

ICMC STATEMENT ON THE EXECUTIVE ORDER SUSPENDING THE UNITED STATES REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM

On 20 January, the President of the United States issued an [Executive Order](#) that suspends the United States Refugee Admissions Program.

The 1951 international Refugee Convention defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Only people who meet these stringent criteria obtain international protection as refugees.

In line with its founding values, the U.S. has historically led and championed the international community’s commitment to protect the most vulnerable. Since 1980, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program has provided over 3 million refugees with the opportunity to safely settle in the United States and contribute to its progress.

The program is a legal pathway granting access to refugees only after they undergo a lengthy and rigorous screening process - including by federal security agencies -, as well as a thorough preparation to help them successfully integrate into American society.

For several decades already, the International Catholic Migration Commission has proudly partnered with the U.S. on its Refugee Admissions Program, responding to the Gospel’s call: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35).

Today, we are deeply concerned that the disruption of this program will cause further suffering to many families and individuals who have already invested years, resources and – above all – hope in this legal pathway to a brighter future.

Furthermore, as the world experiences a growing number of tensions, conflicts, and injustices, it is imperative that the U.S. does not waiver in its leadership and commitment to offer protection to the victims.

We wholeheartedly echo the appeal that Archbishop Timothy Broglio made in his [statement](#) on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on 22 January: “It is our hope that the leadership of our Country will reconsider those actions which disregard not only the human dignity of a few, but of us all.”

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.