

Petition Concerning the Treatment of Asylees and Refugees

Whereas the Scriptures proclaim that “The Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19). And Jesus taught his disciples that when they took care of “the least of these,” including welcoming strangers, they were welcoming him (Matthew 25:31-40);

Whereas the *United Methodist Social Principles* state, “We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. ... We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants, and to advocate for justice for all.” *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶ 162.H;

Whereas the *United Methodist Social Principles* also state, “The mistreatment or torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs,” *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶ 164.A;

Whereas the Department of Homeland Security’s *Migrant Protection Protocols* (The Remain In Mexico Program) often puts asylum seekers in danger, as protection from their persecutors is limited, at best, and the circumstances of their housing often make them more vulnerable to violence by criminal groups in Mexican border towns;

Whereas the Department of Homeland Security’s *Prompt Asylum Claim Review* (PACR) and *Humanitarian Asylum Review Process* (HARP) programs deny asylum seekers Due Process protections, specifically the right to an attorney, by substantially fast-tracking the adjudication of their asylum cases to where contact with immigration defense counsel is severely limited;

Whereas the current arbitrary limit on the number of refugees our nation can accept this year (18,000) ignores life threatening realities of human trafficking and persecution, which force refugees to flee their home countries; and

Whereas Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors (AZJFON) is the Desert Southwest chapter of a nationwide United Methodist organization offering legal assistance to immigrants in the United States. We welcome our asylee, refugee, and immigrant brothers and sisters as fellow children of God, and neighbors in our Conference, and we work for a time when they will be accepted, valued, and welcomed by their communities, their states, and our nation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference petition the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to contact United States Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Homeland Security, and Governors of all the states and territories of the United States ask that:

1. Immigration and Customs Enforcement no longer keep asylum seekers in detention for the duration of the adjudication of their asylum case;
2. The Department of Homeland Security end the *Migrant Protection Protocols* (The Remain In Mexico Program), and allow asylum seekers to enter and remain in the United States for the duration of the adjudication of their asylum case;
3. The Department of Homeland Security end the *Prompt Asylum Claim Review* (PACR) and *Humanitarian Asylum Review Process* (HARP) programs, guarantee asylum seekers access to counsel, and enforce Due Process protections; and
4. The current Refugee Acceptance Rate limit of 18,000 refugees per year be rescinded, and the previous limit of 85,000 be reinstated.

Submitted By:

Arizona Justice for our Neighbors (AZJFON)

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