

February 28, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama and Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned faith, refugee, and humanitarian leaders and organizations, write to ask for your leadership as the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program faces a crisis. Without your intervention, America's ability to provide persecuted refugees and vulnerable migrant children with safe haven and a chance at a new life could be dramatically diminished. Currently, the federal agency responsible for responding to refugees and unaccompanied migrant children lacks the robust funding required to succeed.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the populations most vulnerable to organized crime in Central America are unaccompanied children, as well as single women and female heads of household with young children. A recent surge in widespread organized crime and violence in the region has led to an unanticipated increase in the number of unaccompanied children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Thousands of children in the region are fleeing their homes to escape extortion, killings, forced recruitment, and generalized fear. As these children flee the dangers of their home countries, their age and vulnerability place them at special risk for abuse, exploitation and trafficking during their journeys.

As a result of several acts of Congress, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is responsible for caring for these children after their apprehension in the U.S. and prior to the conclusion of their immigration cases. In FY 2013, ORR budgeted for the arrival of 14,500 of these "unaccompanied alien children" (UACs), anticipating the number of UACs to be consistent with FY 2012 levels. However, current ORR and DHS projections anticipate that 20,000 children will arrive this fiscal year, creating a significant budget shortfall.

Unless ORR receives additional funding to respond to this crisis, ORR will have to find the funding to care for these children elsewhere in their budget. We fear that ORR will have no choice but to take funds from programs supporting refugees and the communities that welcome them. Reprogramming funding in this way may force ORR to reduce or disrupt services to refugees and the other vulnerable populations that fall under its mandate, hampering the road to self-sufficiency and integration. In addition, the funding that ORR provides to states, counties and cities that welcome refugees would also be at risk.

Further, a lack of additional funding to respond to this crisis would impact the future of refugee arrivals. This could be the beginning of a downward spiral for the U.S. refugee program, wherein our inability to appropriately serve refugees would cause the United States to reduce the number of refugees we welcome each year. Our nation's leadership in offering hope and safety to the world's most vulnerable persons is at risk unless increased funding allows ORR to meet the needs of all the populations it is expected to serve.

One of the greatest strengths of the resettlement program is the partnership between the U.S. government and private organizations. Refugee resettlement agencies, houses of worship, local community groups, and dedicated citizens have worked together for decades to create successful and sustainable partnerships and welcoming communities for refugees across the country. We are committed to continue our support to refugees and vulnerable migrant children. We respectfully and urgently request your immediate intervention to ensure we can continue to work together to offer hope and safety to refugees and vulnerable migrants to the United States.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

Agudath Israel of America  
American Forum of Russian Jewry  
American Jewish Committee  
Anti-Defamation League  
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies  
B'nai B'rith International  
The Center for Victims of Torture  
Church World Service  
The Episcopal Church  
Ethiopian Community Development Council  
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights (Chicago, IL)  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society  
International Rescue Committee  
Jewish Council on Public Affairs  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Keshet  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepard  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College  
Reformed Church World Service, Reformed Church in America  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants  
Women's Refugee Commission  
World Relief

**Local Organizations**

Catholic Social Services Alaska  
Arizona Immigrant and Refugee Services  
Catholic Charities Community Services of Phoenix  
Catholic Social Services Arizona  
Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, Tucson, AZ  
Refugee Focus, Division of Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, Phoenix, AZ  
Alliance for African Assistance  
American Immigration Lawyers Association, Northern California Chapter  
Catholic Charities CYO, Archdiocese of San Francisco  
Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego  
Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice  
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County  
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles (CLUE-LA)  
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley  
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center – San Francisco, CA  
Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice – California)  
Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service, Los Angeles

Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties  
Jewish Family and Children's Service of the East Bay  
Jewish Family Service of San Diego  
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley  
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley  
Jewish Labor Committee Western Region CA  
Lutheran Office of Public Policy- California  
Opening Doors, Inc., Sacramento, CA  
Program for Torture Victims (Los Angeles, CA)  
Survivors of Torture, International (San Diego, CA)  
Ecumenical Refugee and Immigration Services, Denver, CO  
Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains  
Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition  
IRIS - Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, New Haven, CT  
Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT)  
AJC Miami and Broward  
AJC Palm Beach County  
Catholic Charities Northwest Florida  
Church World Service Miami, FL  
Coptic Orthodox Charities, Inc.  
Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services  
Lutheran Services Florida  
Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta, GA  
Catholic Charities Hawaii  
AJC Chicago  
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago  
Lutheran Advocacy- Illinois  
RefugeeOne, Chicago, IL  
The American Red Cross, St. Joseph County Chapter, South Bend, IN  
Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc., Indianapolis, IN  
Lutheran Services in Iowa, Inc.  
Catholic Charities of Louisville  
Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Lexington, KY  
Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville, KY  
Catholic Charities Maine  
Jewish Community Services of Baltimore  
Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights (Boston, MA)  
Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Boston  
Catholic Charities Worcester County  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston  
Jewish Family and Children's Services Boston New American Services  
Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts, Inc.  
Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, MI  
Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Metropolitan Detroit  
Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit  
Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County  
St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, Michigan  
Minnesota Council of Churches, MN  
Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri  
Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma (St. Louis, MO)  
Jewish Vocational Services, Kansas City

St. Louis Mental Health Board (St. Louis, MO)  
Southern Sudan Community Association  
Jewish Vocational Service of Metrowest NJ, Inc.  
Encuentro – Albuquerque, NM  
AJC New York  
Catholic Family Center, Rochester, New York  
Federation Employment and Guidance Service, Inc.  
HealthRight International (New York, NY)  
InterFaith Works Center for New Americans, Syracuse, NY  
Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County  
Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc., Buffalo, NY  
Lutheran Social Services of New York  
UJA-Federation of New York  
Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency – Charlotte, NC  
Church World Service Durham, NC  
Church World Service Greensboro, NC  
North Carolina African Services Coalition  
American Jewish Committee – Cincinnati Regional Office  
Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS), Columbus, OH  
US Together, Inc.  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon / Sponsors Organized To Assist Refugees, Portland, OR  
Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, PA  
Catholic Charities Counseling & Adoption Services - Erie, PA  
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Church World Service Lancaster, PA  
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Pittsburgh  
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Harrisburg, PA  
Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota  
Nashville International Center for Empowerment  
Catholic Charities of Corpus Christi  
Center for Survivors of Torture (Dallas, TX)  
Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services El Paso  
Dominican Sisters of Houston, TX  
Refugee Services of Texas - Amarillo, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, TX  
Catholic Community Services of Utah  
Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City  
Utah Health and Human Rights (St Lake City, UT)  
Church World Service Harrisonburg, VA  
Northern Virginia Family Service (Falls Church, VA)  
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy  
Jewish Family Service of Seattle  
AJC Washington  
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation  
Pan-African Community Services

## **Community and Faith Leaders**

### **National**

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church  
Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez, Director, Church and Community Engagement, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Office of National Mission  
Rev. Linda Jaramillo, Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ

### **Alabama**

Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### **Arkansas**

Bishop Anthony Taylor, Bishop of Little Rock, AR  
Rev. Stephen Copley, Chair, Arkansas Interfaith Alliance, Little Rock, AR

### **Arizona**

Dr. Larry Stoterau, Pacific Southwest District (Southern California, Arizona, Southern Nevada)  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Rev. Bishop Stephen S. Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod (Arizona, Nevada), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### **California**

Rev. Jason E. Bense, Pastor, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Sacramento, CA  
The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane, Assisting Bishop in the Diocese of San Diego and Retired Bishop of Washington, D.C.  
Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox, Executive Director Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.  
Debra DeBondt, Executive Director, Opening Doors, Inc., Sacramento, CA  
Debbie Decker, the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, CA  
Rabbi Mark Diamond, Regional Director of AJC Los Angeles and President of Los Angeles Council of Religious Leaders  
Most Reverend Jose` H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles  
Mark Schroeder, O.F.M., Franciscans for Justice, West Coast, U.S.  
Dr. Larry Stoterau, Pacific Southwest District (Southern California, Arizona, Southern Nevada)  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Meghan Tumilty, Executive Director, Attorney at Law, Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service (IRIS) and Chair of the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA  
E. Stephen Voss, President & CEO, International Institute of Los Angeles

### **Colorado**

Senator Betty Boyd, Board Vice-Chair, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service, Lakewood, CO

### **Connecticut**

Angela Bovill, President/CEO, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont  
Chris George, Executive Director, IRIS- Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, New Haven, CT  
Kelly Hebrank, Deputy Director, IRIS- Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, New Haven, CT  
Angela Rossi Zurowski, Executive Director, International Institute of Connecticut

### **Florida**

Bishop Edward R. Benoway, Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Oscar Rivera, Director, Church World Service, Miami, FL  
Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami

**Georgia**

Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Idaho**

Roberta Nestaas, President/CEO, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

**Illinois**

Laura Lonneman, Housing and Policy Manager, RefugeeOne, Chicago, IL  
Bishop Wayne N. Miller, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Heidi Moll Schoedel, Executive Director, Exodus World Service, Itasca, IL

**Iowa**

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Kansas**

Bishop Gerald L. Mansholt, Central States Synod (Kansas, Missouri), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Kentucky**

Elizabeth Kaznak, Executive Director, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Louisville, KY

**Louisiana**

Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Maryland**

Tal Widdes, Chief Operating Officer, Jewish Social Services Agency  
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Massachusetts**

Angela Bovill, President/CEO, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

**Michigan**

The Rt. Rev'd Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr., Bishop of Michigan  
Kimberly Hassan, Program Advocate, Arab American and Chaldean Council  
Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim, Chaldean Bishop of St. Thomas, The Apostle Chaldean Diocese  
Mark Stutrud, President and CEO, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan  
Hanna Sullaka, Pastor, Lutheran Church

**Minnesota**

Rabbi Morris J Allen, Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights, MN  
Kitty Goggins, International Institute of Minnesota Board Member  
Rosanne M. Hope, International Institute of Minnesota Board Member  
Marry Ann Nowak, International Institute of Minnesota Board Member

**Mississippi**

Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Missouri**

Anna E. Crosslin, President & CEO, International Institute of St. Louis, St. Louis Missouri  
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**New Hampshire**

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**New Jersey**

The Rt. Rev. Mark M. Beckwith, Bishop of Newark

**Nevada**

Dr. Larry Stoterau, Pacific Southwest District (Southern California, Arizona, Southern Nevada)  
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**New York**

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Douglas J. Anderson, Director, Church World Service Upstate, NY  
Mehtab Bajwa, Sikh Society of Syracuse, NY  
Charles W. Beach, President, Board of Directors, InterFaith Works of C.N.Y.  
The Rev. Sherry Chayaf, Zen Center of Syracuse, NY  
Manpreet Dhani, Gurinder Dhillon, Sikh Society of Syracuse, NY  
Gurinder Dhillon, Sikh Society of Syracuse, NY  
Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn  
Rabbi Michael E. Feinberg, Executive Director of the Greater New York Labor/Religion Coalition  
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Rabbi Ari Hart, Founder of Uri L'Tzedek and Rabbi at Hebrew Institute of Riverdale  
Stephanie Horton, Program Facilitator, SCSA Refugee Assistance Program, Syracuse, NY  
The Rev. Jim Kerr-Whitt, N. Manlius United Church, Kirkville, NY  
Mohamed Khater, Islamic Society of Central New York, NY  
Helen Malina, Interfaith Works of Central New York, Syracuse, NY  
Rev. Simone W. Montgomery, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Syracuse, NY  
Rev. William Redfield, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, NY  
Molly Short, Director, Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc., Buffalo, NY  
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Rev. Edith Washington, Unity of Syracuse, Syracuse, NY  
Rev. Jon Werner, Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, NY  
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**North Carolina**

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**Ohio**

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Angela Plummer, Executive Director, Community Refugee & Immigration Services, Columbus, OH  
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**Oregon**

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**Pennsylvania**

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Bishop Claire Burkat, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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**Rhode Island**

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**South Carolina**

George Kanuck, Social Justice Advocate, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Lowcountry, Bluffton, SC  
Bishop Herman R. Yoos, South Carolina Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Tennessee**

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**Texas**

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Ajit Giani, Board member of Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston and leader of the Bahia Community in Houston, TX  
Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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**Vermont**

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Angela Bovill, President/CEO, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont  
Todd Centybear, Executive Director, Howard Center  
The Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Ely, Bishop of Vermont



Dr. Karen Fondacaro, Director, Behavior Therapy and Psychotherapy Center at UVM  
D. J. Hellerman, Burlington City Arts Curator, Burlington, VT  
Dr. Anne Judson, Director , Graduate Education Program at St. Michael's College  
Amy Mellencamp , Burlington High School Principal, Burlington, VT  
Nina Meyerhof, Director, Children of the Earth  
Reverend Karen Mendes, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Burlington, VT  
Julie Berger Pierson, Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity  
Carolyn Rushford, Joint Urban Ministry Program Board Member  
Shawna Shapiro, Middlebury College Visiting Assistant Professor of Writing  
Rebecca Trudeau , Vermont Department of Labor

### **Virginia**

Lisa Gibson, Director, Church World Service, Tidewater Region, Newport News, VA  
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Rabbi Amy M Schwartzman, Temple Rodef Shalom, Falls Church, VA  
Rev. Eric Wester, Chaplain, U.S. Army, Arlington, VA

### **Washington**

Dianne Aid, President, The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice, Kent, WA  
Aida Bound, The Hat Project, Wenatchee, WA  
Roberta Nestaas, President/CEO, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Idaho, Oregon, Washington  
The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel, Bishop of Olympia

### **Washington, DC**

Rabbi Charles Feinberg, Washington, DC  
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Rev. Craig C. Roshaven, Witness Ministries Director, Unitarian Universalist Association  
Rev. Mari Castellanos, D. Min., United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF, Franciscan Action Network  
Rabbi David Shneyer, Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community of Greater Washington, DC