in the process.

In September 2019, Temple Beth Hatfiloh in Olympia, Washington decided to become a physical sanctuary for Maria Pablo Matias and her son. A critical part of the Jewish story is about fleeing oppression and hardship. It therefore comes as a natural and fundamental response for the Jewish people to act on behalf of those facing the same with a sense of obligation. Jews speak about the responsibility of always being an upstander, avoiding becoming a bystander. These are ideas deeply ritualized in the Jewish tradition.

1,100 congregations in more than 30 states across the country have become sanctuaries, often where they are also supported by a city moving to become a sanctuary city.

“Facing deportation, a mother and son seek sanctuary in an Olympia synagogue” by Rolf Boone, *The Olympian*, September 6, 2019. See: <https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article234779707.html>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

Image: Used with permission. All rights reserved.  
© Rolf Boone | *The Olympian*.

# KEY UNITED STATES AGENCIES THAT DEAL WITH IMMIGRATION

*The previous Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) no longer exists. The INS was divided into three separate agencies under the new Department of Homeland Security in 2002. Many US Agencies handle issues related to immigration. Some key ones are as follows:*

## **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the agency that determines immigration benefits.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) deals with immigration enforcement issues within the United States.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) handles immigration screening at the U.S. borders and ports of entry.

## **Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)** is a unit of ICE.

**Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** provides information on the poverty guidelines, as well as physician information on the J-1 program.

**Department of Justice (DOJ)** runs the immigration courts, and the appeals process for immigration benefits.

**Department of State (DOS)** manages the foreign relations of the United States with other countries,

including the U.S. consulates and embassies abroad. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is the humanitarian bureau of the State Department that coordinates foreign policy, humanitarian aid, and multilateral partnerships that advance the protection and rights of the forcibly displaced around the world.

**Department of Labor (DOL)** approves applications for certain types of immigration benefits, including the Labor Condition Application for H-1B workers, and the Labor Certification Application for some employment-based permanent residency applications.

Several additional U.S. Agencies handle other aspects of the administrative process for immigration matters.



# CRAFTING GROUND RULES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE

*Your group should take some time to discern, discuss, and decide on some ground rules for respectful dialogue (this chapter) and how you will handle “fake news” (the next chapter). Take a few moments in advance to “whiteboard out” ideas on the agreements you will make together. Keep them somewhere you can easily refer to and begin each session by reminding participants of your agreements. Name them aloud. Respecting the inherent dignity and sacred worth of each person inside and outside the conversation should be a guiding principle for us all.*

To help you along, we are sharing here suggestions that are adapted from “InterActive Faith: The Essential Interreligious Community Building Handbook,”<sup>9</sup> a book whose proceeds benefit Religions for Peace USA and which was generated by the goodwill and common vision of our staff. It was edited by our former staff leaders Bud Heckman and Rori Picker Neiss and it includes a series of contributions from our member religious leaders and affiliated advisors:

1. *Listen first.* Use the reflective listening techniques developed by relational psychologist Carl Rogers to get the most out of your conversation (e.g., “what I heard you saying is...”). Open your body posture, look at your dialogue partner, and seek affirmations that you are hearing correctly what they are sharing. Allow space in the conversation.
2. *Don't interrupt.*
3. *Speak for yourself and allow others to do the same.* You don't do anyone a favor by trying to speak for them. Offer up your own perspectives and experiences.
4. *Try to see the best in others.* Resist comparing your best self with their worst. In other words, do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you.
5. *Talk about your faith as it is, not as it ideally should be.* Be sober and honest about the worst parts of your tradition. Be honest and vulnerable about your own spiritual journey. Every tradition includes aspects of darkness and light. Humility invites deeper understanding. The same might be said for political positions or parties.
6. *Know that dialogue is not a debate.* There is no contest to prove who is “correct.” Dialogue is

<sup>9</sup>“InterActive Faith: The Essential Interreligious Community Building Handbook,” by Bud Heckman and Rori Picker Neiss. SkyLight Pathways Publishing (now part of LongHill Partners Publishing, which is owned by Turner Publishing Company), 2008.

## CRAFTING GROUND RULES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE | CONTINUED

about relationships and the process. It is the means, not the end, that matters.

6. *Meet people on terms you can both agree on.* People learn and process information in different ways. Dialogue happens with heads, hearts, and hands. Recognize that your preferred method of dialogue may not be theirs. Dialogue is not all conversation; it can be expressed through service, advocacy, and the arts. It might be framed by song, prayer, meal sharing, or other forms. Get creative and choose different forms of expression beyond “head talk” for your dialogue and learning.
7. *Admit what you do not know.* Our religious traditions are vast and complex. You can spend a lifetime trying to understand the depth and breadth of a single faith in all its varieties. The same might be said for political parties and positions or a complex issue like immigration. Admit the limits of your knowledge and leave your assumptions about the religious or political other at the door.
8. *Accept that you might change somewhat in the process.* In fact, the laws of physics virtually dictate it. Dialogue shapes our understanding of our own self and of the “other.”
9. *Dialogue is strongest when it is both between (interfaith) and within (intrafaith).* Catholics and Buddhist can learn much from each other,

as can Catholics and Protestants. Catholics and Protestants might learn even more if they come together sometimes to talk about Buddhism. The same insight might be made about dialogue between and with political parties or different cultures.

10. *Involve the head, the heart, and the whole body.* The best forms of dialogue move beyond intellect to heartfelt experience and vice versa. Participants in interreligious encounters should always seek to see the religious other’s viewpoint as completely as possible, and to view it from within, if possible.

# DISCERNING THE SOURCES THAT WE USE

*Many conversations that we have these days can break down quite quickly over judgments about the veracity and credibility of the sources. Misinformation, malinformation, and disinformation in an era of hyperfast communication can quickly render enormous damage to our sense of trust and faith in one another and our world.*

Moreover, Americans live in social media and news bubbles, most frequently obtaining information from sources that align with their well-developed positions and values. Neuroscience teaches us that we are all susceptible to reject credible information and facts based on our inherent and implicit biases. Unchecked biases can cloud our ability to authentically see and hear one another in dialogue, preventing us from uniting around shared values to agree on the things for which our world needs resolutions.

We recommend you begin your conversations with agreeing to:

1. Shared principles of respectful dialogue (the previous chapter) and
2. Shared ideas about how you will handle the veracity and credibility of the information that you are considering in making faithful decisions (this chapter).

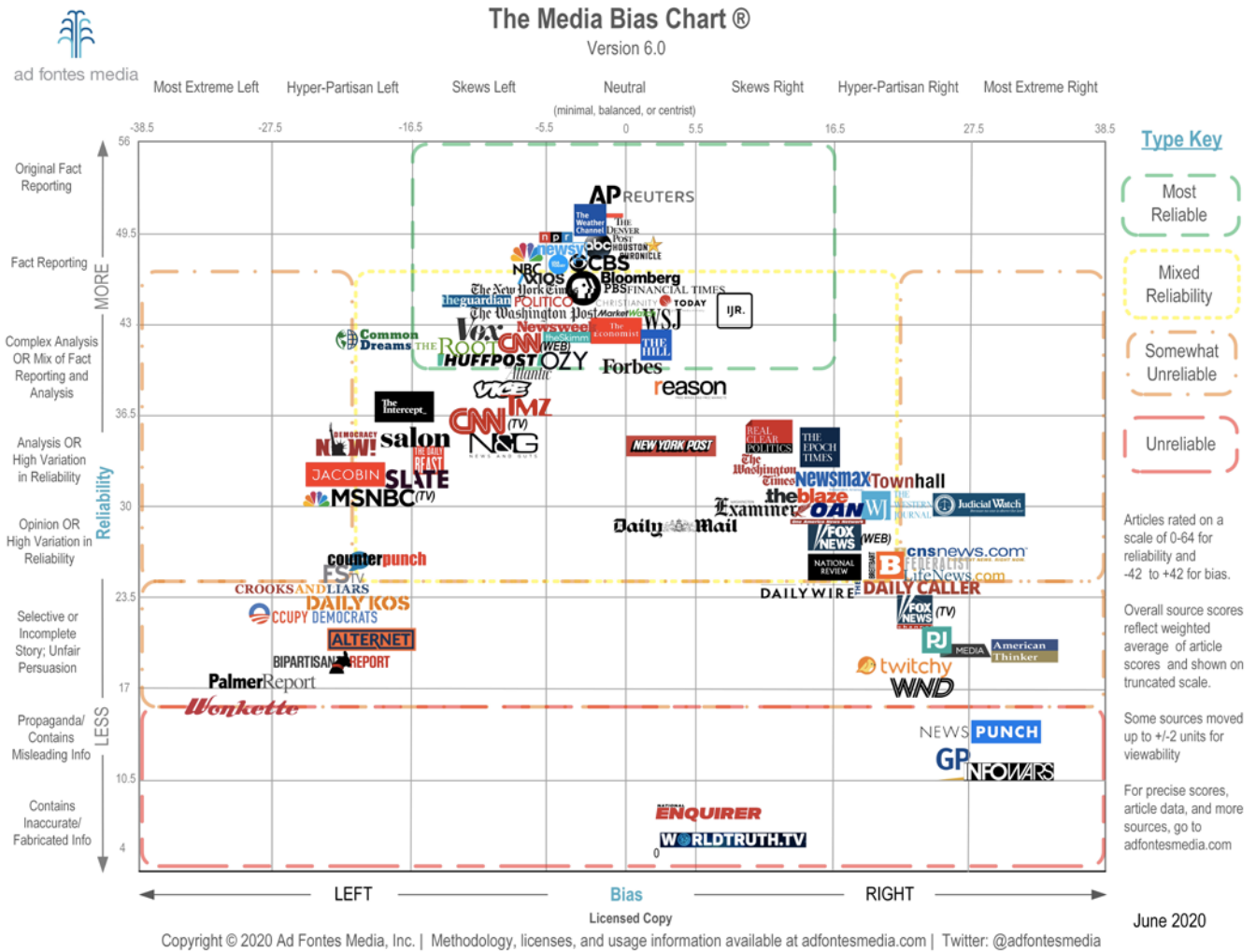
We have a responsibility as people of faith to honor and uphold the truth and to take opinions and propaganda for what they are. When the public is relying on an “everything goes” soup of ideas and views, we cannot allow ourselves as people of faith to devolve into the moral relativism of false

equivalences, nor, at the same time, can we simply adhere to the moral righteousness of the perceived superiority of our sources.

Here are three reputable guides that you can use as a point of reference to consider the evaluation of sources of information:

1. [Ad Fontes Media](#) (page 17) is a helpful resource that provides ongoing nonpartisan analysis of print news sources based on a set of clear journalistic standards regarding bias and accuracy. It is an evolving work in progress, but offers a respected benchmark for consideration.
2. The [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions](#) has a helpful 8-point visual guide (page 18) for discerning what might be fake news. Take a few moments to talk about [How To Spot Fake News](#) and how information sources can mislead and frustrate conversations between otherwise well-intending people.
3. A second guide from European-based [eavi Media Literacy for Citizenship](#) (page 19) offers a deeper dive into fake news and may be helpful as well.

# DISCERNING THE SOURCES THAT WE USE | CONTINUED



10 Copyrighted. All rights reserved. Used with written permission from Ad Fontes Media. Please note, again, that this analysis is in reference to print sources only. Ad Fontes Media encourages users to consider their interactive version: <https://www.adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart-2>.

# HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



**CONSIDER THE SOURCE**  
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



**READ BEYOND**  
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



**CHECK THE AUTHOR**  
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



**SUPPORTING SOURCES?**  
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



**CHECK THE DATE**  
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



**IS IT A JOKE?**  
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



**CHECK YOUR BIASES**  
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



**ASK THE EXPERTS**  
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

**IFLA**  
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions  
With thanks to www.FactCheck.org

<sup>11</sup> See: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:How\\_to\\_Spot\\_Fake\\_News.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:How_to_Spot_Fake_News.jpg) from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Accessed September 15, 2020.

# BEYOND 'FAKE NEWS'

## 10 TYPES OF MISLEADING NEWS

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>propaganda</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopted by governments, corporations and non-profits to manage attitudes, values and knowledge</li> <li>appeals to emotions</li> <li>can be beneficial or harmful </li> </ul>   | <b>partisan</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ideological and includes interpretation of facts but may claim to be impartial</li> <li>privileges facts that conform to the narrative whilst forgoing others</li> <li>emotional and passionate </li> </ul>   | <b>IMPACT</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>neutral </li> <li>low </li> <li>medium </li> <li>high </li> </ul> <b>MOTIVATION</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>€ money</li> <li> politics/power</li> <li> humour/fun</li> <li> passion</li> <li> (mis)inform</li> </ul> |
| <b>clickbait</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eye catching, sensational headlines designed to distract</li> <li>often misleading and content may not reflect headline</li> <li>drives ad revenue </li> </ul>   | <b>conspiracy theory</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tries to explain simply complex realities as response to fear or uncertainty</li> <li>not falsifiable and evidence that refutes the conspiracy is regarded as further proof of the conspiracy </li> <li>rejects experts and authority</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>sponsored content</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advertising made to look like editorial</li> <li>potential conflict of interest for genuine news organisations</li> <li>consumers might not identify content as advertising if it is not clearly labeled </li> </ul> | <b>pseudoscience</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>purveyors of greenwashing, miracle cures, anti-vaccination and climate change denial</li> <li>misrepresents real scientific studies with exaggerated or false claims </li> <li>often contradicts experts</li> </ul>                              |  |
| <b>satire and hoax</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social commentary or humour</li> <li>varies widely in quality and intended meaning may not be apparent</li> <li>can embarrass people who confuse the content as true </li> </ul>                                       | <b>misinformation</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>includes a mix of factual, false or partly-false content</li> <li>intention can be to inform but author may not be aware the content is false</li> <li>false attributions, doctored content and misleading headlines </li> </ul>                |  |
| <b>error</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>established news organisations sometimes make mistakes</li> <li>mistakes can hurt the brand, offend or result in litigation</li> <li>reputable orgs publish apologies </li> </ul>  | <b>bogus</b><br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>entirely fabricated content spread intentionally to disinform</li> <li>guerrilla marketing tactics; bots, comments and counterfeit branding</li> <li>motivated by ad revenue, political influence or both </li> </ul>                                    |  |
| <b>DIG DEEPER...</b>   |  |  |
| <b>false attribution</b><br>authentic images, video or quotes are attributed to the wrong events or person   | <b>misleading</b><br>content does not represent what the headline and captions suggest   |  |
| <b>counterfeit</b><br>websites and Twitter accounts that pose as a well-known brand or person  | <b>doctored content</b><br>content, such as statistics, graphs, photos and video have been modified or doctored  |  |

N.B. The impact and motivation assignments are not definitive and should just be used as a guide for discussion



**eavi**  
 MEDIA LITERACY  
 for CITIZENSHIP  
 www.eavi.eu

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://eavi.eu/infographic-beyond-fake-news-10-types-of-misleading-news-17-languages> from eavi Media Literacy for Citizenship. Accessed September 15, 2020.

# INTRODUCTION

*We encourage you first to read carefully and discuss together the preparatory steps to this guide. In particular, we invite you to:*

Using the help above, we strongly encourage you first to read carefully and discuss together the preparatory steps to this guide. In particular, we invite you to:

- Create ground rules for how your group will honor respectful dialogue;
- Discern together the credibility of the sources that we use for our news;
- Review carefully the *Joint Statement from U.S. Religious Leaders and Communities Regarding U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policies and Practices*;
- Get a handle on the background and definitions of key immigration terms to help your group use the terms in shared ways; and
- Understand key United States agencies that deal with immigration.

We suggest you look ahead each week to review the suggested readings and films to plan for the upcoming week's discussion. You can spread this out over four to ten weeks of study, review, and discussions, depending on the pace you want to take. This guide is only meant to be a starting point.

Migration is a powerful word that sparks complex ideas and feelings across boundaries and borders. At its most basic, the meaning is simple and straightforward – to move. To move from one country and settle in another, to find home in a new land, to create a home where there was none before.

The right to move, and the right to seek asylum, are enshrined in international humanitarian law. They are basic human rights protected and upheld by international justice mechanisms. Over the last

four years, in particular, we've seen the most fundamental of human migration rights systematically dismantled by the current administration. There has never been a more urgent moment to become educated and to come together as communities of faith to stand by and for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

It is our hope that this guide will offer inspiring ideas and resources to enable you to lead meaningful conversations within your own communities. By increasing knowledge, by engaging in authentic dialogue with each other and with your newly arrived neighbors, and by committing to speak out and stand for immigrants and refugees, our prayer is that you and your faith communities will be transformed.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your migration story? How did your family/families originally come to the United States? What caused them to migrate? What barriers did they face?
2. What hardships and injustices that refugees and immigrants face move you personally? Why is the issue of migration important to you?
3. Have you had personal, first-hand experience with refugees? If so, please share. Have you had the opportunity to forge meaningful relationships with refugees or immigrants?

4. What are red flags that indicate a news piece might be misleading?
5. In what ways can you build upon the good work already being done in your community on behalf of refugees and immigrants? Are there agencies or study groups that might be interested in partnering?

### DIGGING DEEPER



There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- **A bird's eye view of the shifts in refugee resettlement levels over the past four decades:** [U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-2019](#)
- **A film by Ken Burns that looks at the impact of one of the first exclusionary acts limiting immigration to the United States:** [The Chinese Exclusion Act](#), by Ken Burns and Li Shin Yu, Steeplechase Films and PBS, 2018.



#### *The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965*

Prior to 1875, the United States did not have immigration policies. The Page Act of 1875, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the Immigration Act of 1891 were among the first efforts to restrict entrants to the US based on certain ethnicities and classes of people from immigrating to America, including criminals, the insane, or “any person unable to take care of him or herself.” But the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, ended all earlier quota systems and exclusionary acts based on national origin. It created a new immigration policy framed around attracting skilled labor to the United States and reuniting separated families. The policies put into action by the Act would markedly change the demographic makeup of the American population in the decades that followed. Apart from the cruel history of the forced slave trade that brought millions of Blacks to the US, prior to 1965 few persons came into the US from anywhere other than predominantly Christian and Jewish Europe. After 1965, the US had significantly more immigrants coming from countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which has diversified our country racially, ethnically, religiously, and otherwise.

Image: President Lyndon B. Johnson sits at a desk at the base of the Statue of Liberty with a view of Ellis Island and the New York Harbor adjoining as he signs the Immigration and Naturalization Act, October 1965. (Associated Press)



# THE STATE OF THE GLOBAL MIGRATION CRISIS

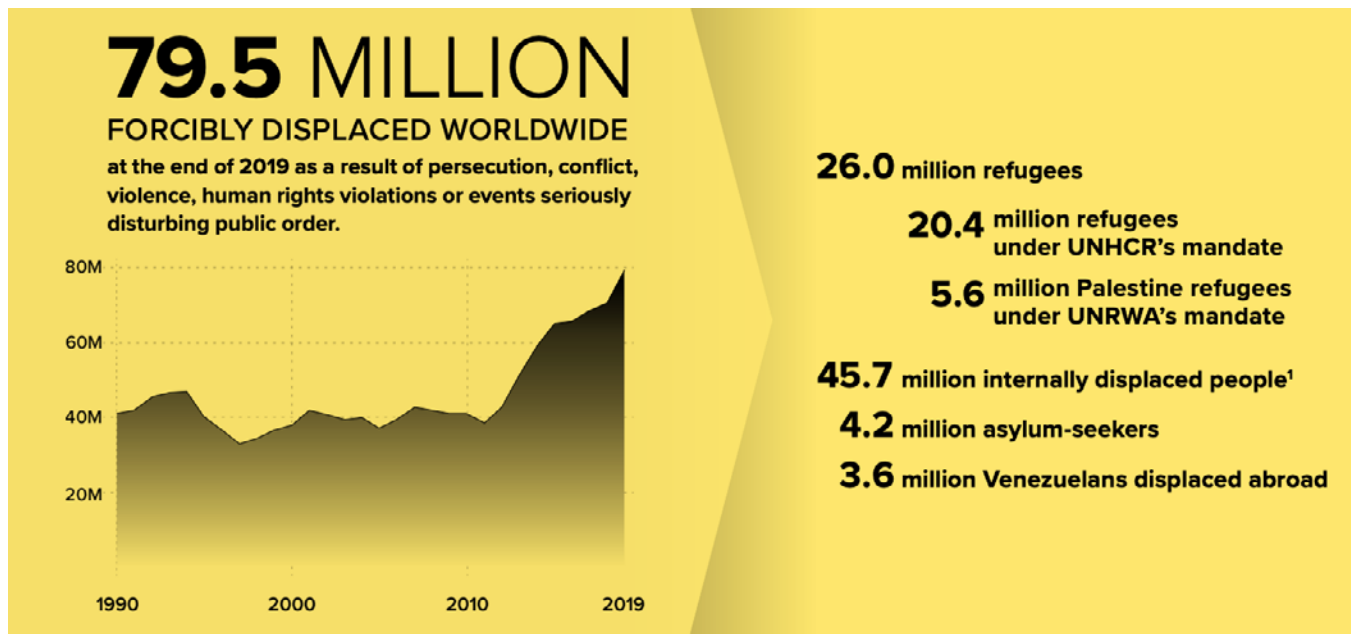
*The global need to aid displaced persons is at its highest point at the same time that the United States has retreated to its lowest level of commitment. An unprecedented 79.5 million people around the world have been forced from home, a higher number than at any point since WWII.*

26 million of them are refugees – more than half of whom are children under the age of 18 – and 4.2 million are asylum seekers, escaping life threatening conditions.<sup>13</sup>

While there are many factors, war and violence are significant drivers of the global crisis. For example, 57% of all recent refugees come from just three war-ravaged countries: Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan. By 2050, climate change will likely become the overwhelming factor, bringing as many as 200 million refugees.

As for asylum seekers, more than 4 million people have fled Venezuela alone, resulting in nearly 30,000 seeking asylum in the US in each of the past two years. With this added demand on an already overstressed system, the US now has a backlog of more 339,386 asylum cases.<sup>14</sup> Combined with gang warfare and violence in Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries – El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras – there has been a more than 22-fold increase in refugees and asylum seekers from Central America.<sup>15</sup>

16



<sup>13</sup> See “[Figures At A Glance](#)” from UNHCR’s Global Data on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/PEDAfirmativeAsylumStatisticsFY2019.pdf>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

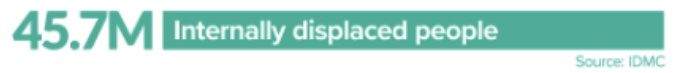
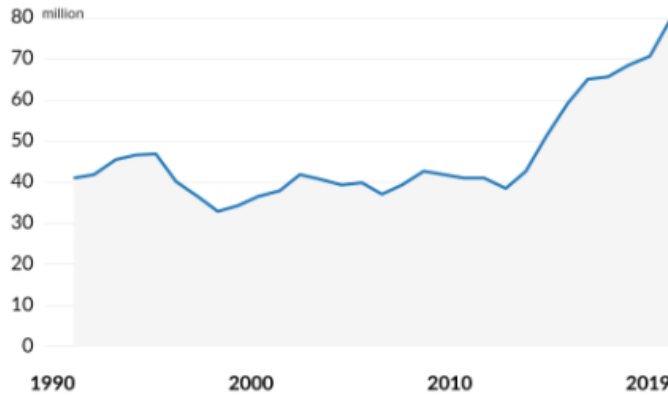
<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> See “[UNHCR’s Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019](#),” p. 2. Accessed September 15, 2020.

## Global Displacement

**79.5 MILLION** forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2019

Source: UNHCR / 18 June 2020



|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>1%</b> of the world's population is displaced</p>        | <p><b>80%</b> of the world's displaced people are in countries or territories affected by acute food insecurity and malnutrition</p> | <p><b>73%</b> Hosted in neighbouring countries *</p>      | <p><b>68%</b> Came from just 5 countries *</p> |
| <p><b>40%</b> of the world's displaced people are children</p> | <p><b>85%</b> Hosted in developing countries *</p>   | <p><b>TOP HOSTING COUNTRIES</b></p>                       | <p><b>TOP SOURCE COUNTRIES</b></p>             |
| <p><b>4.2M</b> Stateless people</p>                            | <p><b>2M</b> Asylum applications (in 2019)</p>   | <p><b>107,800</b> Resettled to 26 countries (in 2019)</p> | <p><b>5.6M</b> Returnees (in 2019)</p>         |

\* Data includes UNHCR refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad



employs **17,324** personnel in **135** countries (as of 31 May 2020)

We are funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, with 86 per cent from governments and the European Union and 10 per cent from private donors

<sup>17</sup> See "Figures At A Glance" from UNHCR's Global Data on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers, June 18, 2020. Accessed on September 15, 2020.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. We are giving you a great deal of data throughout this study guide. The statistics are hard to read and even harder to internalize when you realize each as a precious human life and story that deserves compassion and dignity. What is a story that you have heard and/or seen that moved you about displaced persons?
2. Consider this statistic: 40 percent of resettled refugees are minors (children under 18 years of age). Does this statistic affect how you think about the ethical and moral responsibility of caring for refugees?
3. Did you know that the majority of resettled US refugees have been assisted by religious agencies and communities? Ecumenical and denomination-specific agencies have led resettlement aid for decades. Many are [members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) and have been sidelined and diminished by the current administration. Has your church or family been involved in sponsorship of a refugee family? If so, did you work with a religious agency like Church World Service, Catholic Charities, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Episcopal Migration Services, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services or others? What was your experience?

4. How do you feel each country should determine its responsibilities to take in refugees? What alternative solutions do you think are workable for nations?



## DIGGING DEEPER

There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- **A quick bird's eye view of the world migration situation:** [UNHCR's Global Data on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers](#)
- **A comprehensive intergovernmental report on displaced persons globally:** [UNHCR Report - Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019](#)
- **A film that gives a sweeping view of the global crisis of displaced persons:** [Human Flow](#) by Ai Weiwei, Amazon Studios, Participant Media, and AC Films, 2017.

# MIGRATION IS A MATTER OF FAITH

*Hospitality to the stranger/foreigner/sojourner is unequivocally insisted upon by scriptures of our various traditions as being fundamental to faith. In the Christian and Jewish traditions so central to American history, for example, the scriptures have strong admonitions which appear 36 times in the Jewish Torah or Christian Hebrew Bible alone.*

A clear example is the direct admonition that “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” (NIV, Leviticus 19:33-34).<sup>18</sup>

U.S. religious communities and agencies have long held the lead globally in resettling refugees. For decades, VOLAGS, or Voluntary Agencies, have contracted with the US Department of State’s Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration to provide cultural integration training, reception, and placement services for newly arrived refugees. Up until the last few years, faith-based agencies like Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Catholic Charities, Episcopal Migration Services, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services have led domestic and global resettlement efforts.

Communities of faith have worked amicably alongside government agencies and processes for more than a century to provide welcome, freedom, and safe haven in the United States. This social

outreach has most often happened across lines of faith and cultural difference – e.g., a local United Methodist Church hosting and helping to settle a Bosnian Muslim family – which has contributed to advancing understanding and creating bonds of social cohesion. Each of us has had life-affirming experiences with refugees resettled by our respective traditions.

Our faiths call us to be concerned for the well-being of all families. Of note is that the predominant number of refugees resettled in the United States are coming to reunite and protect families.

Our faiths teach us that each and every person is endowed with dignity and value, regardless of their country of origin, faith, race, or any other marker of identity.

For these reasons, religious agencies and local faith communities have long played a vital role in aiding the process of resettlement. From the overall national coordination with government agencies down to the individual family settlements and ongoing support necessary, we are there.

<sup>18</sup> Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## DIGGING DEEPER

1. What tenets of your faith tradition call you to answer the needs refugees and immigrants face?<sup>19</sup> What scriptures from your tradition inform how you and your faith community think about immigration matters?
2. How does your faith community relate to the experience of migration? What stories do you have to share with one another; personal and/or collective? Are there cultural or faith events or holidays in your religious or liturgical calendar that celebrate migrations?
3. What motivates your faith community in relation to the idea of “welcoming the stranger”?
4. Has your congregation or community had a service or meeting in which immigration concerns were centrally spoken to? Do you hear the matter addressed from the pulpit, bima, or minbar in your tradition?
5. Do you have any experience with the religiously-centered Sanctuary Movement?

There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- **Guides to welcoming refugees:** [Refugees Welcome Toolkit from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)
- **A compendium of resources for religious prayer and worship responses to refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, and immigration concerns:** [Resources for Religious Responses to Immigration Issues from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)
- **On the insidious tactics and overreach of DHS:** [The Case of Rev. Kaji Douša vs. the Department of Homeland Security](#)
- **On the New Sanctuary Movement:** [The New Sanctuary Movement](#); [Written resources on how your community can provide sanctuary](#)
- **A Netflix series that provides a very gritty look at immigration:** [Immigration Nation, a Netflix docuseries, 2020.](#)

<sup>19</sup> For some background and suggestions from different traditions, see p.10 and following in Religions for Peace’s “Guide to Action on Mobilizing Faith Communities to Welcome Migrants and Refugees.” See: <https://rfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/RFP-Refugees-and-Migrants-Resource-Guide.pdf>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

# CLOSING THE U.S.'S GOLDEN DOOR

*The U.S. has a long, proud history in resettling refugees. Historically, the US has led the world in refugee resettlements annually. But our government's recent draconian turn impairs our capacity to exercise our faith in reaching the most vulnerable.*

As a country, not only are we not leading, but we are not even currently caring for our fair share. 86% of the world's displaced persons are being hosted in developing or poor countries. 80% are hosted in a neighboring country. Turkey (3.9M), Columbia (1.8M), Uganda (1.4M), Pakistan (1.4M), Germany (1.5M), and Sudan (1.1M) are the heaviest absorbers of refugees. According to the UN High Commission on Refugees, only 107,800 refugees were resettled in the most recent year of record (2019), when millions need resettlement.<sup>20</sup>

The U.S. for the past four decades had a Presidential Determination that permitted a ceiling average of 95,000 refugees to come each year, with an average of about 85,000 ultimately doing so.<sup>21</sup>

Under the current administration there has been a historic reduction of admissions cap numbers to 30,000 refugees in 2019, 18,000 for 2020, and now just 15,000 suggested for 2021. Combined with additional restrictions for arrivals based on category and country of origin, the actual admitted numbers are trending even lower. This results in the most dire situations being ignored or denied. People turned away can too often risk death. They are fleeing for clear reasons and need our help.<sup>22</sup>

Politically, these reductions and barriers are in contrast to the intent of the bipartisan 1980 Refu-

gee Act, 1962 Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, and the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (especially section 207). Morally, they are unconscionable and inconsistent with our various traditions' shared commitments to care for the stranger in our midst, not to mention common sense and the value of human dignity.

Some leaders have invited Americans to reframe how they see immigration by examining what the United States has taken from the other countries and done to the environment through pollution and exploitation. If in its expansion into becoming a world superpower the US pillaged natural resources and production power – even in the deplorable form of slavery – from other countries and contributed to harmful global inequities, then immigration might be seen as an accessible form of reparations for that disharmony.

And if the US is responsible for about 25% of all the factors that contributed to our accelerated climate change, as science estimates, it stands to reason that the United States should take an equitable portion of responsibility for aiding the anticipated 100 million people who are or will be impacted because they live within about a meter of current high tide level and will be displaced from their homes.

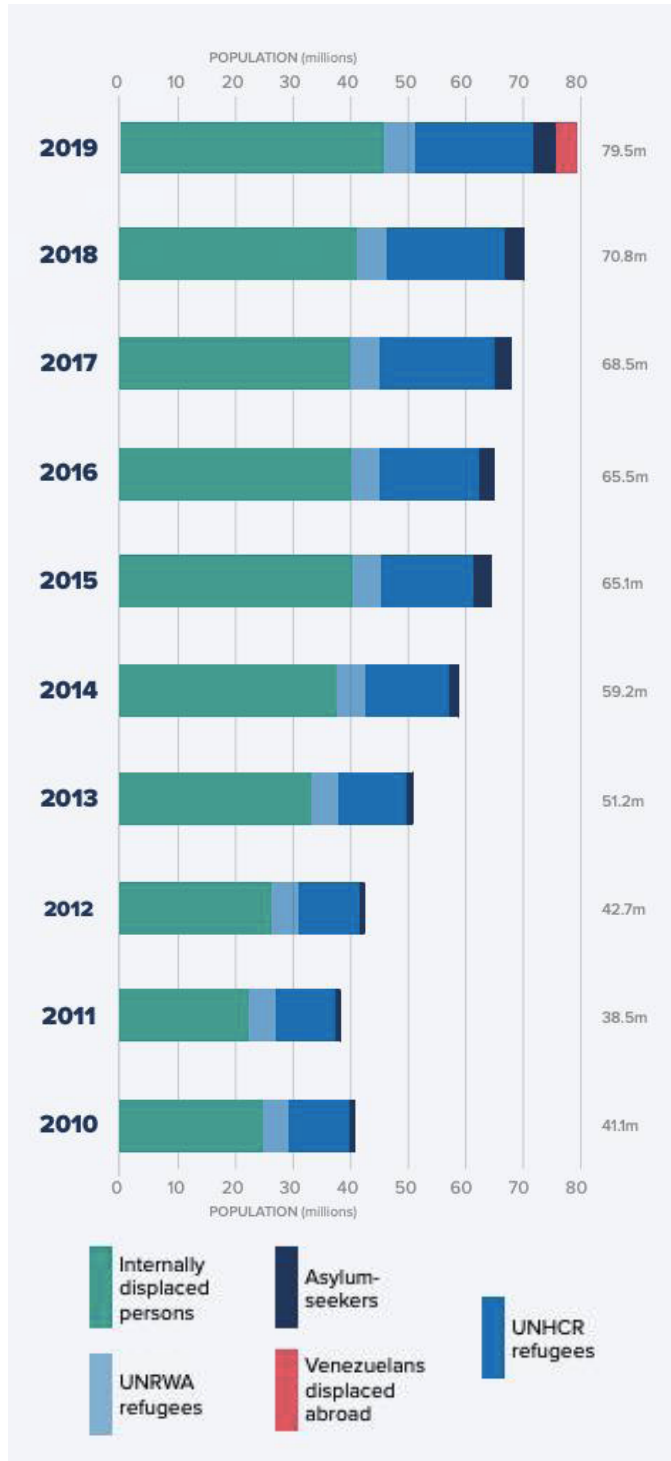
<sup>20</sup> See: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> See: <https://www.hias.org/news/blog/video-presidential-determination-explained>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> See: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-annual-refugee-resettlement-ceilings-and-number-refugees-admitted-united>. Accessed September 15, 2020.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

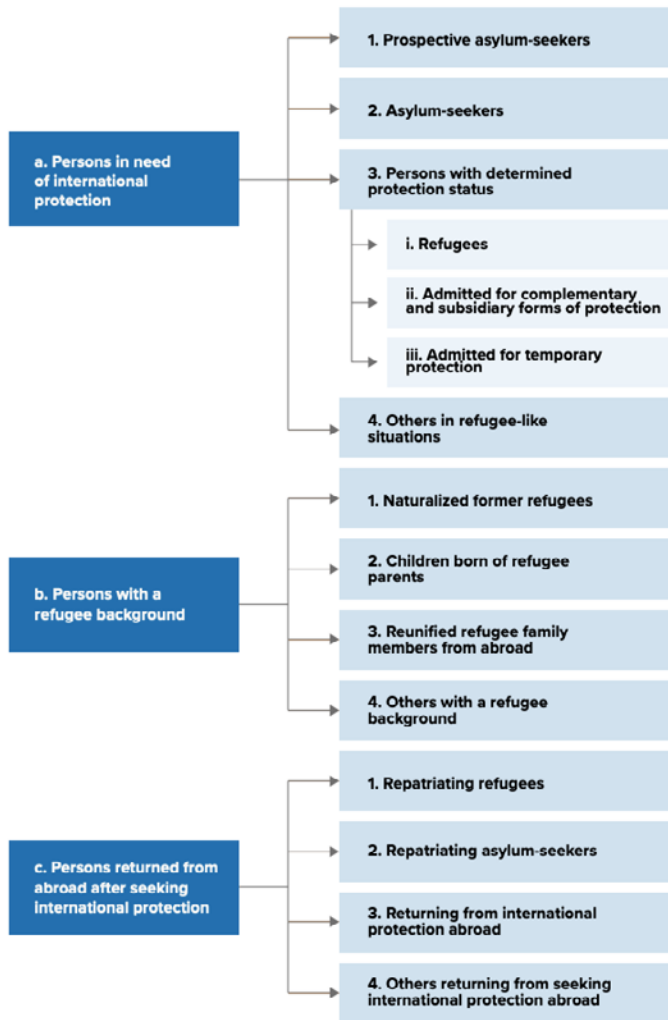


23

1. What tenets of your faith tradition call you to answer the needs refugees and immigrants face?<sup>25</sup> What scriptures from your tradition inform how you and your faith community think about immigration matters?
2. How does your faith community relate to the experience of migration? What stories do you have to share with one another; personal and/or collective? Are there cultural or faith events or holidays in your religious or liturgical calendar that celebrate migrations?
3. What motivates your faith community in relation to the idea of “welcoming the stranger”?
4. Has your congregation or community had a service or meeting in which immigration concerns were centrally spoken to? Do you hear the matter addressed from the pulpit, bima, or minbar in your tradition?
5. Do you have any experience with the religiously-centered Sanctuary Movement?

<sup>23</sup> See Figure 1, p. 7 and the associated interactive graphs in UNHCR’s Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019. <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

Figure 30 | Scope of the population of refugee and refugee-related populations



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## DIGGING DEEPER

There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- A comprehensive report on the global displaced persons: [UNHCR Report - Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019](#)
- Letters of support from state & local leaders for refugee settlement - an interactive map: [Refugee Council USA's Interactive Map of State and Local Support for Refugee Settlement](#)
- A report on the efforts to shut down access even for asylum seekers: [A Primer on the Trump Administration's Most Ambitious Effort to End Asylum](#)
- A film following one large immigrant family from Mexico to agriculture work in the US: [In The Shadows](#) by Dan Glynn, Broadbandaid Films, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> See Figure 30, p. 68 in UNHCR's Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019. <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

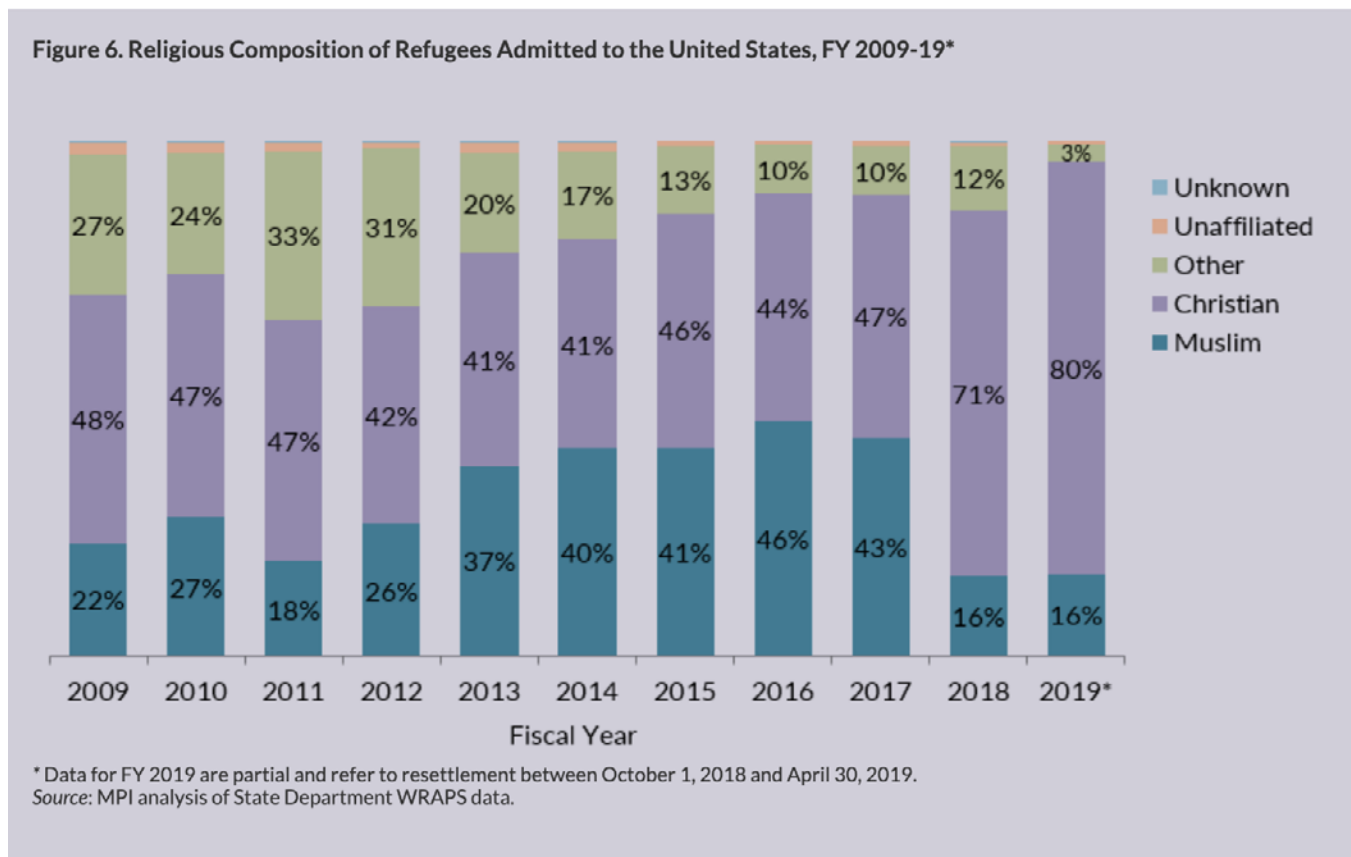


# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT REDUCTIONS AND BIAS

*The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program has welcomed more than 3.1 million refugees and granted asylum status to more than 721,000 individuals since its inception. This service has been a vital aid to our economy, national security, and foreign policy interests.*

Refugees and asylum seekers already go through an extreme vetting process that involves multiple stages and can last two years on average, and some have been waiting now in excess of four years. If approved, they go through a process of medical screenings, cultural orientation, sponsorship assurances, and aid from agencies in transportation and resettlement. Faith agencies are a critical part of that process throughout.

We are in the midst of the worst global refugee crisis since WWII. Historically, the United States has been a global leader in receiving and settling refugees. Immigrants, including refugees, have been an enormous asset to our economy and a hallmark of our tradition of being the engine of global innovation and versatility. Our abandonment of receiving immigrants and refugees has created a



<sup>25</sup> See Figure 6 in Migration Policy Institute’s “Refugee and Asylees in the United States.” See <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states-2018>. Accessed September 15, 2020. Data is derived from the U.S. Government’s reporting in the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

# REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT REDUCTIONS BIAS | CONTINUED

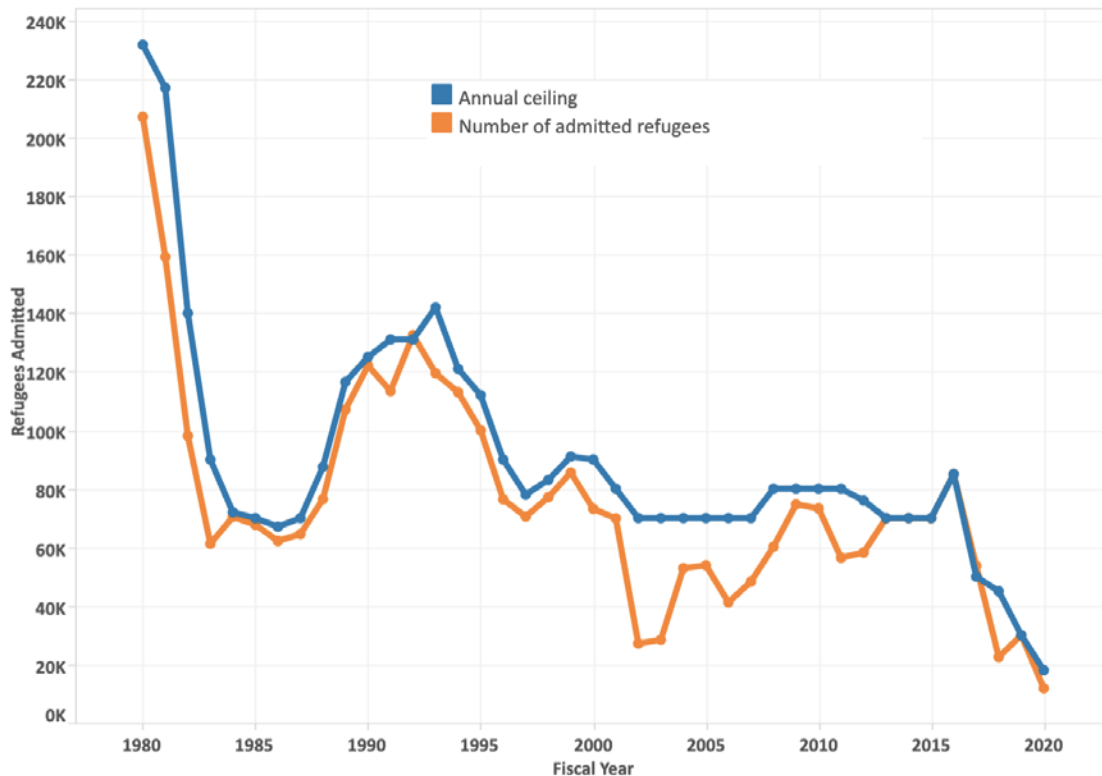
permissiveness for other countries to follow our lead. This failure of leadership has created a domino effect that has exacerbated the global crisis.

The refugee resettlements in the United States under the current administration have not only reduced drastically, but also, they have shifted to reflect a clear and demonstrated bias in favor of Christian refugees and against Muslim and other religious minority refugees among the overall reduced numbers. Historically, while Christians have reflected 41-48% of refugees annually, yet in the first two years on record and fully under the

control of the current administration, the numbers have jumped to 71% in 2018 and 80% in 2019 respectively. Meanwhile, the number of Muslims has dropped from a high of 46% to a new low of 16%. A similar pattern follows for other religious minorities. We believe that this is intentional and is contrary to our historic commitments to religious freedom and the flourishing of human diversity.

Faiths transcend country boundaries. Diversity exists everywhere. The bias against Muslims inherent to Executive Orders 13769 and 13780 issued in 2017, often referred to collectively as

**U.S. Refugee Admissions and Refugee Resettlement Ceilings, Fiscal Years 1980-2020**



Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub  
<http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub>

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<sup>26</sup>“U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present” from the Migration Policy Institute. See: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-annual-refugee-resettlement-ceilings-and-number-refugees-admitted-united>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

“The Muslim Ban,” evolved into a targeted-countries ban that impacts persons of all faiths. Of the listed countries, no refugees from any of those respective countries have carried out terrorist-related violence in the United States. The Administration utilized fearmongering and the rationale of “national security” as impetus to leverage xenophobia and exclusionist ideologies against what the President has described dismissively as “sh\*t-hole countries.”

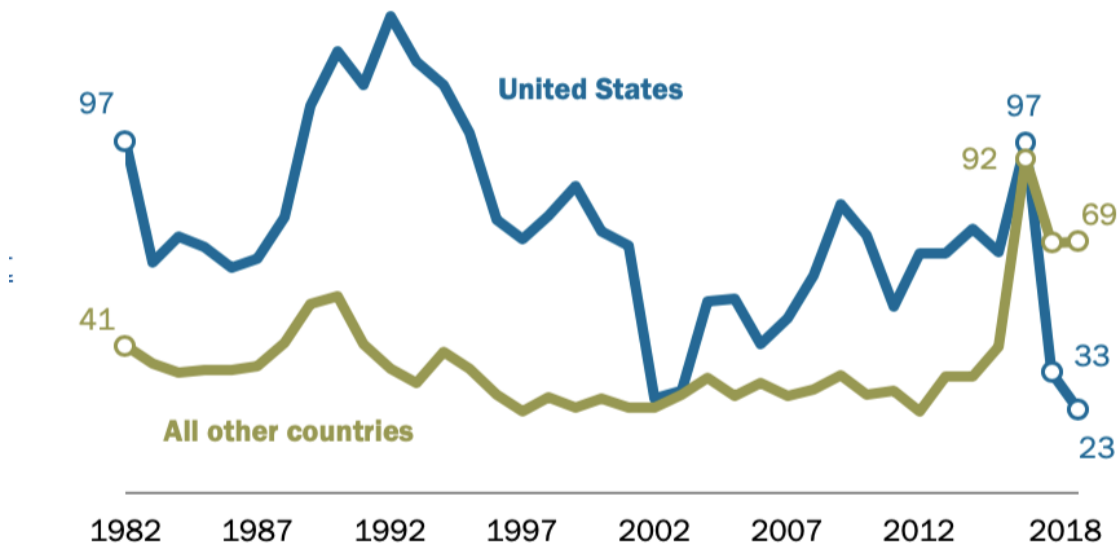
While the many Muslim-predominate countries in the government’s ban list have had a 99%

drop in refugee acceptance by the US, it also has swept up and blocked many Baha’is, Christians, Jews, Yazidis, and others in the process.

Overall refugee and asylum seeker resettlements have dropped off drastically. For instance, according to the State Department’s Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), the US admitted just 53,716 refugees in 2017, only 22,491 in 2018, and just a mere 11,814 for 2019. More than 60% of those 11,814 refugees come from just three countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and Burma (Myanmar).<sup>27</sup>

## U.S. trailed rest of world in refugee resettlement in 2017 and 2018 after leading it for decades

*Number of refugee admissions, in thousands, by calendar year*



Note: Figures rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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<sup>27</sup> “Refugee Admissions Report” for US Government Year Ending September 30, 2020 on the Refugee Processing Center website: <https://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals>. Accessed October 5, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Graphic cited in “Key Facts About Refugees to the U.S.” by Jens Manuel Krogstad, Pew Research Center, October 7, 2019. The source for the Pew Research Center analysis is the UNHCR data, accessed by Pew on June 12, 2019.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. The resettlement debate is only a beginning point for determining our ethical and moral responsibility toward refugees. For the last 40 years, the resettlement regime and refugee camps have been considered the interim solution to this protracted humanitarian crisis. What obligations do we in the Global North have to ensure the protection, rights, and dignity of refugees?
2. Given the repercussions of the “Muslim Ban” in the US, what actions can your faith community take to become more intentionally welcoming to our Muslim brothers and sisters? If you are Muslim, how are you able to share safely with people of other faiths about the impact of this targeting?
3. In a New York Times opinion piece, Dr. Jessica Goudeau states: “If the nation’s reckoning with race is a mirror into its ideals on justice and equality, then refugee resettlement is the testing ground for our ideals.” Discuss.<sup>29</sup>
4. As people of faith, what principles and criteria do you think we should use and as Americans to decide on our acceptances of refugees and asylum seekers?

## DIGGING DEEPER



There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- The Pew Research Center, which is a principal source of religious surveying data, offers an overview of key facts on refugees: [Key Facts About Refugees To the U.S.](#)
- A film as an investigative journey examining why people might need to seek refuge: [The Immigration Paradox](#), by Lourdes Lee Vasquez, Deep Focus Cinema, 2014.

<sup>29</sup>“Refugee Resettlement Is Close to Collapse. That Was Trump’s Plan,” by Dr. Jessica Goudeau, New York Times, July 28, 2020. The opinion piece is a selection from the forthcoming “After the Last Border: Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America” by the same author. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/opinion/us-refugee-resettlement-trump.html>. Accessed October 5, 2020.

# TERRORISM, VIOLENCE, AND HATE CRIMES

*Fears regarding immigrants and refugees are often conflated with fears concerning terrorism and violence.*

Data from a five-decade study of more than 190,000 global terrorist incidents from National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) makes evident that an extremely small percentage of terrorist attacks have been attempted in the US by refugees. Only 20 attempted incidents have been recorded since 1975 and those have only resulted in 3 deaths. The conservative, libertarian Cato Institute has noted that this means an American has a one in 3.85 billion chance of being killed by a refugee.<sup>30</sup>

Terrorism in the US has been predominately homegrown and not involved immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers at all. Since 9/11, more than 80 percent of persons either charged with or having died while engaging in terrorist activities in this country have been U.S. citizens or permanent residents.<sup>31</sup>

The fearmongering fomented by the current administration regarding immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, persons of color, and minorities in general has bred a spirit of distrust and given permissive license to new levels of bias, discrimination, hate crimes, and violence.

Since the 2016 election season began, the US has seen a sharp increase in hate crimes, with an alarmingly high percentage of them targeting Jews and Jewish institutions and Muslims as well Sikhs. Jewish and Muslims traditions are impacted by nearly 4 out of every 5 religiously-motivated hate crimes, according to FBI data.<sup>32</sup> Perpetrators have largely been associated white nationalist, anti-immigrant, anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic groups, and anti-LGBTQ movements. According to data from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, hate crimes have risen for five consecutive years reaching multi-decade highs. During this same period, in contrast, crime overall in major cities has continued to decline.<sup>33</sup>

People's fear of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is based in emotional and subconscious identity conflicts and often framed in a complete vacuum from actual lived experiences with these vulnerable populations. Multiple studies show that there is actually an inverse correlational relationship between crime and immigration. Between 1980 and 2016, immigration increased

<sup>30</sup> The Global Terrorism Database makes this information available via the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. See: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> "Terrorists by Immigration Status and Nationality: A Risk Analysis, 1975-2017" by Alex Nowrasteh, Cato Institute, May 7, 2019. See: <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/terrorists-immigration-status-nationality-risk-analysis-1975-2017>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> "Hate Crime Statistics, 2018" by the Federal Bureau of Statistics. See: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2018>. Accessed September 15, 2020. Follow-up reporting for 2019 is partial and delayed.

<sup>33</sup> "Report to the Nation: 2019 - Factbook on Hate and Extremism in the US and Internationally" by Brian Levin and Lisa Nakashima, The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino (CSHE). See: <https://www.csusb.edu/sites/default/files/CSHE%202019%20Report%20to%20the%20Nation%20FINAL%207.29.19%2011%20PM.pdf>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

118% in 200 major cities and overall crime decreased 36%.<sup>34 35</sup>

In contrast to common misconceptions, refugees contribute billions more in taxes than they receive in benefits, they start new businesses at a rate appreciably higher than native-born residents, and they commit lower rates of crime than native-born residents. Their civic and economic contributions are undeniable.<sup>36</sup>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What fears or biases<sup>37</sup> do you hold towards refugees? Looking inward to ourselves first, and examining our own prejudices, is an important step.
2. Research shows that personal experience and positive counter examples help reduce our tendency towards “othering.” What demystifies or breaks down for you the fear of “the other”? How do we move beyond a fear-based narrative to embrace and celebrate the rich diversity that refugees and immigrants offer?

3. The current administration was elected on partisan lines and promises to undertake “extreme vetting” of refugees in spite of the fact that a well-established, long-form vetting system was already in place. In what ways have you witnessed messages of fear mongering and xenophobia related to terrorist accusations in the news and media? In your community? What have you done/are you doing to counter it?



## DIGGING DEEPER

There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- **A analysis and a report on the economic contributions of refugees: From Struggle to Resilience: [The Economic Impact of Refugees in America](#)**

<sup>34</sup> “The Myth of the Criminal Immigrant” by Anna Flagg, The Marshall Project, March 30, 2018. See: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/03/30/the-myth-of-the-criminal-immigrant>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> “For the Last Time, Here is the Real Link Between Immigration and Crime” by Tanvi Misra, Bloomberg CityLab, February 6, 2019. See: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-06/what-s-the-real-link-between-crime-and-immigration>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> “From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America” by New American Economy, June 2017. See: [https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE\\_Refugees\\_V5.pdf](https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE_Refugees_V5.pdf). Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> We don’t have a test specifically for biases against refugees, but one way to explore your own biases, since they are often implicit or hidden to us, is to take some of the related implicit bias tests via Harvard’s implicit bias project, Project Implicit. See: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

- A look at the lack of correlation between immigration and crime: [The Myth of the Criminal Immigrant](#)
- A film that chronicles how as European settlers poured into the US, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that non-citizens are entitled to equal protection under the law: [Whose Land Is This? Part of the Series Freedom: A History of the US](#), by Nancy Steiner, Peter W. Kunhardt, and Philip Kunhardt III, PBS, 2002.



### *When A Pastor Caring for Immigrants Becomes Targeted By DHS, CBP, and ICE*

Some actions by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have become rallying points for good Americans and the religious community to take responsive actions. Like children being separated from parents and put in cages. Like U.S. veterans and citizens being deported. Like their recent violations of the very long standing principle of respect for the sanctity of religious spaces in service of failed efforts to extract suspected deportation targets.

One big wake up call came when clergy who advocated for immigrants found that they were themselves being surveilled and targeted for providing support and aid through a clandestine Operation Secure Line. An NBC affiliate in San Diego investigation reported that Rev. Kaji Douša (pictured left above), a United Church of Christ pastor, had become a target of government surveillance and it revealed another layer of hidden tactics and intimidation. The USG is tracking US citizens without warrant. Journalists covering immigration, lawyers aiding immigrants, and pastors sojourning with and advocating for migrants are all in scope.

Rev. Douša fought back. A native-born US citizen, senior pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church, co-chair of the New Sanctuary Coalition, and president of the alumni board of the Yale Divinity School, she sued DHS, CBP, and ICE on July 8, 2019 and hundreds of religious leaders signed-on to support her. Her still active case is lobbied on behalf of other dissenters, activists, and people of faith and goodwill who associate with marginalized communities and have experienced government harassment and retaliation aiding immigrants.

"Dousa vs. DHS" by United to Protect Democracy and the Protect Democracy Project. See <https://protectdemocracy.org/project/dousa-v-dhs>. Accessed October 5, 2020.

# ON THE WALL AND DEPORTATIONS

*A central promise of the current administration has been the erection of a wall or protective barrier on the U.S.'s southern border. It has been coupled with an aggressive tact by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations unit to expedite the removal of America's reported 11 million unauthorized immigrants.*

The implementation of harsh new and frequently changing or reinterpreted policies has resulted in confusion and starkly cruel and unusual conditions. Thousands of children have been separated from their parents, some even permanently. Places of faith and major cities have felt the need to step up in response by providing sanctuary and safe haven and leading protests and interventions. Persons of color, even those who are legal immigrants or citizens, are resorting to avoiding the police, receiving hospital care, or help in crisis in order to avoid ICE and deportation. Even legal immigrants and U.S. citizens have been mistakenly deported in the chaos.

Governments have a right and a responsibility to address unauthorized immigration and to expect the rule of law to be upheld. But not all laws are appropriate or moral. Slavery was legal. Segregation was legal. Discrimination against women, persons of colors, and other minorities has been legal. Our respective faiths and history help us to understand that what is legal is not necessarily moral or just. We can be justified in considering the current approach to immigration to be immoral in many respects.

The wall sought by the current administration will not work as proposed. Individuals can climb or fly over it, tunnel under it, or boat around it. The

few hundred miles of wall already in place are regularly being subverted and are inordinately costly to maintain. As of this writing, only five miles of new wall have been constructed. The vast majority of all unauthorized immigrants in the United States entered the US through legal means and through ports of entry other than the southern border.<sup>38</sup>

The U.S. government is designed to be accountable to the electorate. Currently, there is little accountability in regards to the deportations, detentions, and militarized border enforcement.

In 2017, the US had 542,000 deportation court cases backlogged. The wait time for a court hearing averaged more than three years at that point. Under the current administration in just a little more than three years, the backlog has more than doubled and grown to an unconscionable level of more than 1.25 million cases and the wait time is now beyond knowing. It has crippled the efficacy of the system.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol detention centers are places of flagrant abuse, including sexual mistreatment of minors, deaths stemming from medical negligence, arbitrary use of solitary confinement, unwarranted use of force by officers, and unhealthy and unsafe conditions, lacking basic sanitary and humanitarian conditions.

<sup>38</sup> "Why the Wall Will Not Work" by David J. Bier, Cato Institute, April 10, 2017. See: <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/why-wall-wont-work>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>39</sup> "U.S. Immigration Courts Backlog Exceeds One Million Cases," by Michelle Hackman, Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2019. See: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-immigration-courts-backlog-exceeds-one-million-cases-11568845885>. Accessed September 15, 2020. Also see an update via the "Immigration Court's Backlog Tool" at [https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court\\_backlog](https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court_backlog) for the 1.25 million figure. Accessed September 15, 2020.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. How are or might we be working to meet the physical and spiritual needs of migrants and refugees? How do we identify these needs? What are best practices for learning about and then moving to meet those needs?
2. What stories about deportations have arrested your attention? What course of action do you want to take or see taken in response?
3. Polling shows that most Americans can agree that our immigration system needs reform. What types of actions can we take other than building a physical wall along one section of the Southern border that will have a meaningful impact on ensuring safe, fair, and welcoming immigration?



### DIGGING DEEPER

There are a number of recommendations for films, booklets, reports, and websites at the conclusion of this resource. We are recommending a few for each section that may be appropriate to help you dig deeper.

- **Cato Institute, a conservative think tank, has made a strong argument that immigration helps America and that the wall will not work: [Why the Wall Will Not Work](#)**
- **The Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship: [Fratelli Tutti](#)**
- **A film on the breakup of families in the deportation process: [The Deportation of Innocence: Children of Deported Parents](#) by Francisco Alarcon, Relampago Films, 2016.**
- **A collection of short films on the wall, deportation, and DACA: [The Wall: The Effects of Its Imposing Presence on Migrant Families](#) by Laura Herrero Gavin, Meredith Hoffman, Peter Johnston, Sara Gozalo, Sarah Kuck, Schott Boehm, and Stephanie Schiavenato, Pragda Films, 2019.**



### *American Diversity and Rockwell's 'Freedom of Worship' Revisited*

US demography has changed significantly since the Second World War. The united effort for the War awakened the American conscience to issues of diversity in new ways. Liberalization of civil rights and immigration came in the decades that followed as a result. “Freedom of Worship” (left) is the second of a series of four famous oil paintings entitled “Four Freedoms” made by Norman Rockwell. They were created in response to the vision outlined in a memorable address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the beginning of the Second World War. Rockwell’s Four Freedoms were recently reimaged by Hank Willis Thomas and Emily Shur in several renditions, in collaboration with Eric Gottesman and Wyatt Gallery of For Freedoms. Two of them are included here, center and right. Their updates reflect the diversity of the United States of today – more than 75 years later.

Image: (Left) Norman Rockwell. (Center and Right) Hank Willis Thomas, Emily Shur, Eric Gottesman and Wyatt Gallery.  
 © For Freedoms. To learn more and see the full images: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/lens/norman-rockwell-paintings-hank-willis-thomas-emily-schur-for-freedoms.html>.



### *Fratelli Tutti – Pope Francis Speaks About Walls and Borders*

Pope Francis’ most recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* speaks to our human condition and is filled with mentions of breaking down walls and seeing beyond borders as people of faith:

“Paradoxically, we have certain ancestral fears that technological development has not succeeded in eliminating; indeed, those fears have been able to hide and spread behind new technologies. Today too, outside the ancient town walls lies the abyss, the territory of the unknown, the wilderness. Whatever comes from there cannot be trusted, for it is unknown, unfamiliar, not part of the village. It is the territory of the “barbarian”, from whom we must defend ourselves at all costs. As a result, new walls are erected for self-preservation, the outside world ceases to exist and leaves only ‘my’ world, to the point that others, no longer considered human beings possessed of an inalienable dignity, become only ‘them.’ Once more, we encounter “the temptation to build a culture of walls, to raise walls, walls in the heart, walls on the land, in order to prevent this encounter with other cultures, with other people. And those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others.” (par. 27).

See: [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html). Accessed October 5, 2020.

Image: A large cohort of faith leaders gather in support of incoming migrants and are confronted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, at the fence between the United States and Mexico on December 10, 2018.  
 Photo © by Carlos Garcia Rawlins / Reuters. All rights reserved.

# COVID-19 AND IMMIGRATION

*The COVID-19 pandemic is, unfortunately, still unfolding even as this report goes to print. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared the outbreak a pandemic. Today, the US has surpassed over 7,800,000 confirmed cases resulting in over 200,000 deaths.<sup>40</sup> Our generation faces a public health crisis of unprecedented magnitude.*

SARS-CoV-2 is affecting vulnerable populations in disproportionate numbers; and drastically so. In the US, an analysis conducted by National Public Radio revealed that Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans bear a disproportionate rate of becoming ill and dying of COVID-19 at a higher rate than Whites. The report also revealed that African Americans are dying from COVID-19 at a rate of more than 1.5 times their share of the population.<sup>41</sup>

We know that health emergencies often disproportionately impact the world's most vulnerable, especially asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced people (IDPs). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk that displaced women and girls have of experiencing various types of gender-based violence (GBV), including intimate partner violence, conflict-related sexual violence, human trafficking, and forced and early marriage — four manifestations of GBV that are already more common in displacement.<sup>42</sup>

Refugee children, in particular, are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, a refugee child was twice as likely to be out of school

as a non-refugee child. For refugee girls, the threat is particularly grave. Refugee girls already have less access to education than boys and are half as likely to be enrolled in school by the time they reach secondary level. Based on UNHCR data, the Malala Fund estimates that as a result of COVID-19, half of all refugee girls in secondary school will not return when classrooms reopen.<sup>43</sup>

Though under threat, refugee resettlement remains a life-saving pathway for asylum seekers. However, even people who have had the fortune to work through arduous systems to find some pathway to safe resettlement for their families, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown complications into the path of movement and effective communication. Many immigration processes and courts have slowed their processes because they have not been able to shift to remote technologies or handle the volume in the same way. A typical immigration process in the U.S. that might have ordinarily taken anywhere from 18 months to 3 years, now will be delayed perhaps immeasurably longer with the complications of the pandemic.

<sup>40</sup> [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). CDC COVID Data Tracker. Accessed October 9, 2020

<sup>41</sup> [“As Pandemic Deaths Add Up, Racial Disparities Persist — And In Some Cases Worsen.”](#) NPR, September 23, 2020. Accessed October 9, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> “Exacerbating the Other Epidemic: How COVID-19 Is Increasing Violence Against Displaced Women and Girls” by Devon Cone, Refugees International, August 4, 2020. [Exacerbating the Other Epidemic: How COVID-19 is Increasing Violence Against Displaced Women and Girls](#). Accessed September 15, 2020.

<sup>43</sup> “Coming Together for Refugee Education,” by UNHCR, Geneva, September 3, 2020. [Coming Together for Refugee Education](#). Accessed September 15, 2020.

## CONCLUSION AND COMMITMENTS

The global need to aid and resettle displaced persons is at its highest point and yet our country's administration has dropped our commitment to the most vulnerable to the lowest level of response in history.

We have a moral responsibility to love our neighbor, protect the vulnerable, and care for the sojourner, both as people of faith and as Americans. We pledge to advocate for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. We do this by championing causes which uphold the dignity and sacred worth of every person and protect families and human security.

We cannot afford to be misled by fear or distracted by scapegoating. We will not accept short-sighted solutions. We pledge a priority to this work, to stay vigilant, and to uphold a series of commitments, re-engaging our faith communities in advocacy for vulnerable displaced persons.



EVERYONE IS  
**WELCOME**

# RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE

*The resources mentioned under “Dig Deeper” in each section and others beyond those are collected together here to help encourage you to learn and understand more about the complex issues around migration and immigration to the U.S.*

## SELECT FILMS

There are many films we might suggest. This guide offers a handful of suggestions to get you started. To watch films and documentaries related to immigration and refugees, we recommend the equitable access of the streaming service [Kanopy](#), which is available free through many public and university libraries (and offers up to 10 movies per month). Kanopy has a series on “Immigration in the 21st Century.” Ask your librarian. Other good films and documentaries appear on fee-for-service streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon, and Hulu.

[Brooklyn](#), by John Crowley, Searchlight Pictures, 2015.

The film offers a contrast to much of the immigration conversation today, featuring a dramatic story of a European immigrant in the last generation before the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965.

“Based on Coim Tóibín’s novel, Brooklyn is the story of Eilis Lacey (Saoirse Ronan), a young Irish woman who migrates to the U.S. in the 1950s. We identify Brooklyn as a great example of a film that addresses many nuances of migration. As the story unfolds, we learn about Eilis’s life in Ireland, what prompted her move, what her journey was like, what followed in the new land and how her migration impacted her relationship with her family. Brook-

lyn explores an experience often shared by humans who move (voluntarily and involuntarily): shifting understanding of the ideas of home and belonging in relationship to the communities and circumstances around us.”

[The Chinese Exclusion Act](#), by Ken Burns and Li Shin Yu, Steeplechase Films and PBS, 2018.

The United States did not have any substantive laws barring immigration before 1875. All immigration was “legal” for a few hundred years. The Chinese Exclusion Act was among the first of a series of exclusion acts that were all ended with the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965.

“In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act singled out a nationality by name and race for special treatment, making it illegal for Chinese nationals to become citizens of the United States. The Act, passed by President Chester A. Arthur, also made it illegal for Chinese labourers to enter America on pain of imprisonment. The law, little known today, had a profound impact on the citizens of the US and potential immigrants, creating economic, cultural, social, legal, racial and political repercussions throughout one of the nation’s most formative periods.

“Now, in-depth documentary THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT takes a long, hard look at this episode in American history – one that sheds light on key aspects of American civil liberties, immigration and culture.”

## RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE | CONTINUED

[The Deportation of Innocence: Children of Deported Parents](#) by Francisco Alarcon, Relampago Films, 2016.

“The Deportation of Innocence takes us on a journey into the experiences of U.S.-born children and their immigrant families as they come to terms with deportation and the long-lasting effects this has had on their lives. For the children, this can mean growing up with an absentee parent, being placed in foster care and in the most dire cases, being put up for adoption. This film takes us deep into the struggle of these American children as they are caught in the political crossfire between two nations.”

[Human Flow](#) by Ai Weiwei, Amazon Studios, Participant Media, and AC Films, 2017.

“Over 65 million people around the world have been forced from their homes to escape famine, climate change and war in the greatest human displacement since World War II. Human Flow, an epic film journey led by the internationally renowned artist Ai Weiwei, gives a powerful visual expression to this massive human migration. The documentary elucidates both the staggering scale of the refugee crisis and its profoundly personal human impact.

“Captured over the course of an eventful year in 23 countries, the film follows a chain of urgent human stories that stretches across the globe in countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, France, Greece, Germany, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, and Turkey. Human Flow is a witness to its subjects and their desperate search for safety, shelter and justice: from teeming refugee camps to perilous ocean crossings to barbed-wire borders; from dislocation and disillusionment to courage, endurance and adap-

tation; from the haunting lure of lives left behind to the unknown potential of the future. Human Flow comes at a crucial time when tolerance, compassion and trust are needed more than ever. This visceral work of cinema is a testament to the unassailable human spirit and poses one of the questions that will define this century: Will our global society emerge from fear, isolation, and self-interest and choose a path of openness, freedom, and respect for humanity?”

[Immigration Nation](#), a Netflix docuseries, 2020.

This can be painful to watch. It is a gritty in the trenches look at the immigration challenges in the US.

“This documentary series offers a unique and nuanced view of the ongoing struggles in America’s broken immigration system. With unprecedented access to ICE operations, as well as moving portraits of immigrants, this docuseries takes a deep look at U.S. immigration today.”

[The Immigration Paradox](#), by Lourdes Lee Vasquez, Deep Focus Cinema, 2014.

“The Immigration Paradox takes a critical and in depth look at one of the most divisive issues in human global history – immigration. After encountering an immigrant crossing the Arizona desert, Emmy Award Winner and Filmmaker Lourdes Lee Vasquez set out to understand why people would risk their lives to come to the U.S. Her quest takes a shocking twist when she musters enough courage to cross the line at a protest and has an encounter with whom she believed was her enemy. From there on her journey, spanning 7 years searching for answers and solutions to this complex social issue, takes her and the audience to places never before considered in the immigration debate.”

## RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE | CONTINUED

[The Infiltrators](#) by Alex Rivera and Crisitna Ibarra, Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2019.

“THE INFILTRATORS is a docu-thriller that tells the true story of young immigrants who are detained by Border Patrol and thrown into a shadowy for-profit detention center—on purpose. Marco and Viri are members of the National Immigrant Youth Alliance, a group of radical DREAMers who are on a mission to stop unjust deportations. And the best place to stop deportations, they believe, is in detention. However, when Marco and Viri attempt a daring reverse ‘prison break,’ things don’t go according to plan. By weaving together documentary footage of the real infiltrators with re-enactments of the events inside the detention center, THE INFILTRATORS tells an incredible and thrilling true story in a genre-defying new cinematic language.”

[In The Shadows](#) by Dan Glynn, Broadbandaid Films, 2013.

“This film, a modern day ‘Grapes of Wrath,’ follows Jairo and his extended family of undocumented immigrants from their home in Mexico to a dairy farm in the USA in search of a better life and a means to send money home to their struggling families. Along the way, they encounter dangerous border crossing conditions and a run-in with immigration authorities. This film explores why immigration remains an enduring issue for our country.”

[The Wall: The Effects of Its Imposing Presence on Migrant Families](#) by Laura Herrero Gavin, Meredith Hoffman, Peter Johnston, Sara Gozalo, Sarah Kuck, Schott Boehm, and Stephanie Schiavenato, Pragda Films, 2019.

“A compilation of short documentaries on the current undocumented immigration crisis touching topics such as The Wall, the effect of family separation at the border, deportation, and DACA.”

[Whose Land Is This? Part of the Series Freedom: A History of the US](#), by Nancy Steiner, Peter W. Kunhardt, and Philip Kunhardt III, PBS, 2002.

“The nation seethes with racial conflict as immigrants increasingly become targets of prejudice, and as settlers and soldiers massacre Western Indians and force them onto reservations. As European freedom-seekers continue to pour into America through Ellis Island, the Supreme Court finally rules that non-citizens are due equal protection under the law.”

### SELECT READINGS

Many of the resources that appear here are referenced earlier in this study guide in footnotes or in the Digging Deeper suggested readings. Others are additional references.

#### International Migration Agreements, Patterns, and Analysis

- [UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration](#)
- [UNHCR Report - Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019](#)
- [UNHCR's Global Data on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers](#)
- [UNHCR's Global Statistics on Persons of Concern](#)

#### US Immigration Law, Policies, Practices, and Analysis

- [1965 Immigration and Nationality Act \(See esp. Section 207\)](#)
- [The Refugee Act of 1980](#)
- [US Citizenship and Immigration Services' Reports on Immigration and Citizenship Data](#)
- [USCIS' Most Recent Asylum Seeker Workload Report](#)
- [U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-2019](#)
- [Understanding the Presidential Determination of Refugee Allowances and the Bipartisan Refugee Act of 1980](#)
- [U.S. Immigration Courts' Backlog Exceeds](#)

#### [One Million Cases](#)

- [A Primer on the Trump Administration's Most Ambitious Effort to End Asylum](#)
- [F.B.I Hate Crime Statistics 2018](#)
- [Key Facts About Refugees to the US](#)

#### Dispelling Negative Framings and Myths

- [America's Divided Mind: Understanding the Psychology That Drives Us Apart](#)
- [The Marshall Project: The Myth of the Criminal Immigrant](#)
- [US Refugees and Asylees: An Overview](#)
- [The Rise in Hate Crimes in the United States](#)
- [Terrorists by Immigration Status and Nationality: A Risk Analysis, 1975 – 2017](#)
- [Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland](#)
- [The Economic Impact of Refugees in America](#)
- [The Relationship Between Immigration and Crime](#)
- [Why the Wall Will Not Work](#)
- [Blaming Immigrants: Nationalism and the Economics of Global Movement](#)
- [Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World](#)
- [Refugee Economies: Forced Displacement and Development](#)

#### US Faith Advocacy and Activism

- [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)
- [A List of Letters of Support from the Refugee Council USA Regarding](#)



## RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE | CONTINUED

### [Refugee Resettlement](#)

- [170 Jewish Organizations Express Concern Over the Zeroing of Refugee Resettlements for 2020](#)
- [Faith Leaders Supporting the GRACE Act](#)
- [USCIRF Statement in Response to White House Plans to Reduce Refugee Ceiling to Zero](#)
- [The Case of Rev. Kaji Douša vs. the Department of Homeland Security](#)
- [Facing Deportation, a Mother and Son Find Refuge in a Synagogue](#)

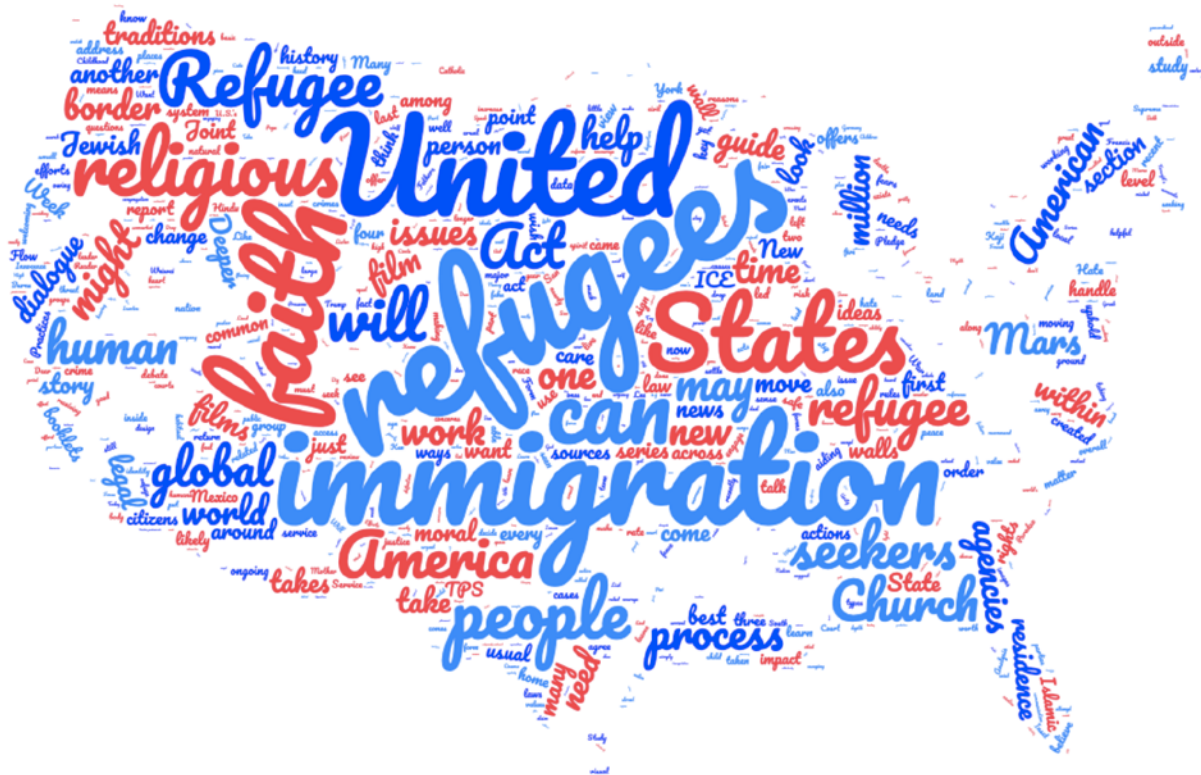
### Study Guides

- [‘Refugees Welcome’ Toolkit from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

- [Guide to Action on Mobilizing Faith Communities to Welcome to Migrants and Refugees from Religions for Peace International](#)
- [Ways to Welcome and the ‘I Welcome’ Toolkit from Amnesty International USA](#)
- [Faith and Immigration Justice Training Program from JustFaith](#)

### Additional Titles

- [Migrations: Open Hearts, Open Borders](#)
- [We Are Displaced](#)
- [Separated by the Border: A Birth Mother, A Foster Mother, and a Migrant Child’s 3,000 Mile Journey](#)
- [The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration](#)



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*E Pluribus Unum. Out of Many, One.*



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