

BUILDING BRIDGES



Partner: Arab Renaissance for Democracy (ARDD)

Refugee Support & Advocacy Toolkit



Globally, 2015 saw the largest number of people forced to flee their homes in recorded history. Worldwide, there are currently 19.5 million refugees and another 38.2 million people displaced within their own countries. **In the face of a humanitarian crisis this vast, it's common to feel powerless – but we are *not* powerless. There are many ways that we can take action.** UUSC has created this toolkit to help individuals, congregations, campus clubs, and community groups mobilize in support of refugees. It is organized into four sections for easy use:

- 1. Understanding the world's refugee crisis**
- 2. Supporting refugees in your community**
- 3. Countering anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant bigotry**
- 4. Advocating for refugee rights and integration**

We also invite you to join the **UUSC Refugee Rapid Response Network**. As part of this network, you will receive special alerts and news updates, and can participate in monthly calls to network with other UUSC refugee rights advocates.

UUSC is a member of the Refugees Welcome Coalition, an initiative dedicated to show that Americans from all walks of life stand ready to welcome all refugees, regardless of their nationality, religion, or ethnic group. We encourage you to visit the coalition's website, refugeesarewelcome.org, and register your local events for their map and calendar.

At UUSC, we are eager to collaborate with you to advance refugee rights. Please be in touch to let us know what you're interested in doing or what you have already done, and if there are further resources that would support your work. This toolkit is a living document, and as we learn from all of you, it will grow with your stories and ideas.

UUSC began our work over 75 years ago when Rev. Waitstill and Martha Sharp traveled to Europe under the sponsorship of the American Unitarian Association to support refugees escaping Nazi persecution. We are proud to continue this tradition by standing with refugees today.

We wish to thank Barbara and Adnan Aswad, Monica Curca, Rev. Kathleen McTigue, Angela Kelly, Eva Millona, Valerie Vande Panne, Jillian Tuck, Inés Llorente, Sara Oaklander, Katia Hansen, Jan Meslin, Ariella Pasackow, Gary Crawford, Lavona Grow, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley, Yasmine Taeb, Jen Smyers, the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, and all others who have shared stories and provided invaluable insight, resources, and feedback.

In Solidarity,
Hannah Hafter & Pamela Sparr
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Justice-Building Unit

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a human rights organization powered by grassroots collaboration. In more than a dozen countries throughout the world, UUSC fosters social justice and works toward a world free from oppression. UUSC's innovative approaches and measurable impact are grounded in the moral belief that all people have inherent power, dignity, and rights.

The **UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund** has raised over \$645,000 in its first eight months. These funds are being distributed to grassroots partners along the migration route from Syria and other neighboring countries experiencing conflict to help these partners provide emergency aid, ensure access to legal help and resettlement support, and advocate for necessary changes in policy and public perception throughout Europe and the United States. More information on the Refugee Crisis Fund Partners can be found at uusc.org/updates/syrian-refugee-crisis-situation-strategy-partners-and-advocacy

Table of Contents

Part 1: Understanding the World's Refugee Crisis

- Basic Background
- Frequently Asked Questions
- UUSC's refugee crisis partners

Part 2: Supporting Refugees in Your Community

- Volunteer with refugee resettlement agencies
Case Study: Youth Mentorship with New American Students
- Host a #refugeeswelcome dinner or event
Case Study: Stories from a Refugee Solidarity Family Dinner
- Visit asylum seekers in detention or join a pen pal program
- Consider becoming a Sanctuary Congregation

Part 3: Countering Anti-Muslim and Anti-Immigrant Bigotry

- Education and Solidarity
- Confronting hate speech in politics
- Countering fear: refugees are not terrorists
Case Study: How Love Drowned Out Fear in Roanoke, Va.
- Understanding Islamophobia in an era of mass criminalization

Part 4: Advocating for Refugee Rights and Integration

- Influencing federal legislation and regulations
Case Study: Congregations in Action in the Nation's Capital
- Stopping anti-refugee legislation in your state
- Creating refugee-welcoming cities and sanctuary cities

Appendix:

- A. Glossary of Terms
- B. Welcome Event Materials
 - Interfaith Iftar resources for events during Ramadan
 - Placemats
 - Sample Media Release Form
- C. Sample City Council Resolution
- D. Communications Tools
 - Refugees Welcome Sign
- E. Worship Materials for Unitarian Universalist Congregations
- F. Additional Resources List



Partner: Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) Photo by Edd Carlile

1 UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD'S REFUGEE CRISIS

The Global Picture

In 2015, the world witnessed the largest number of people forced to flee their homes in recorded history. Globally, there are 19.5 million refugees and 38.2 million more people displaced within their own countries, according to the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). If these people were grouped into a country, it would have the 24th largest population in the world.¹

UNHCR reports that the top five countries people are fleeing are Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. The largest single source is Syria, with some 4.6 million refugees. Nearly 90% of Syrian refugees are living in neighboring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, and over half of them are children. The United States has agreed to accept just 85,000 refugees in 2016, including a minimum of 10,000 Syrians.

A Profile of U.S. Refugees

In 2015, the three leading countries of origin for refugees resettling in the U.S. were Burma, Iraq, and Somalia. The remaining top 10 countries are Bhutan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, and Cuba.² Over the last 40 years, the largest groups of refugees have come from the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, and the former Yugoslavia – but these immigrants fall off our social radar today because of how extensively they have integrated into our society.³

Refugees to the U.S. range from university professors and doctors to people who never had access to a formal education. Refugees are women, men, children, and the elderly. People who come to the United States as refugees had full lives in their homelands, and will have full lives here. Being a “refugee” is not an identity in itself – it is a temporary condition resulting from forced displacement, usually related to political violence. Although their lives have been drastically disrupted, refugees in the United States bring a wide range of strengths, skills, and contributions to our society and the economy.

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>

² <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/statistics/251285.htm>

³ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/vietnamese-immigrants-united-states>

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Process

Refugees who come to the United States go through a long and rigorous process that typically takes a minimum of 18 months, but can drag out for years. They must first be screened and selected by the UNHCR for referral to the United States, then go through a second screening with the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS). In addition to interviews with both the United Nations and USCIS, they must pass a series of background checks, undergo a medical exam, and receive cultural orientation – all before landing on U.S. soil.

Refugees whose applications for U.S. resettlement receive approval from USCIS are matched with a local resettlement organization that facilitates their orientation to the United States. They receive 90 days of government-sponsored services such as food, housing, and employment help, and may be eligible for benefits for a longer period of time. Typically, refugees are expected to quickly become self-sufficient contributors to U.S. society by working and paying taxes, and by learning English and attending school.

Refugees from Central America

Tens of thousands of families and unaccompanied minors have come to the United States from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, seeking safety at our southern border. While the Department of Homeland Security continues to refer to them as “illegal aliens,” the truth is that they have every legal right under U.S. and international law to request asylum. However, the situation families fleeing from violence in Central America find once they reach the United States is very different from the circumstances of resettled refugees.

Although in most cases Central American families will face the same risks as resettled refugees if they are forced to return to their country, the United States holds them for weeks or even months in family detention centers. Central American families who enter the United States first and then request permanent protection from persecution in their home country are technically “asylum seekers” rather than refugees, because they were not first screened and approved before entering the country. As a result, they have to go through adversarial court proceedings to prove their case, and even if they are released from detention, they do not have permits to work



Photo by Jeff Percy for UUSC

(they can apply for employment authorization 6 months after filing for asylum). They don't have access to the basic support services resettlement agencies provide, or even a lawyer to assist them through the extremely complicated legal process to qualify for protection, unless they are able to find pro bono legal aid or are able to afford a private attorney.

The U.S. State Department has partnered with the UNHCR to begin in-country screening for families and individuals seeking refugee resettlement from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in 2016.⁴ While this is a positive step toward providing a safer method to reach the United States for families in danger, the program is not yet underway as of April 2016. At the same time, the U.S. government continues to force families and unaccompanied minors already here to go through rapid court hearings in order to expedite their processing. This often means that these families and individuals are not represented by a lawyer and lose their cases, only to be quickly deported.

Latino asylum-seeking families already in the U.S. deserve the same community support as resettled refugees, and that is why UUSC has taken care to include Central American asylum seekers in our refugee toolkit.

Syria & The Current Refugee Crisis

2016 marks five years since the start of the Civil War in Syria, which has since been fueled by the involvement of several nations, including the United States. In addition to the 4.6 million refugees who have fled the country, an estimated 7.6 million Syrians have been internally displaced within their own country. As the world scrambles to respond, with much of the focus on conditions refugees encounter in Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East, we must remember that the real "refugee crisis" is that millions of people's homes have been destroyed and they are not safe in their own country. The impact on industrialized nations beyond Syria's borders is not the heart of the crisis.

Although the media has labeled current events as the "Syrian refugee crisis," the reality is that only about half of all refugees arriving

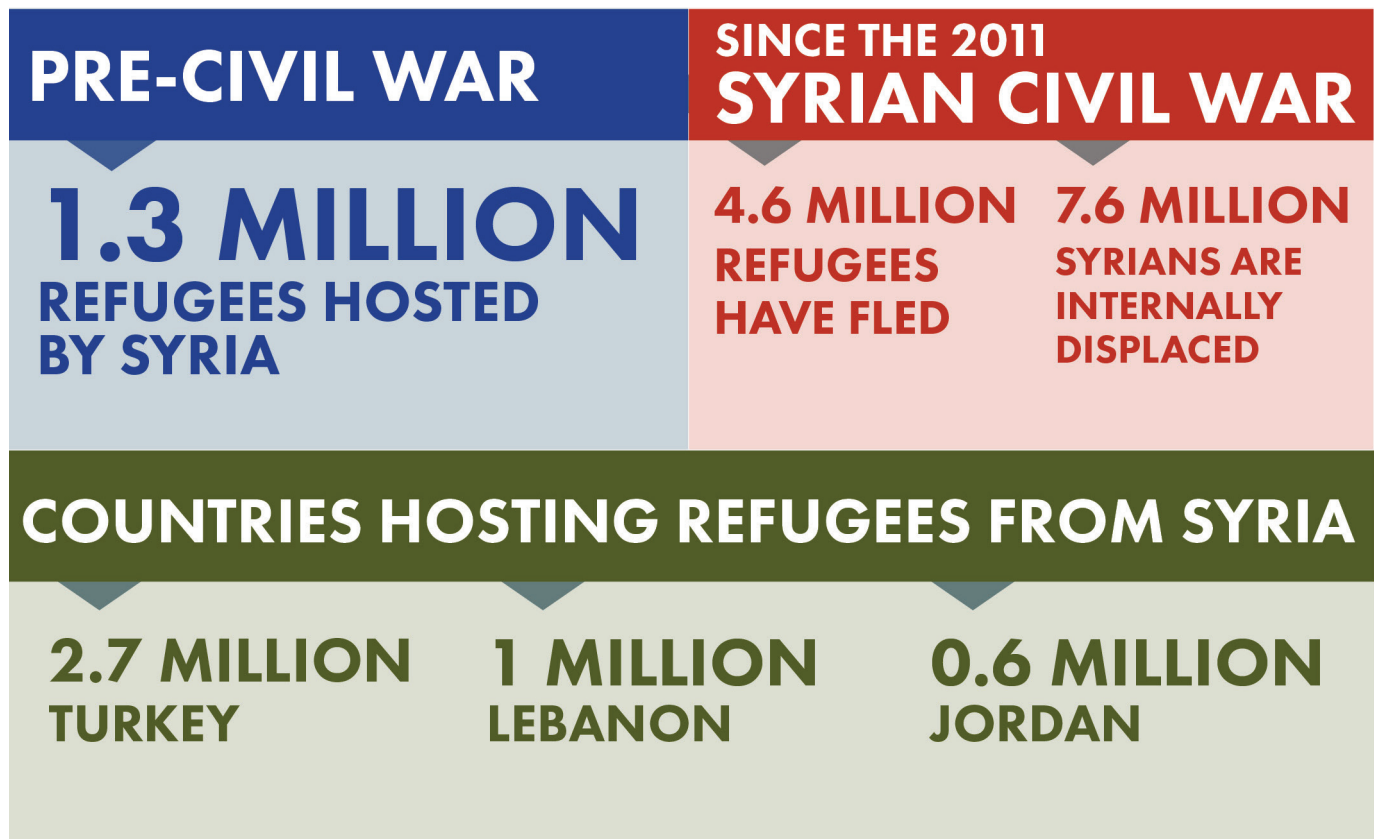


Partner: Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) Photo by Edd Carlile

⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/5697d35f6.html>

in Europe are from Syria. Refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Eritrea make up another 40%.⁵ It is also often forgotten that Syria was previously a major host country for refugees: 1.3 million refugees, primarily Iraqi and Palestinian, made their homes in Syria before the war.⁶ They have now been displaced for a second time, and face additional barriers at European borders.

The majority of refugees in neighboring countries live outside of camps. Some have family members or friends who have offered them a place to stay. Others have found work in the informal sector in order to pay rent for housing in urban areas, since Jordan and Lebanon do not allow work permits for refugees. In places where there are no official camps, many families have set up makeshift settlements lacking clean water and



Nine out of every ten refugees from Syria are currently living in neighboring countries like Turkey (2.7 million), Lebanon (1 million), and Jordan (0.6 million).⁷ The Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, founded in 2012 on what used to be barren desert, has a population of nearly 80,000. Refugee camps have always been intended to be a temporary crisis response, but they are increasingly becoming long-term shelters in the place of permanent solutions for resettlement or a safe return home.

sanitation. The United Nations' Syrian Refugee Response Plan has only received 40% of the needed funding from its member states as of March 2016, and as a result, food rations have been cut. In Lebanon, **the food budget for refugees is now only \$13 per person per month – less than 50 cents a day.**⁸

Over 1 million refugees sought to reach Europe during 2015. Over 95% of them made the life-threatening journey by attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. At least 3,770 people died.⁹ While most deaths occurred on the

⁵ <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

⁶ <http://www.unhcr.org/4dfdbf50b.html>

⁷ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/06/refugee-crisis-un-agencies-broke-failing>

⁹ <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-counts-3771-migrant-fatalities-mediterranean-2015>



journey from northern Africa to Italy, more than 800 died in the Aegean Sea, crossing from Turkey to Greece. In 2014, the European Union suspended full-scale maritime rescue operations, based on the theory that their presence encouraged more risk-taking. This proved to be dangerously wrong; refugee journeys by sea steadily increased, and so did the deaths. The European Union's new rescue operation is now run by Frontex, the European border agency; it prioritizes deterrence over search-and-rescue.

As media attention increased awareness of the treacherous, often fatal journeys being taken by so many, refugees arriving in Europe during 2015 encountered an outpouring of compassion and generosity from the public – though not nearly enough to meet their basic needs. At the same time, they faced increased xenophobia and fear from most governments and some segments of the population. Though attention has shifted toward other news, the struggles of many people seeking asylum in Europe continues. German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed refugees with open arms at first, but eventually even Germany restricted the arrival of new refugees, saying that the rest of the European Union needed to do their part as well. By early 2016, the Balkan route being used by Middle Eastern

and Afghan refugees to reach northern Europe had been effectively sealed off by a series of border crackdowns in Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, and Macedonia. This has left tens of thousands of people stuck in Turkey, Greece, and other key points along the route, where they face the possibility of violent attacks at closed borders, with insufficient access to shelter, food, water, medical facilities, psychosocial support, or legal assistance.

In March 2016, a controversial deal was struck between the European Union and Turkey to deport any refugees arriving at Europe's borders.¹⁰ But as long as home is not a livable option, people will continue to find routes to escape to safety. This applies just as much to asylum seekers who come to the United States through our Southern border as it does to Syrians and other Middle Eastern refugees. A comprehensive response requires not only the acceptance of more refugees in the West and increased aid for Syria's neighboring countries, where 90% of refugees remain. It must also address the root causes of forced displacement, including a committed effort to establish peace through diplomacy, an approach that requires addressing the role the United States has played in both the Middle East and Central America.

¹⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/04/turkey-illegal-mass-returns-of-syrian-refugees-expose-fatal-flaws-in-eu-turkey-deal>

The Role of the United States

Increasing the refugee cap in the United States and our financial commitment to global humanitarian aid for refugees isn't just the right thing to do – it is also a way to take responsibility for the role we have played in destabilizing the regions from which people are escaping, and contributing to the rise of the refugee crisis. Our concern for the humanitarian challenges facing millions of refugees compels us to better understand, oppose, and educate others about the impacts of U.S. foreign policies that have caused so many to flee their homes.

Many refugees currently seeking shelter in Europe are escaping the lasting effects of U.S. wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the continued conflict in Syria. As of June 2015, the UNHCR has reported that these wars and occupations have caused more than 13 million people to become displaced within their own countries, or to seek safety in other nations.¹¹ It is also now widely documented that the United States' 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq created conditions that gave rise to ISIS, known increasingly as Daesh, which is escalating violence in Iraq, Syria, and beyond. In the first half of 2016, the United States government spent \$68,000 an hour (\$1.6 million per day) on warplanes targeting ISIS, including bombing in Syria, as part of its war against terrorism. At the same time, Russia has been bombing rebels in Syria who are fighting the Bashar al-Assad regime.

Phyllis Bennis, senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, explains: "The Syrian conflict is simultaneously a civil war – pitting a brutal government against a multitude of political and military opposition forces – and a proxy war in which a host of outside powers are fighting for various regional and global hegemonies. And all of those overlapping wars are being fought to the last Syrian."

The consequences of U.S. foreign and economic policies in Latin America have also led many to escape violence closer to home. U.S. intervention has fueled war and violent conflict in Central America since the 1950s, when the United States engineered the overthrow of democratically elected Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz in order to protect U.S. corporate interests. U.S. drug war funding has intensified conflicts among police, soldiers, and drug cartels, with more and more everyday citizens caught in the crossfire. After a 2009 military coup against Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, the United States applied international pressure to recognize the new government even while it used the military to quell uprisings.¹² Violence has risen in Honduras since that time, and the country achieved infamy as the "Murder Capital of the World" for counting over 80 murders per 100,000 citizens. That figure led the world for four years until it was surpassed by neighboring El Salvador in 2015 when that country's murder rate rose to 104 murders per 100,000 citizens.¹³ Fearing the exodus of refugees escaping from this violence in Central America, the United States has contracted with Mexico to carry out immigration enforcement on our behalf by providing over \$100 million a year for Mexico to strengthen its own southern border and detain Central Americans in transit to the United States.¹⁴

Now is the time for the United States to demonstrate moral courage. This country was founded as a place of refuge for those fleeing religious persecution. It's a fundamental part of our national identity to be a safe haven. As a country, we can acknowledge our mistakes, take concrete steps to address their consequences, and support efforts for peace, diplomacy, and security in these regions while providing a haven to as many people as we can who have already been affected.

¹¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html> (Iraq)

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486eb6.html> (Afghanistan)

¹² <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2010/12/9834/banana-republic-once-again>

¹³ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/01/07/el-salvador-homicide-rate-honduras-guatemala-illegal-immigration-to-united-states/78358042/>

¹⁴ http://www.wola.org/publications/mexicos_other_border

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I have a spare room in my house and I am interested in hosting a refugee family. What can I do?

A: The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program aims to promote independence and self-sufficiency for refugees, and therefore does not use in-home hospitality. However, if you own a separate rental unit with its own kitchen and bathroom and would like to offer a discounted rate for refugee families, inform your local resettlement agency. Even if you cannot host, there are many ways you can provide much-needed early support to new arrivals and ongoing assistance to your local refugee community. See part 2 for specific ideas related to volunteering and expressing your friendship.

Q: How do I find out what refugee resettlement agencies exist in my area?

A: The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement has a national map to help you find resettlement agencies near you. <http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/state-programs-annual-overview>

Q: I thought Syrian refugees were the biggest refugee group, and I'm interested in helping Syrian refugees. Why are there so few of them in the United States?

A: The United States resettled only 1,500 Syrian refugees in 2015, with a cumulative total of only 1,854 since the beginning of the conflict in Syria – significantly fewer than President Obama's goal of resettling 10,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016. The United Nations has already submitted 13,586 refugee referrals for the United States to consider for resettlement, but the approval process is long and complicated. As the numbers of Syrian refugees coming to the United States increases, they are likely to relocate to communities that already have a larger Arabic-speaking population – places where they feel more at home. Even if there are no Syrian refugees where you live, we encourage you to get to know other refugees in your community and advocate with your member of Congress and Senators for raising the U.S. refugee quota.

Q: Can I sponsor a refugee or a refugee family? If so, how do I do that?

Sponsorship means very different things in the United States and Canada. In the United States, there is no official process for sponsorship – although there are still many ways to support families and individuals receiving refugee status here.

In Canada, groups can apply directly through a government program (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/sponsor.asp>) to sponsor a specific refugee family to come to Canada. They make a financial commitment to cover basic expenses including relocation, and a personal commitment to help with social support and community integration.

In the United States, however, there is no way to sponsor a family to relocate here. Instead of private volunteers, government-funded refugee resettlement agencies are responsible for supporting refugee families upon arrival to the country. Some resettlement agencies invite groups to co-sponsor a family by providing additional support such as furnishing a home, and helping with job searches, English, and cultural orientation. Other agencies welcome volunteers but do not match groups with individual families.



Partner: Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC)

UUSC'S REFUGEE CRISIS PARTNERS

As a result of the generous support of many donors, the UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund has distributed over \$645,000 to these carefully selected grassroots partners along the European migration route:

Jordan: challenging refugee exploitation through legal and rights awareness

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy (ARDD) – Legal Aid is raising legal awareness and empowerment through trainings and research. Syrian refugees in Jordan navigate the risks they face due to discrimination, lack of formal recognition, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. WAQE3 for Community Development offers free counseling and legal literacy sessions for Syrian refugees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities and avoid exploitation while living in Jordan.

Greece: ensuring decent reception conditions

UUSC is partnering with the Greek nongovernmental organization PRAKSIS to provide immediate transportation assistance and survival kits to newly arrived refugees and their children on the Greek island of Lesbos.

Serbia: providing comprehensive mobile assistance along the transit route

The Asylum Protection Center (APC), our partner in Serbia, enlists a team of aid professionals who travel in a camper vehicle alongside shifting migration routes to provide a comprehensive array of services, including legal support, humanitarian aid, psychosocial counseling, and language interpretation.

Croatia: offering support for long-term resettlement

UUSC is partnering with the Center for Peace Studies (CPS), which spearheads the Welcome Initiative, a collaborative effort of 50 organizations dedicated to refugee resettlement and the provision of immediate humanitarian support.



Partner: Magna Children at Risk,
Croatia-Serbia border

Hungary: facilitating family reunification

With our support, UUSC partner the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) is working to provide full financial and legal support for refugee families who have been torn apart by war and are navigating the family reunification process.

Slovenia: providing humanitarian protection at Croatia-Serbia border

Magna Children at Risk operates medical humanitarian projects – including medical, surgery, psychological, and nutritional programs for children and their families – in two refugee camps at the Croatia-Serbia border.

United States: promoting positive dialogue, refugee integration, and public policy

In Southern California, with UUSC support, the Arab American Civic Council is launching a “Refugees Welcome” initiative that supports the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in that area. The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) is working with UUSC to improve the public and political conversation – and influence public policy – related to refugees in MA. In Indiana, UUSC is partnering with Refugee Exodus to provide critical care to Syrian refugees while also refuting the anti-refugee sentiment that caused Refugee Exodus a loss of vital financial support.

UUSC'S MIGRANT JUSTICE PARTNERS: SECURING RIGHTS ALONG THE CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRATION ROUTE

In addition to our refugee rights partners in Europe and the Middle East, UUSC's Rights at Risk Program includes a migrant justice strategy to support migrants and refugees from Central America and Mexico, and to address root causes of the violence that threatens them at home and throughout their journeys.

El Salvador: Regional strategies for protecting survivors of violence

With UUSC's support, Foundation Cristosal in El Salvador is establishing a database to measure the impact of forced displacement across the Northern Triangle. Other efforts to support long-term policy development include fifteen strategic litigation cases with the potential for setting precedents that would compel the state to recognize its responsibilities to survivors; and the development of durable long-term solutions allowing for safe and successful return to their

places of origin or – where this is not possible – integrated resettlement elsewhere.

Mexico: Upholding the rights of migrants and asylum seekers in transit

In **Mexico City**, the Scalibrini Mission for Refugees and Migrants (SMR) will accompany refugees and migrants who are victims of crime through the legal process, providing psychosocial support, social work assessments, in-kind assistance, and legal aid. In **Guadalajara**, With UUSC support, FM4 Paso Libre is expanding its existing migrant shelter to offer 24-hour-a-day service to give additional respite to migrants as well as protection from the dangers of harassment, abuse, extortion, and ill treatment they might otherwise suffer from gangs and authorities. At the U.S.-Mexico border, UUSC is partnering with the Kino Border Initiative to document, expose, and counter the systematic abuse of migrants and recent deportees by Mexican authorities.

United States: Decriminalizing migration and protecting the right to asylum

Within the United States, UUSC is supporting CIVIC in **San Francisco, Calif.**, to build capacity for self-advocacy among detained migrants and asylum seekers. CIVIC is starting a national 24/7



UUSC PARTNER MAP

hotline for immigrants in detention to connect with family members, receive attorney referrals, and build cases to challenge their detention. In **Tucson, Ariz.**, No More Deaths is documenting the impact of abuses by the Border Patrol's BORSTAR search and rescue unit that are fueling the missing persons crisis in the borderlands. In **Phoenix, Ariz.**, the Arcoiris Liberation Team is working to support LGBTQ+ migrants in detention through visitation, advocacy, and solidarity building. And in **San Antonio, Texas**, UUSC continues to strengthen its partnership with RAICES by supporting pro bono legal services for women and children asylum-seekers in detention, sending volunteers through the UU College of Social Justice, and collaborating on advocacy campaigns. CIVIC also trains and advises local groups interested in starting ongoing visitation programs for people in detention.

Note: Both UUSC's Refugee Crisis and Migrant Justice programs are currently expanding, and this document may not reflect the latest additions to UUSC's partners.

2 SUPPORT REFUGEES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

VOLUNTEER WITH LOCAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

In the U.S. refugee resettlement process, newly arrived families receive free, government funded services for just the first 90 days. By the end of the third month, while they may be eligible for certain benefits, they are generally expected to be self-sufficient and able to continue on their own. Three months is a very short time to adjust to a new country, language, and culture; it can seem even shorter for migrants who need to recover from the traumatic circumstances that forced them from their homes.

That's why community support through relationships with volunteers is incredibly important and meaningful. If you'd like to

volunteer, you can begin by reaching out to a local resettlement agency. No matter where you live in the United States, it's likely that there is a refugee resettlement agency near you. The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement has a national map to help you find the closest resettlement agencies: <http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/state-programs-annual-overview>.

You may want to volunteer as an individual, or as a group from your congregation, campus group, or community organization. Before you begin, make sure you are ready to make a commitment of at least 2-4 hours every few weeks for at least 3 to 6 months. Volunteering can be flexible with your work schedule, but building real relationships requires a steady presence.

Common volunteer roles include:

- Provide community and cultural orientation
- Teach English Language Learners (ELL) classes or have English conversation meet-ups
- Offer transportation to appointments
- Help find household items and set up apartments
- Help families enroll children in schools
- Tutor teens and children
- Coach adults to prepare for job interviews and write resumes
- Offer workshops such as art for children or employment skills for adults
- Help with office-based tasks

If the resettlement agency has faced harassment, as many have, contact the Executive Director and offer your congregation or group's moral support and willingness to voice your support for them in public.

If your volunteer interest involves providing housing to refugees, please see the FAQs.

Additionally, consider volunteering with service organizations based in specific cultural communities, such as the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), which serves immigrants as well as economically disadvantaged local communities; ACCESS currently has locations in 11 states.

A Volunteer's Story: Youth Mentorship with New American Students

Through Cambridge Community Services (CSS), I've been volunteering as a one-on-one mentor with a high school sophomore, starting just three months after she arrived in the United States with her family from India. We meet on a weekly basis to discuss her homework, job, and friends. We've watched Bollywood movies and music videos together, walked around the Harvard campus, and spent time with family and friends. Recognizing the challenges new American students face both socially and academically, CCS implements a holistic model to support the growth and success of refugee and immigrant students attending public school. Through mentoring, tutoring, internships, field trips, and leadership seminars, students get 360 degrees of support on top of their typical school day. For me, volunteering with refugee students is just one way to create a welcoming community for new Americans, and to show solidarity with the millions of refugees displaced worldwide.

- Ariella Pasackow, Cambridge, MA

HOST A #REFUGEESWELCOME DINNER OR EVENT

One great way to begin building relationships with recently arrived refugees is by hosting a welcome dinner, luncheon, or other #RefugeesWelcome event. It can also be an opportunity to highlight the contributions made by immigrant and refugee families who have become integrated into your community over the years. Sharing a meal together is a timeless tradition that cuts across all cultures and religions. The act of inviting recently arrived immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers into the hospitality of a communal meal holds immense meaning; it offers a welcoming space to get to know and learn from one another. #RefugeesWelcome events not only show hospitality – they can also influence local social and political attitudes about refugee resettlement and put pressure on our representatives to be more welcoming.

Many community groups and congregations have hosted welcome dinners that also double as a fundraising event to collect donations and funds to help refugees rebuild their lives in the United States. See the documentary, *Welcome to Shelbyville*, for examples of how sharing a

dinner can break down barriers and transform communities.

Thank you to the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) for spearheading the initiative to bring #RefugeesWelcome dinners and events to cities and towns throughout the United States.

Steps to a Successful #RefugeesWelcome Event:

- 1. Determine your capacity.** Begin by seeing how many members of your group or congregation want to be involved, and if the congregation or college will officially endorse your work to support refugees.
- 2. Contact your local resettlement agency.** Find out if they would be interested in partnering with you, and if they know families who would want to attend.
- 3. Invite the interfaith community to help with the planning.** Be sure to include Jewish and Muslim faith leaders in your event. Plan far enough in advance to have a few joint meetings and distribute roles among partners. Divide tasks for outreach, cooking/food, taking pictures and other logistics.
- 4. Register your event.** Once you have the

resettlement office and faith/community leaders committed to assisting with the event, let us at UUSC know about your plans, and add your event to the IIC's #RefugeesWelcome page at bit.ly/WelcomeWeekendReg.

- 5. Identify the best space for the event.** It may be a church, mosque, temple, school, or community center.
- 6. Invite refugees to speak.** Ask the resettlement agency if any of the refugees attending would be interested in speaking. Depending on the circumstances, any kind of public speaking may not be appropriate for families who have just arrived. Instead, invite someone who is more settled and perhaps has become a leader within the community.
- 7. Invite your representatives to attend.** Remember to include both local and federal officials to attend and offer messages of support against anti-refugee legislation. Visibility of our elected officials on refugee issues is very important in our increasingly polarized political environment.

8. Plan for translation/interpretation.

Consider what kinds of translation are going to be necessary, both for speakers and for conversations at tables. Prepare icebreaker questions or activities for small groups at tables. Several cities have volunteer "interpreter collaboratives" who are willing to interpret at events like these for free.

9. Include an action attendees can do after the event.

This may be writing letters, signing pre-printed postcards to representatives, or signing a petition (see part 4 for ideas).

10. Plan ahead for follow-up.

Welcome Dinners are not one-time events – they are a starting point for bridge building and deeper connections. Have a way non-refugee participants can sign up to learn more about volunteering. Encourage families to exchange contact information if they are interested. If there is major pro- or anti-refugee legislation coming up soon, invite participants to reconvene for a planning meeting to influence the outcome.



If you plan to host a #RefugeesWelcome event, a series of helpful resources are included in the appendix

Why it is important to include all refugees

While the crisis in Syria has opened many peoples' eyes to the needs of refugees, it is important to invite all refugees to Welcome Dinners no matter their country of origin. Many other refugee communities, who have suffered equally but received less publicity, may understandably feel ignored if they are not included in your event.

Since Central American families who have come to the U.S. seeking asylum do not receive

support from resettlement agencies (see FAQ), the best way to reach them and extend an invitation to your #RefugeesWelcome event is to contact grassroots immigrant rights organizations near you which are likely to have relationships in the Central American community. If you have trouble identifying a local immigrant rights partner, please feel free to contact UUSC at mobilization@uusc.org to collaborate.

Stories from a Refugee Solidarity Family Dinner

In early 2016, First Parish UU Church of Dorchester in Boston, Mass., hosted a "Refugee Solidarity Family Dinner" organized by Dorchester People for Peace. We served an array of Middle Eastern food, much of which was donated by local restaurants owned by people who have immigrated from the region. Participants included several Syrian families who arrived in the United States at different times over recent decades. They shared their own experiences coming to this country, their impressions of the causes of the current crisis, and what could be done to address it. Some also relayed the experiences of family members who are still in Syria or have recently fled. A local activist who teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy provided an understanding of the geopolitical context of this human rights crisis. I reported on my recent experiences volunteering with refugee solidarity efforts at the borders of Greece. By sharing photos, stories, and an on-the-ground perspective, I wanted to help put a human face on what's happening and highlight the ways that refugees I met are demonstrating empowerment, courage, collective strength, and resilience amidst extremely adverse and unjust circumstances.



Participants signed petitions and discussed other action steps to take, including legislative advocacy for peace and support for the resettlement of more refugees in the United States. More than 120 people attended, including many children who made colorful cards with messages of peace, hope, and welcome, which were later distributed to children at refugee camps overseas. The event also included music, dance, and a gallery of drawings by youth from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It was covered in the local newspaper and helped build new relationships, collaborations, and understanding in the community, leading to a subsequent event on confronting Islamophobia and building solidarity with Muslim Americans.

- Angela Kelly, Dorchester, MA

#RefugeesWelcome Event Planning Tips

- **Avoid food that is not allowed under some refugees' religion.** In particular, be careful to avoid pork and any pork-based ingredients and gelatin for Muslim and Jewish guests. A full guide on halal food restrictions can be found here: utsc.utoronto.ca/~facilities/documents/GuidetoHalalFoods.pdf.
- **Try to include food that comes from the different traditions of refugees who will be attending.** If your resources only allow for a potluck among the hosts, that's fine. Consider purchasing from a local restaurant that serves the foods of the refugee communities attending (they may offer a discount if you explain the purpose), or talk to the resettlement agency and see if there may be refugees who do catering you can hire for the event.
- **Determine photography protocol and be sensitive about taking photos.** Discuss in advance with the resettlement agency whether any kind of photography is appropriate – it may not be, based on culture or fear of potential reprisal and violence toward relatives in refugees' home countries. Make sure everyone knows to only take pictures after asking for permission. If you plan to use photos for publications or websites, make sure that you get photo releases signed – but also make sure everyone fully understands the release (use interpreters when necessary).
- **Make a media and social media plan.** Depending on how photography is to be handled, decide whether you want to invite local press to cover the event. If you do, make sure refugees provide consent for your plans, including the specific media representatives you invite. A sample consent form is included in the appendix of this kit. Remember, refugees may not feel comfortable with their stories being shared publicly, since identifying information could bring harm to family members back in their home countries. If it makes sense, share promotion and stories on social media.
- **Consider incorporating music, art, or dance.** Be sure to represent the countries from which your group is welcoming new arrivals. Consider finding and learning a welcome song important to the culture/s of refugees honored in your event. One example is the ancient Arabic welcome song used when Prophet Mohammed was a refugee to Medina, called "Tala'al-Badru'alayna."
- **Ask non-refugee participants to focus questions on interests and commonalities.** Too often, refugees who have been through trauma are asked to tell their story over and over. You want your guests to enjoy an event where they feel welcomed as their whole selves, without the expectation that they will revisit difficult memories, either as part of your program or during informal interactions with other participants. It isn't superficial to talk about food, sports, music, or even celebrities – these conversations create a shared space where our guests can feel normal and connected.
- **Be careful to respect refugees' own religious traditions.** Avoid incorporating religious expression that could feel like proselytizing. For example, if you plan to say grace for a meal, provide the opportunity for prayers to be offered from every religion in the room.
- **Provide action and advocacy ideas for follow-ups.** Attendees will feel inspired for next steps following your event. Be ready to offer opportunities for ongoing relationships with and support for refugee families, and to promote positive public policies and perspectives about refugees.

VISIT ASYLUM SEEKERS IN DETENTION OR JOIN THE PEN PAL PROGRAM



Asylum seekers who apply for protection once they are inside the United States, or at a port of entry, have to wait for between 1.5 and 4 years for their cases to be heard.¹⁵ An exception has been made for Central American families and unaccompanied minors, whose cases are now fast-tracked so that they can be removed or integrated more quickly. Asylum seekers are placed immediately into one of more than 250 detention centers throughout the United States, and often must wait there for an indefinite time. The growing number of asylum seekers from West and Central Africa and South Asia have a route that is just as arduous and can take up to 2 years. The pain of isolation adds to the trauma they have already survived, and knowing that there is support from the outside world can make a huge difference. You can offer that support by participating in detention visitation, the Hotline, or the pen pal program.

In addition to asylum seekers, many immigrants are detained simply because they have been living in the United States without documents. Many have U.S. citizen spouses or children, and they can be held in detention for months or years while they fight to stay.

CIVIC (endisolation.org) is a UUSC partner organization that supports a network of more than 40 immigration detention visitation programs throughout the United States. About 2,000 volunteers are working to end the isolation of some 34,000 people in immigration detention right now. In addition to visiting detainees, CIVIC volunteers are independent monitors for what happens inside the centers. They lift up stories and advocate for people. They also help write and advocate for state and national legislation. Their interactive map at endisolation.org/projects/visitation-programs/ will help you find out if there is an existing visitation program near you where you can volunteer. If there isn't, check the map to see if there is a detention center near you where immigrants and asylum seekers are being held, and CIVIC can guide you in how to begin a local visitation program.

If visiting doesn't work for you, volunteers are also needed for the CIVIC telephone Hotline and for pen pals. You can find more information at endisolation.org.

Jan Meslin from Tapestry UU Congregation in Mission Viejo, is on CIVIC's leadership team. Contact her for more information at jmeslin@endisolation.org. Jan has been visiting with the Friends of Orange County Detainees for almost 4 years.

¹⁵ <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/affirmative-asylum-scheduling-bulletin>



Photos by Angela Kelly, UUSC

CONSIDER BECOMING A SANCTUARY CONGREGATION

"When Lives are on the line, the only ethical act is resistance," – Alison Harrington, Pastor at the Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Ariz., and leader in the New Sanctuary Movement

A growing number of congregations are offering a physical safe haven to immigrants and refugees who are at imminent risk of deportation, especially those who would be endangered. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) respects the sanctity of religious houses of worship, and will not enter to detain someone, even if they have a deportation order. In response to a surge of immigration enforcement home raids on over 100 Central American refugee families in early 2016, more religious communities are joining the 300-congregation strong **New Sanctuary Movement** to provide protection, resist injustice, and build political leverage. Not every congregation in the movement is prepared to physically host a sanctuary case – some may instead offer material and moral support for a case in their city.

Read the text or watch the video of a sermon by Rev. Chris Jimmerson of First UUC Austin recounting how offering sanctuary positively transformed him and his congregation at austinuu.org/wp2013/sanctuary.

A complete guide to getting involved in the New Sanctuary Movement is available online at sanctuarynotdeportation.org.

Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education (UURISE) is a non-profit immigration legal services provider founded on and grounded in Unitarian Universalist principles, dedicated to the advancement of justice and human rights for immigrants and refugees. In addition to providing direct legal services, UURISE also works with UU Congregations throughout the country that are considering becoming a sanctuary congregation. UURISE can support your congregation through a careful discernment process about making a commitment to sanctuary, and can help you figure out where to start once you are ready. You can inquire with Katia Hansen, President and CEO of UURISE, at katia@uurise.org or 760-477-7537.

Watch this video for an overview of the New Sanctuary Movement:
vimeo.com/152642979

3 COUNTERING ANTI-MUSLIM AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT BIGOTRY

Part of offering hospitality involves creating a welcoming and safe environment for our new neighbors. It is important to understand how these forms of discrimination and hostility fit into a larger national dynamic of institutional racism towards people of color in the United States. This section provides ideas for making those connections and conducting various types of events and actions.

EDUCATION AND SOLIDARITY

In recent months, the rate of hate crimes targeting Muslim Americans has risen to levels as high as they were after September 11th, 2001. Right-wing media and politicians often fuel hatred and fear by equating all of Islam with terrorism. Most non-Muslims in the United States, regardless of political affiliation, don't understand the basics of Islam.

There are many ways to support our Muslim neighbors and educate ourselves about their faith:

Reach out to a local mosque or Islamic cultural center. If you are part of a congregation or campus faith group, ask your clergy person to contact the local mosque to identify yourselves as allies for the Muslim community. Even if the relationship goes no further immediately, it will be immeasurably helpful for them to know they can turn to your congregation for support if a hate crime occurs. Whether your clergy person gets involved or not, you can always reach out and explain that you are interested in being an active ally. Ask if they are looking for any kind of support from the greater community. Find out if they have programs for the public, like an introduction to Islam class, or if they would be interested in collaborating with your congregation to hold interfaith dialogues.

Organize a study group or book club. One option is to use all or part of the new seven session

curriculum, "My Neighbor Is Muslim," by Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services (LIRS) at lirs.org/myneighborismuslim/. Another option is hosting a book group featuring *Sacred Ground* by Eboo Patel, a renowned young Muslim community leader, which is a fantastic primer on fostering interfaith collaborations, published by Beacon Press.

Host a workshop. In 2011, UUSC developed the original "Building Bridges" project in partnership with the American Islamic Congress, which brought worship services and activities to several major cities throughout the country to raise awareness about civil liberties issues and create greater understanding of the complexities and diversity within the Muslim American community. In each workshop, Unitarian Universalist and Muslim community leaders co-facilitated, members of both groups attended, and participants developed larger action-plans specific to the needs of their local political and social environment. If you would be interested in hosting a workshop and would like our support, please be in touch with UUSC at mobilization@uus.org.

Talk to your kids. Children of all ages are absorbing the messaging around them, both explicit and implicit. Don't wait until you are faced with a difficult situation – start the conversation now. Ask them what they know about different faiths and cultures, and share your family's beliefs about inclusion and



Partner: Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)

hospitality. Encourage them to speak out if they see discrimination or bullying occurring at school. Have age-appropriate books and movies that show positive representation of Muslims, and consider monitoring what media they watch or have discussions about it. One way to help children form bonds of friendship and understanding is to invite them to make cards with messages of encouragement for refugee children. These could be distributed by a local resettlement organization or sent overseas with a volunteer or organization providing direct support to asylum-seekers.



Provide special learning opportunities for teens.

The UU College of Social Justice offers an ongoing list of special educational events for teens of any and all backgrounds. The 2016 line-up includes: **Activate GA** at the UUA General Assembly in June 2016, **Activate New Orleans: Racial Justice & Beloved Community** from July 30-August 7, 2016, which will address Islamophobia as part of the program, and **Activate Tucson: Immigration Justice** from July 23-31. Check uucsj.org/youth/ for a list of current offerings.

Additional immigrant justice resources: The UU College of Social Justice has compiled a series of educational resources on immigration justice that can be found at uucsj.org/studyguide. They include ideas for hosting film screenings and discussions, and a four session study guide for reading the book "Undocumented" by Avi Chomsky as a group.

The following two pieces, "Confronting Hate Speech in Politics" and "Understanding Islamophobia in an Era of Mass Incarceration," are intended to reach beyond this toolkit. Consider sharing and discussing them among your group.



CONFRONTING HATE SPEECH IN POLITICS

In the 2016 electoral season, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant bigotry have been an alarmingly consistent element along with other racially charged comments. Countering hateful messages is an important part of creating the world we believe in – a world in which the human rights and dignity of all people are respected. The way in which we speak our alternative message is as important as the content of that message. If we confront someone who is shouting about keeping out immigrants by shouting back at them, our message is likely to be lost in the method of delivery. When we hear racially charged statements from public figures, we often feel offended, angry or humiliated. It's important to be aware of these feelings in order to choose our message and tone of communication with care. Monitoring our own reactions can also help us maintain a stance of nonviolence, calm and dignity when directly confronting an angry opposition.

Here are some steps that can help:

1. Before writing a response to an article or news item, think about the *values* you most want to elevate to counter a message of hate. Rather than belittling your adversary's values, lean into the ones you most want to emphasize: fairness, compassion, peace-building, diversity, dignity, hospitality.
2. If you have an opportunity to attend a protest or a counter-rally in the name of immigrant rights or racial justice, try to gather a group of friends or members of your organization or congregation and go together. Invite the group to spend some time preparing for how best to respond to violent words or actions in ways that will not escalate the anger but will elevate a powerful counter-statement.
3. In the context of heated confrontations at rallies or protests, remember the power of song, silent witness, and prayer. Some of the most eloquent renunciations of hate speech have come in such forms.

UNDERSTANDING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AN ERA OF MASS CRIMINALIZATION

Harmful depictions of Islam are not new, and they fit into a larger pattern of political scapegoating and criminalization that targets other communities of color, including African Americans and Latino/as. Islamophobia and related hate crimes often cast such a wide net that they catch many non-Muslims in the process, from anyone of Arab descent regardless of religion to Sikh men in turbans who are targeted because of religious and racial bigotry. This can't just be blamed on ignorance. The nation's demographics are changing and there is backlash: by 2045 the white population will be less than 50% of the United States and that's already true for children five years old and under. While there are a lot of white Americans who appreciate diversity, there are still many who fear losing power and privilege and seek to keep others out.

Islamophobia targets both new refugees and Muslims whose families have been in the United States for generations. Similarly, anti-immigrant attitudes and laws targeting undocumented immigrants as "illegal" also harm Latino U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. For example, S.B. 1070, the Arizona state law that requires police officers to check for immigration status during routine stops, has resulted in regular harassment of Latino citizens. Terms like "illegal alien" that are used regularly in the media strip immigrants of their humanity. Some news sources have agreed to switch to language like "undocumented immigrant" which is more respectful of the people being addressed.

In recent years, #BlackLivesMatter protesters have shined a spotlight on the scale of unarmed Black men and women killed by police violence. These deaths are connected to a long history of criminalization of Black communities in the United States, including police profiling practices like stop-and-frisk in which over 90% of people stopped are completely innocent.

Mass criminalization of Muslim refugees, immigrants, and Black communities serves at least two purposes: it deflects blame for the plummeting economic standards for lower- and middle-income whites; and it also creates a new source of profit for privatized prisons. Under U.S. and international law, everyone has the right to seek asylum if they are unsafe in their home country, and yet many who do so face months and years in prison. Mandatory minimums for drug sentences and immigrant bed quotas provide a guaranteed income to prison companies like GEO Group and the Corrections Corporation of America and their investors. The number of people incarcerated in the United States has risen to more than 2.2 million, an increase of over 500% since 1983, and these two companies have a combined annual profit of \$3.3 billion.¹⁶

The assumptions that Muslims are terrorists, that Latino/as are "illegal," and that African Americans are criminals all depend on the same thing: seeing people first as *what* they are instead of *who* they are, and presuming guilt rather than innocence. To effectively counter

¹⁶ <http://grassrootsleadership.org/cca-dirty-30>

Islamophobia we must address these common fundamental attitudes and behaviors. We must commit to changing both the public's hearts and minds *and* the specific policies and politics that uphold discrimination.

In this social media-driven era we can feel pulled in too many directions, like there are too many injustices to tackle. When we understand how each of these oppressions is distinct, and yet interconnected, we can forge strong new partnerships and approach our work for justice with new eyes and greater effectiveness.

COUNTERING FEAR: REFUGEES ARE NOT TERRORISTS

If you have friends, family, or co-workers who oppose refugee resettlement in the United States, their opinion probably arises from a feeling of fear. While many of us prefer to avoid conversations about controversial subjects, we can play an important, constructive role in interrupting this fear.

If you look at the history, you'll find that U.S. refugees simply don't become terrorists.

Throughout our history, the United States has invited in millions of refugees, including hundreds of thousands from the Middle East. Not one has committed an act of terrorism within the United States.

It makes no sense for a potential terrorist to try to use the refugee resettlement process as a way to enter and attack the United States. Here's why:

Refugee status is the single most difficult way to come to the United States. Processing times for refugee resettlement average 18–24 months and can take as long as three to four years. The United States already puts refugees through extensive security screenings with the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and even the National Counterterrorism Center. Student and tourist visas are much easier and faster to obtain than refugee status. The existing lengthy and rigorous vetting that refugees have to go through before coming to the United States has proven effective in stopping potential terrorists from trying to use the refugee program to enter the country.



Partner: Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) Photo by Edd Carlile

Refugees don't get to choose the country where they'll go for resettlement. Refugees who apply to be resettled through UNHCR are first screened and approved by the United Nations, and then referred to one of 28 possible countries that have agreed to receive refugees. It's possible that refugees could be sent to Italy or Korea instead of the United States. Potential terrorists could not reasonably expect to reach the United States even if they did manage to get approved for resettlement by the United Nations.

Only the most vulnerable refugees are approved for U.S. resettlement. Less than 1% of the global refugee population is ever referred for resettlement. Since the United States prioritizes hosting the most vulnerable refugees, we primarily accept female-headed households, families with many children, and extended families with elderly dependents. Half of Syrian refugees who have arrived in the United States

so far have been children, and only about one out of every fifty is a young, single man.

"Think Muslims Haven't Condemned Isis? Think Again."

Next time you hear someone say that Muslims aren't speaking out enough against ISIS, share this article.. It includes an international round-up of Islamic leaders' and groups' statements against ISIS.

Love Drowns out the Voice of Fear in Roanoke, Virginia

In November 2015, the city of Roanoke, Va., received international attention for a statement by our mayor that the United States should suspend the resettlement of Syrian refugees to prevent terrorism, referencing the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II as a similarly necessary measure. This provocative statement emanated from the mayor, but it did not represent the local government. In fact, the city council unanimously disavowed its content.

Delegate Sam Rasoul, who represents Roanoke in the Virginia House of Delegates, asked me whether space could be made available at our church to host a rally in support of "The Real Roanoke." In response to the delegate's request, I immediately made available our main sanctuary for the rally. Only 48 hours later, we hosted an energetic event with a standing-room-only crowd of 300 citizens celebrating the diversity of our community. Local television and newspaper coverage was extensive and laudatory.

Many members of our congregation attended the rally, but the original concept and overall success of the event are to the credit of Delegate Sam Rasoul, his staff, and constituents. The event demonstrated the potential for putting into practical work each of our seven principles.

- Gary Crawford, President, Board of Directors, Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke

4 ADVOCATE FOR REFUGEE RIGHTS AND INTEGRATION

INFLUENCING FEDERAL LEGISLATION

UUSC has been working to increase federal humanitarian assistance for refugees, to increase the number of refugees that the United States accepts each year, and to forestall any attempt from politicians to introduce religious or ethnic discrimination into the refugee program. As of April 2016, nine thousand of you have already taken action with us!

UUSC has four priorities for national legislative action related to refugees:

- 1. Increase the refugee quota.** President Obama has agreed to raise the number of refugees accepted to the United States. from 70,000 per year to 85,000 in Fiscal Year 2016 and 100,000 in FY2017. This is an improvement but still too low, considering that Germany is resettling 800,000 refugees and has only a quarter of our population.
- 2. Provide adequate funding for resettlement programs.** The federal budget for

FY2016 cuts funding for resettlement programs, even though the number of refugees arriving will be increasing. This will severely strain under-resourced resettlement agencies trying to meet the need.

- 3. Support global humanitarian aid for refugees.** The United Nations' Syrian Refugee Response Plan has only received 40% of the needed funding from its member states, and as a result food rations have been reduced. The United States can and should do more to fund global humanitarian efforts.
- 4. Prevent discriminatory legislation.** During the 2015-2016 legislative session, bills have been proposed that would create more hoops for refugees to jump through in the screening process, allow states to choose not to accept refugees, and institute religious discrimination by prioritizing Christian refugees over Muslims. We have taken a strong stand against these discriminatory bills.

The legislative landscape is constantly changing, so this toolkit does not include a list of specific bills that would quickly become outdated.

You can find out about the latest federal action by joining UUSC's Refugee Rapid Response Network or visiting our partners' websites at Refugee Council USA, rcusa.org, and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, interfaithimmigration.org.



Congregations in Action in the Nation's Capital

We formed Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the Nation's Capital Region because as people of faith, we are called to remind our decision makers about the worth and dignity of every person, regardless of parentage or nationality, as the United States decides how to respond to immigrants arriving from around the world, especially from Central America and the Middle East. There are more than 6,500 Unitarian Universalists in over 23 congregations in the greater Washington, D.C., National Capital Region, and 5,670 in Virginia, and we know that together, our voice can be powerful. After the House of Representatives passed HR 4038 (the so-called SAFE Act), which sought to add new hurdles for Middle Eastern refugees' ability to enter the United States, we lobbied our senators to stop the passage of that bill. We believed that the bill was a terrible response to the fears in this country generated by the terror attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. We felt that responding to fear in that way is contrary to the principles that motivate us to help ease the path for immigrants and refugees, and would provide absolutely no additional security for people in the United States. Over a period of more than two months, we met with the staff of Rep. Gerald Connolly (D-VA), and Senators Timothy Kaine (D-VA), Mark Warner (D-VA), and Ben Cardin (D-MD). We are pleased to share that a few hours after our final visit on January 20, 2016, the Senate refused to consider HR 4038 and it therefore will not reach the President's desk. While this victory is important, we know it is only a first step.

-Lavona Grow, Board Chair, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the Nation's Capital Region



MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The best opportunity to meet with your members of Congress is during the times when they are in their local offices in your district. You may be inspired to meet with them regarding a specific bill, but it is equally important for them to know that there is consistent strong support for refugees in their district. Congressional visits are particularly effective if your representative is a member of an important committee for bills that affect refugees, such as the Appropriations or Judiciary Committee.

As you plan your congressional visit, consider bringing together people representing different interests, backgrounds, faith identities, and constituencies to demonstrate to your legislators the breadth of support on this issue. Perhaps through the relationships your group has built with resettlement organizations and refugees who have become part of your local community, you will identify individuals whose first-hand experience of the resettlement process will help legislators get to know there are people living in their district who are affected by their policy decisions. **It is important that our representatives understand that refugees aren't just an issue that matters to their constituents – refugees are their constituents.** They live in their

districts, they gain citizenship, and they vote. As always, be sensitive and make sure refugees only share what is safe and comfortable for them. When addressing the impact of U.S. foreign policy and military interventions on the displacement of refugees, another important stakeholder group to include may be local veterans who are advocates for peace, diplomacy and human rights. Local chapters of Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War may serve as helpful resources, as both are concerned with the human toll of U.S. wars.

Another way for your legislators to get a better understanding of the direct impacts of the current refugee crisis is to encourage them to travel on a delegation to visit refugee camps or the places from which refugees are currently traveling. Several Members of Congress have reported that this has been a deeply moving experience, one that has influenced their understanding of and commitment to this issue.¹⁷

A detailed resource on how to conduct local congressional visits on refugee issues is available from Refugee Council USA at rcusa.org under "RCUSA's Local Congressional Advocacy Toolkit"

¹⁷ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/politics/2015/10/13/senators-elizabeth-warren-jeanne-shaheen-visit-island-lesbos-greece-and-view-syrian-refugee-crisis-close/73iAYYxuVYjHBwa18BQ2Al/story.html>

YOUR VOICE IS URGENTLY NEEDED:

Tell Your Members of Congress to Welcome & Help Refugees!

Tell your Senators and Representative that you care about displaced people overseas and refugees resettled in the United States. It is time to act with historic leadership and compassion and stand with those seeking safety and the opportunity to build a new life. Urge your Senators and Representative to **welcome refugees into our communities, support increased funding for refugee assistance, processing, and resettlement, and oppose any attempt to dismantle the U.S. refugee resettlement system.**

Please take action TODAY:

Call your Senators and Representative: 1-866-961-4293

Here's a sample of what to say:

"I'm a constituent from [City/State] and I urge the [Senator/Representative] to welcome refugees into our communities, support increased funding for refugee assistance, processing, and resettlement, and oppose any attempt to dismantle the U.S. refugee resettlement system. The U.S. government and communities around the country help to ensure that people fleeing life-threatening situations find protection. The United States must demonstrate leadership and increase refugee resettlement. Any efforts to stop, pause, or disrupt the U.S. refugee resettlement system do not reflect our national values of generosity, humanity, resilience and solidarity."

Please call this line 3 times to be connected with your Representative and two Senators.

You can also tweet to your Members of Congress and your network:

- ".@SENATOR, show that #AmericaWelcomes and support funding for #refugees! Our community is ready to welcome. #RefugeesWelcome"
- ".@REPRESENTATIVE, show that #AmericaWelcomes and support funding to help & resettle #refugees! Our district is ready to welcome. #RefugeesWelcome"

Follow @InterfaithImm on Twitter and "like" Interfaith Immigration Coalition on Facebook for up-to-date alerts.

STOPPING STATE-LEVEL ANTI-REFUGEE LEGISLATION

As of April 2016, 13 states have 46 anti-refugee bills pending in their legislatures: Florida, Arizona, South Carolina, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Tennessee, Missouri, Wyoming, Virginia, New York, Minnesota, and Alabama. Contact UUSC at mobilization@uuscs.org if you live in a state considering anti-refugee legislation and would like to organize with us against it. Almost every state has a strong coalition to prevent these bills from becoming law, and we can help you connect.

Proposed state laws include injustices like:

- Requiring resettlement agencies to pay the costs of crimes committed by refugees (Neb., S.C., Ariz.);
- Registering all refugees into a database for their activities to be monitored (N.Y., S.C.);
- Authorizing the use of military force to keep refugees out (Fla.); and,
- Implementing “absorptive capacity acts” allowing cities and states to ban new refugees on the grounds that they don’t have the capacity to handle the increase in population (Kan., Miss., S.C., S.D.).

Additionally, 31 Governors have made public statements that they do not want Syrian refugees resettling in their state.¹⁸

Neither states nor cities have the legal authority to exclude Syrian or other refugees, because refugee resettlement is under federal jurisdiction. However, these bills – whether they pass or not – have real impact. They create a chilling, unfriendly environment for new Americans, and can provide inspiration for hate crimes.

Further state-by-state information can be found on the Interfaith Immigration Coalition website,

interfaithimmigration.org/2015/12/03/welcoming-refugees-state-by-state-resources/. For weekly updates on state-level legislation related to refugees, sign up by e-mailing staterefugeealerts@gmail.com.

CREATING REFUGEE-WELCOMING CITIES AND COUNTIES

While we learn almost daily about new anti-immigrant developments, nine cities and 10 counties have passed resolutions affirming their identities as “welcoming and inclusive communities” ready to accept Syrian and Muslim refugees. Mayors from 62 of the largest cities in the United States have signed a letter to Congress pledging their support for resettling refugees, many in opposition to their own states’ public stance. Additionally, 340 cities are already declared “Sanctuary Cities” where law enforcement will not cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to identify and deport undocumented community members.

Steps to Passing a Resolution to Welcome Refugees with your City or County:

- 1. Research your city/county:** Assess the political make-up of your City Council or County Commission and determine if a resolution will be likely to have enough support. If your city is already a Sanctuary City it is likely a strong target for a refugee welcoming resolution. If your city would be a good target and you are in a state whose governor has spoken against refugees or whose legislator will be voting on anti-refugee legislation, these resolutions are especially important.

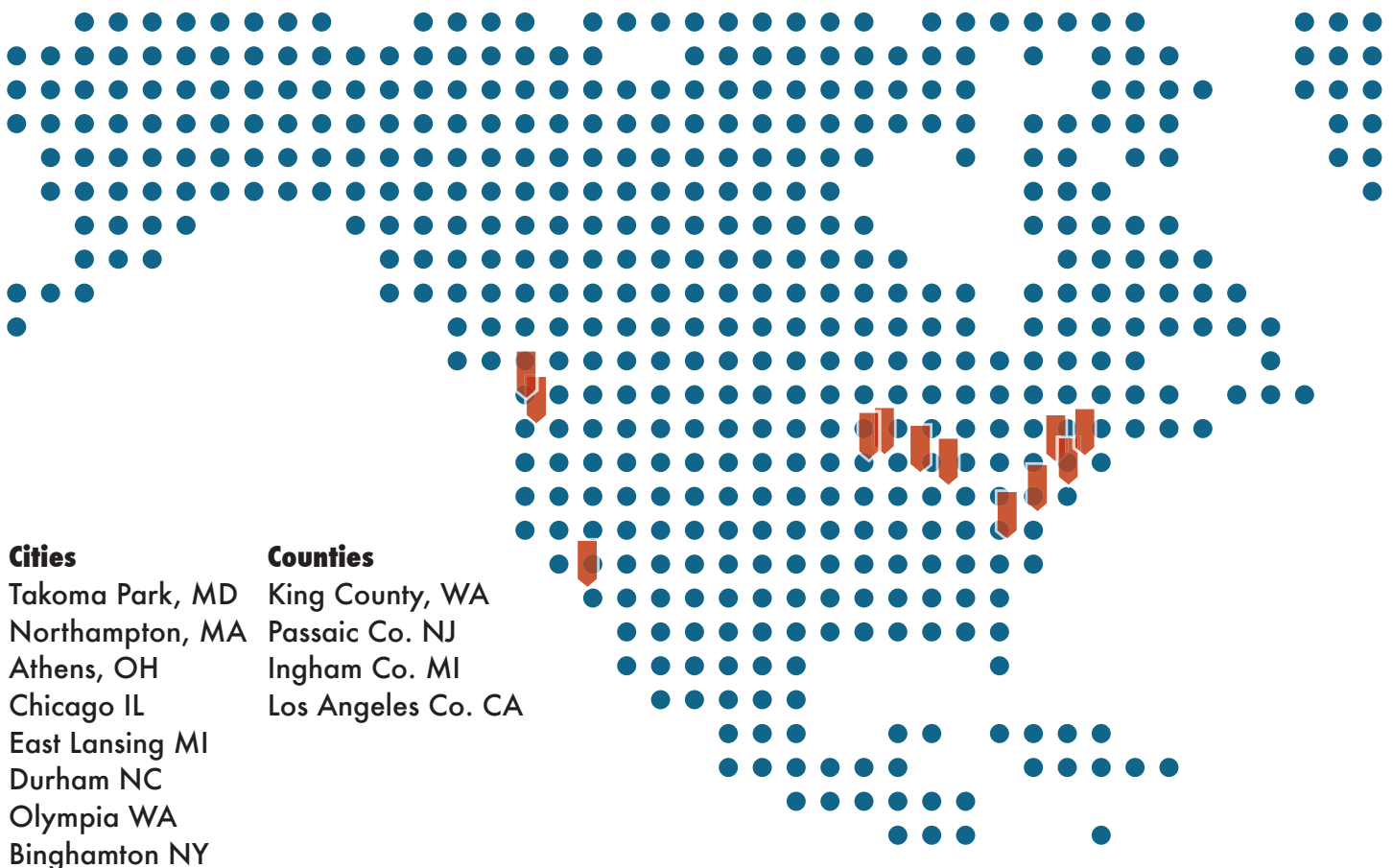
¹⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/16/world/paris-attacks-syrian-refugees-backlash/>

2. **Develop a coalition:** Identify who else in the community would be interested in passing a resolution, and invite them to create an ad hoc coalition. This might include other faith communities, university student groups, and resettlement agencies. Many localities have long-standing ecumenical or interfaith coalitions and human rights councils. These are good places to begin the conversations.
3. **Find a City Council member to sponsor the resolution:** Set up meetings with individual members of the council/ commission or their staff and find one of them who is a strong ally and would like to introduce the resolution.
4. **Mobilize support for the resolution:** Get as many supporters as possible to show

up at the council/commission meeting for the vote and speak in support at the meeting. Collect online petition signatures. Pursue media coverage – unless you think it will bring out more people in opposition, in which case keeping it quieter could work in your favor.

A sample proposal for a City Council resolution is available in the appendix of this toolkit. Our sample resolution is unique from those that have been passed because we include text actively welcoming refugees from Syria, Central America, and other regions of the world. The sample is intended to be adapted to your city.

Cities & Counties that have Passed Refugee-Welcoming Resolutions



Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Asylum: The grant by a State of protection in its territory to persons from another State who are fleeing persecution or serious danger. Asylum encompasses a variety of elements, including *non-refoulement*, permission to remain on the territory of the asylum country, and humane standards of treatment. [UNHCR]

Asylum-seeker: An individual who is seeking refugee status “based on a well founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion.” In host countries with legal requirements for granting protection, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim is pending approval. International law recognizes the individual right to seek asylum, but does not require states to provide it. [U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants]

Immigrant: A person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence. These same individuals are *emigrants* from the country they left behind. [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Integration: The incorporation of individuals or groups as equals into a society or organization (emphasis added). This is not to be confused with “assimilation,” which is the act of adjusting or adapting to a new culture, group, or nation. Assimilation often implies that the person being assimilated will lose or at least hide certain behaviors, norms, beliefs, preferred languages, or traditions — essentially losing one’s earlier identity. [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Internally displaced persons: Those persons forced or obliged to flee from their homes, “...in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters. Unlike refugees or asylum-seekers, they are individuals who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.” [UNHCR]

Islamophobia: Islamophobia (or **anti-Muslim sentiment**) is sometimes used to describe prejudice against, hatred or bigotry toward, or fear of the religion of Islam. It is also used to describe similar prejudice and hostility toward Muslim people. There is a growing debate about whether the term “Islamophobia” can be used interchangeably for both of these definitions, or if “anti-Muslim sentiment” is a better description of the reasons why people are being prevented from escaping armed conflicts in their home countries, or are facing prejudice and bigotry in more “peaceful” countries due to their religion or ethnic identity. (*Atlantic Monthly*)

Migrant: A person who moves periodically or regularly, often used to refer to people who move to find work. The term is also used for people in transit between their country of origin and their chosen destination. [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Non-Refoulement: A core principle of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees The principle of non-refoulement is a part of customary international law and is therefore binding on all states, whether or not they are parties to the 1951 Convention. “No Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” [UNHCR]

Refugee: An individual who is outside his or her country of origin due to the same “well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion” as an asylum-seeker (see definition above). A refugee is an asylum-seeker whose claim for legal protection has been granted by the United Nations or a host country. This definition is sometimes expanded to include anyone fleeing war or other armed conflict. [UNHCR]

Agencies

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

“The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally, or resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

“Since 1950, the agency has helped tens of millions of people restart their lives. Today, a staff of more than 9,300 people in 123 countries continues to help and protect millions of refugees, returnees, internally displaced and stateless people.” [UNHCR]

United States Department of Homeland Security (USDHS)

This federal agency was created in 2003 by the Bush Administration to “prevent terrorism and enhance security; manage U.S. borders; administer immigration law; secure cyberspace; and ensure disaster resilience.” Its broad mandate results from the reorganization of several agencies that were part of other executive departments, including the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), which was part of the Department of Justice and became three new entities within USDHS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP); and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). USDHS also became the home for the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA); the Coast Guard; the Secret Service; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). USDHS’s emphasis on security has in many cases replaced previous agencies’ provision of services to U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. This has been particularly true for asylum-seekers and refugees, who have been subject to restrictions on entry, deportation, and involuntary detention. (American Immigration Council DHS Progress Report)

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

This is the branch of USDHS that oversees lawful immigration to the United States, granting U.S. citizenship and lawful permanent resident status; adjudicating asylum claims; and reviewing petitions for employment authorization documents (EADs). In addition to these rights-granting responsibilities, USCIS provides all immigration benefits and other services through its national network of USCIS Service Centers, which are organized into four multi-state regions. The USCIS does not engage in any enforcement activities (these are the responsibility of ICE). As the agency responsible for processing all immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, USCIS is under increasing pressure to reduce its backlog of applicants for citizenship, visas, and other legal status that has resulted from The USDHS’s emphasis on national security and enforcement operations. The need for improved coordination between USCIS procedures and the enforcement of federal and state laws which may affect the rights of some individuals seeking legal status is another challenge many refugees and asylum-seekers face in the United States today. [Migration Policy Institute]

United States Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

This office, part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), provides rehabilitative, social, and legal services to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other individuals who have resettled in the United States. While refugees and asylum-seekers must first be processed by the USCIS in order to receive ORR benefits, other “special populations,” including victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture, and unaccompanied children, may receive benefits from ORR regardless of immigration status. Individuals who are part of these special populations can apply for services upon entering the United States, but these procedures are also defined and enforced in an arbitrary and inconsistent way. For example, USDHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents must refer unaccompanied children from all countries except for Mexico and Canada to the DHHS ORR, where they have access to legal proceedings in U.S. Immigration Court. However, unaccompanied children from Mexico or Canada may be summarily deported by CBP agents without any legal proceedings. [American Immigration Council Guide to Children Arriving at the Border]

Sources of definitions:

American Immigration Council DHS Progress Report: *DHS Progress Report* http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/DHS_Progress_Report_-_030210.pdf

American Immigration Council Guide to Children Arriving at the Border: *A Guide to Children Arriving at the Border: Laws, Policies and Responses* <http://immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/guide-children-arriving-border-laws-policies-and-responses>

Atlantic Monthly: Atlantic Monthly Magazine <http://www.theatlantic.com>

CIS: US Citizenship and Immigration Services <https://www.uscis.gov/aboutus>

DHS: U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.dhs.gov/about-dhs>

Migration Policy Institute: “USCIS faces criticism over visa backlog,” <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/uscis-faces-criticism-over-visa-backlog>

MW: Merriam-Webster dictionary <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

ORR: US Office of Refugee Resettlement <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/about>

UNHCR: Master Glossary of Terms: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html>

Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamophobia>

Appendix B

Welcome Event Materials

Interfaith Iftar Resources for Events During Ramadan

During the holy month of Ramadan, most Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year, and is holy because it is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. Because the Islamic Calendar is a lunar calendar, Ramadan begins 11 days earlier in each Western Calendar year, and therefore it circulates through all four seasons every 33 years. In 2016, Ramadan is expected to run from **June 6 to July 5**, beginning and ending with the first sighting of a new moon. Because these dates overlap with the summer solstice in 2016, Muslims will be required to fast for an exceptionally long number of daylight hours.

If you are planning for a #RefugeesWelcome event to occur between June 6 and July 5 (including a World Refugee Day event on Monday, June 20), it will be important to consider the needs of Muslims who will be fasting during that time. **One way to host a meaningful event during the month of Ramadan is to host an interfaith Iftar.** Iftar is the evening meal for breaking the fast, beginning after sundown.

The following guide to hosting an interfaith Iftar is provided by our friends at Shoulder to Shoulder.

Shoulder to Shoulder's full guide to hosting an interfaith Iftar can be found at:
<http://shouldertoshouldercampaign.org/2016/05/11/how-to-host-an-interfaith-iftar/>

If you plan to host an interfaith Iftar open to the public, please register at:
<http://se7enfast.com/#/register>

You can find out if an interfaith Iftar is already scheduled near you at:
<http://se7enfast.com/#/locate>

Want to host an interfaith Iftar? Here are key points to know:

1. If you're not Muslim, it is best to work in close collaboration with a Muslim individual and/or community to plan an interfaith Iftar. There are a lot of things to take into consideration, as you'll see below!
2. Iftar (literally, break-fast) starts after the evening *Maghrib* prayer *adhan*, or call to prayer. The prayer time for Maghrib differs based on geographical location. Individuals can find prayer times based on their location on Muslim Pro or Islamic Finder. You'll want to arrange for someone to lead the call to prayer, and also to lead prayer. (Talk with your Muslim friends or contacts about who can do this.)
3. As the host, it is important to allow for your guests to make personal duas (prayers) while waiting to break their fast. It is believed that the minutes leading to Iftar are a special time in which duas will be accepted. Some guests may also need to perform their wudu (ablution) before the Maghrib prayer. To facilitate their need to perform this purification ritual, provide a clean space and clean water. (It would also be helpful to lay down a bathroom rug or mat by the sink to absorb water from those performing wudu.) A clean bathroom works for this!
4. It may be useful to print the dua below to make it available for attendees. Non-Muslims will likely notice their Muslim counterparts murmuring it right before breaking their fast: *Allahumma laka sumtu wa `alaa rizqika aftartu* – O, God. I fasted for your sake and now I am breaking my fast with the food provided by you.
5. It is recommended to break one's fast preferably with dates (the fruit!) and before the Maghrib prayer (**after the adhan**). Guests can also be presented with milk or water (preferably at room temperature) in place of, or in addition to, dates. Keep large food platters away from eyesight as these may understandably distract those who fasted (They'll be hungry!). Other small finger foods or appetizers may also be served with the initial iftar to supplement the dates. **Please note that absolutely no food or drink can be consumed before the adhan.**
6. During the prayer, make sure the prayer area is clean, and that there are clean prayer rugs/mats. Be sure to lay them facing in the direction of the "qibla"- there are phone apps that can help to guide you in determining the exact angle.
7. Do present your guests with a full meal **after** the Maghreb prayer. There is no one way of breaking one's fast after the Maghreb prayer. In many cultures, Iftar consists of hot soup, sweet treats, and savory meals. The idea is to start with some hot/warm food. Cold foods or drinks have to be heated by the body, requiring more energy when ingested, and consequently exhausting the fasting body. You can ask people to bring food, potluck style, but make sure any meat/meat products are halal (remember: NO Pork products or alcohol!) Note: It may be some of your guests' first Iftar dinner, so do not forget to ask individuals to dress modestly but comfortably.
8. **Presentations and content considerations:** We recommend having any presentations or speakers *before* breaking fast, rather than *during* the meal, in part because you'll have more attention from the guests and also because people will likely want to use the meal time to talk and casually enjoy one another's company. The meal time itself is also somewhat short (about an hour), because Muslim guests will be praying the evening prayer- 'isha prayer- in the later part of the evening (around 10 pm or so ET in June - you can find prayer times here). They may want to get to a mosque for those prayers, since during Ramadan there are special Taraweeh prayers that follow 'isha prayers, and often go later into the night. You don't want to have too much programming during the dinner itself so that people have time to eat and leave for a mosque if they want to pray there. Additionally, if these events are to serve the purpose of letting people get to know each other, you'll want to provide ample time for that to happen!

So, say you're hosting an Iftar on June 7, 2016. Here's what the timeline might look like:

- 7:00- Guests begin to arrive- try to create a setting for people to spend this time in reflection and prayer if desired.
- 7:15- Welcoming remarks, guest speaker(s) or presentations- you could allow a shorter time for this, depending how much "content" you want to integrate into the event, but basically, you'll want to be sure to wrap up any presentations by the time of the call to prayer (which is right at sundown!) so that you don't delay people from breaking the fast and praying Maghrib prayer.
- 8:25- Call to prayer, duas, and Breaking Fast (dates & milk and/or water)
- 8:35- Maghrib prayer
- 8:55- Eat, share stories, and have a great time together!
- 9:40- Guests head out (or stick around for 'isha prayer- the Muslim planning partners can determine what is best for this)

مجرماً جميعكم

النهوض بحقوق الإنسان و تحدي الظلم



BIENVENIDOS

**Luchando contra la injusticia,
promoviendo los derechos humanos**



Sample Media Release Form

I give ORGANIZATION and people acting for and with ORGANIZATION permission to interview, photograph, video, and/or audio record me to use and to edit, without compensation to me, the items listed below in any medium, including print and electronic (web-based) material for educational, promotional and marketing purposes:

1. Photographs or video footage of me;
2. Spoken (written or recorded) interviews of me and quotes from me;
3. My full name in connection with the photographs, video footage, interviews, or quotes; and
4. My location in connection with the photograph(s), video footage, interviews or quotes.

I have crossed out any points above to which I, or my signatory, do not agree.

I will make no monetary or other claim in connection with the authorized use of my name or photos, video, interviews and quotes, and I now release ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL and partner organizations and their employees and/or partners in education, promotion, publicity and marketing interviews from any claims, demands, and liabilities in connection with the use authorized and agreed to here by me.

Date:

Printed name of subject:

Signature or thumbprint of subject (if over age 18)

Printed name and signature of a parent or responsible adult (if under age 18)

Sample Media Release Form Used with Permission from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition.

Appendix C

Sample City or County “Refugees Welcome” Resolution

WHEREAS there are more refugees in the world today than at any time since World War II, including almost 5 million Syrians who have fled their homes since the Syrian conflict began in 2011, and tens of thousands of Central American refugees from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador as murder rates have skyrocketed;

WHEREAS the United States has agreed to allow for 85,000 refugees, with a commitment to only 10,000 from Syria and a cap of only 9,000 from Central America;

WHEREAS Syrian and Central American refugees in need of resettlement are identified based on their vulnerabilities and risk of further exposure to violence and exploitation – including children traveling alone, female-headed households, victims of torture, the physically disabled, and members of the LGBTI community;

WHEREAS hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Central American refugees are making life and death decisions to flee their homes and neighboring countries because they are unable to access shelter, health care, education, or protection, and neighboring countries have either closed their borders to new arrivals or violence persists in those countries as well;

WHEREAS nearly 4,000 refugees died trying to cross the Mediterranean and Aegean seas into Europe in 2015, and two children die every day in this crossing, and the death rate for migrants crossing Arizona’s Sonoran desert and the Texas plains continues to rise each year;

WHEREAS all refugees resettled by the United States undergo an extensive and rigorous security screening process including biometric analysis, and all Syrian refugees go through an additional screening procedure;

WHEREAS [RESETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY], the organizations responsible for resettling refugees in this community, as well as numerous other community organizations and religious institutions have declared their support for resettling Syrian and Central American refugees in [CITY];

WHEREAS [RESETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS] have resettled more than [NUMBER] refugees in [CITY] since 2011 from more than [NUMBER] countries including [LIST COUNTRIES], and the individuals who have resettled here have made numerous contributions to our community;

WHEREAS The Refugee Act of 1980 declared that it is “the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands” and gave the President the power to handle an “unforeseen emergency refugee situation” such as one involving “grave humanitarian concerns” [12];

BE IT RESOLVED, that we the members of the [NAME] City Council hereby declare [CITY] to be a welcoming city for refugees and a sanctuary city for all fleeing violence regardless of legal status, and we affirm our support for the resettlement of Syrian and other refugees in [CITY].

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that [CITY] urges the U.S. Congress to streamline the current two-year vetting process for Syrian refugees and appropriate sufficient funds to enable the country to accept its fair share of refugees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [CITY] City Council hereby urges city departments, local businesses, and charitable organizations to work with refugee organizations to provide shelter and sustenance for refugee families relocating to [CITY] and integrating into our communities, and calls upon other [STATE] communities to join them in supporting a stronger national effort to resettle the most vulnerable refugees worldwide.

*Text adapted from Amnesty International’s sample resolution to expand beyond Syrian refugees.

Appendix D

Communications Tools



A full size poster for print is available here: <http://uus.org/sites/default/files/refugeeswelcomeposterfinal.pdf>

Appendix E

Worship Materials for Unitarian Universalist Congregations

Below are suggested worship materials for services related to immigration and welcoming refugees to your community.

References:

All selections with numbers below 1000 are from Singing the Living Tradition. UUA, Boston, 1993.
All selections with number of 1000 and above are from Singing the Journey. UUA, Boston, 2005.
All links are to the Worship Web of the UUA, <http://www.uua.org/worship>.

Opening Words/Chalice Lighting:

418- Come Into the Circle of Love and Justice
429- Come Into This Place of Peace
435- We Come Together This Morning

447- At Times, Our Own Light Goes Out
442- We Bid You Welcome

Readings:

475- We, The Peoples of the United Nations
576- A Litany of Restoration
580- The Central Task of Community
637- For Remaining Silent

THEY SAY I AM ILLEGAL

Rev. Julia Hamilton

WE ARE NOT GUESTS

By Alicia Forde

THERE IS NO CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

By. Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek

AMONG THE SYRIAN REFUGEES

By Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon

HOME

By Warsan Shire

OUR TRUE HERITAGE

by Thich Nhat Hanh

Meditations/Prayers:

602- If There is to be Peace in the World

WE MEET ON HOLY GROUND

By Rev. Richard Gilbert

Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness

translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha

LOVING IN FEAR

By Rev. Stephen Shick

Opening Hymns:

188- Come, Come, Whoever You Are
361- Enter, Rejoice, and Come in
389- Gathered Here

95- There is More Love Somewhere

116- I'm On My Way

121- We'll Build a Land

130- Oh Liberating Rose

146- Soon the Day will Arrive

159- This is My Song

163- For the Earth Forever Turning

298- Wake Now My Senses

348- Guide My Feet

396- I Know This Rose Will Open

1014- Standing On the Side of Love

1028- Fire of Commitment

Meditation Hymns:

131- Love Will Guide Us
155- Circle Round for Freedom
167- Nothing But Peace is Enough For Me
402- From You I Receive
1002- Comfort Me
1003- Where Do We Come From
1023- Building Bridges

Closing Hymns:

30- Over My Head

Other:

Imagine by John Lennon

Peace, Salaam, Shalom by Emma's Revolution

Appendix F

Additional Resources List

Ongoing news sources:

Refugees Deeply: www.refugeesdeeply.org

Syria Deeply: www.syriadeeply.org

Immigration Impact: www.immigrationimpact.com

Refugee issues background & context:

American Friends Service Committee, "Syrian Refugee Crisis in Context," www.afsc.org/story/discussion-syrian-refugee-crisis-context

BBC, "Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts," www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911

Al Jazeera's interactive portraits at "Life on Hold: Stories of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon," www.lifeonhold.aljazeera.com

Bloomberg Politics, "How will the U.S. Absorb Thousands of Refugees?" – putting the United States commitment to resettlement in global context, and demonstrating the positive economic impact of refugees. www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2015-syria-refugees/?=2

Films:

"Salaam Neighbor: The story of Syrian Refugees restarting their lives in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan." www.itunes.apple.com/us/movie/salam-neighbor/id1098467203?ls=1&mc_cid=70c258aade&mc_eid=52c1a70bca

"Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (Angst essen Seele auf) by Rainer Werner Fassbinder in German with English subtitles. This classic explores how racial, class, gender, and nationality dynamics play out in Germany as the country grapples with welcoming the first wave of Muslim and Arab immigrants in the 1970s. One is left with asking what, if anything, has changed over the years. (An answer to that is below.)

German filmmaker Shanbaz Noshir's short film by the same name is a tribute to Fassbinder, but updates the original according to Noshir's experience as a Muslim born in Germany. Shot in 2002, **"Ali: Fear Eats the Soul"** (Angst Isst Seele Auf) offers a chilling look at the place of neo-Nazi skinheads in 21st century Germany. This short film is packaged with the Fassbinder original in Criterion's 2003 DVD.

"Refugee Kids: One Small School Takes on the World." This heart-warming documentary looks at how one New York City public school offers a special summer program to prepare immigrant children for life in their new home. www.refugeekidsfilm.com

Countering anti-Muslim bigotry:

MPower Change: Muslim Grassroots Movement
www.mpowerchange.org

Eric Ward, "How Can we Fight Islamophobia in the Media?" Ford Foundation
www.fordfoundation.org/ideas/equals-change-blog/posts/how-can-we-fight-islamophobia-in-america/

Further action tools:

Refugees Welcome Campaign Website: www.refugeesarewelcome.org/
Toolkit: www.refugeesarewelcome.org/welcoming-resources/

Reframing Refugees Messaging Toolkit
www.welcomingrefugees.org/reframing-refugees-messaging-toolkit-0