How big is the problem of forced migration?
The world is experiencing the largest forced migration crisis since World War II, with an estimated 65 million people having been forcibly displaced from their homes. As a world leader, the United States should welcome more refugees now, not less. Providing protection to people seeking safety is one of our nation’s proudest and longest standing traditions, including resettling Jewish and other European refugees during World War II, Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, and more recently refugees from the Sudan, Burma/Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Since 1975, the United States has resettled approximately three million refugees.

Is the resettlement program safe?
The United States handpicks refugees who resettle here, and they go through multiple layers of interviews and security checks, making them the most thoroughly vetted group of people who come to the United States. Security screenings are rigorous and are constantly improving. They involve the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Defense and multiple intelligence agencies. Our priority is to have a refugee resettlement program that is highly secure; this is the only way to ensure this humanitarian program remains viable and accessible for vulnerable refugees fleeing violence and conflict.

What is the problem with President Trump’s recent refugee related executive order?
The USCCB opposes President Trump’s Executive Order that among other things:
- Suspends visas, admissions and other immigration benefits for immigrants and non-immigrants for 90 days from countries including Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. Recent revisions to the draft order exempt green card holders, dual citizens, and Iraqis that work in the service of the U.S. government (e.g. translators).
- Imposes yet-to-be-determined vetting procedures for individuals seeking to enter the U.S.
- Suspends virtually the entire U.S. refugee resettlement program for 120 days. During this time period, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Secretary of Homeland Security, will review the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) application and adjudication process.
- Following 120 days, the USRAP will resume admissions for nationals of certain countries for which the Secretary of DHS, DOS and the Director of National Intelligence have jointly determined that sufficient screening safeguards are in place.
- Upon resumption of the program, the United States will prioritize refugee claims for individuals who are religious minorities in their countries who are suffering from religious persecution.
- Syrian refugee processing and arrivals are prohibited until it has been determined that Syrian resettlement to the U.S. is in alignment with the best interests of the United States.
- The number of refugees admitted to the U.S. in 2017 is reduced from 110,000 to 50,000.

This executive order will result in families remaining separated temporarily and possibly permanently. American families who make up the very fabric of communities around the country will be kept separated from their relatives who only want to be reunited with their loved ones safely in the United States. Many refugees, immigrants, and U.S. citizens are waiting to be reunited with a sister, brother, parent or child through the refugee resettlement program. Temporarily and possibly permanent separation of these families will cause extreme hardship on families, especially in circumstances where vulnerable family members are in extreme danger.

The order directly attacks our religious liberty, which is one of our founding principles. We do not discriminate based on religion. A decision by the U.S. not to accept individuals from certain countries or of certain religions will signal to other countries who emulate us that it is acceptable to discriminate in this manner. The United States resettles refugees of all faiths. Specifically targeting certain countries is against our ideals as Americans and sends an ugly message to the rest of the world about our values and priorities as a country. To not do so only feeds into ISIS’ propaganda and makes us all less safe.
A temporary ban on Iraqi visas could directly endanger the lives of the interpreters and translators who served alongside U.S. forces in Iraq. By denying this population of visas, these individuals and their families may be targeted by our enemies and killed for their service to our country.

**How does it benefit the United States to resettle refugees?**
Welcoming refugees benefits our country. Resettlement is a strategic program whereby we welcome a small number of the most vulnerable refugees and share the humanitarian responsibility with key strategic allies in countries and regions that are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. It not only saves refugees’ lives but helps to bring stability and security to geopolitically sensitive regions, including those vulnerable to terrorism.

By demonstrating international leadership on refugee resettlement, the United States has been able to convince our friends and allies to provide additional support for refugees around the world. The vast majority of the world’s refugees live in countries that neighbor those that they have fled. These refugee-hosting countries require infrastructure support and international commitments to resettlement in order to keep their doors open. It is in the United States’ best interest, as we seek regional stability in the Middle East and elsewhere, to help these countries both by providing humanitarian aid and resettling some of the refugees they are hosting.

Resettled refugees are eager to give back to the country that has welcomed them and make significant economic and cultural contributions to their communities. Newly-arrived refugees have been the driving force behind the rejuvenation of many cities across the United States. Those granted refuge in the U.S. successfully support their families, pay taxes, and contribute to the country in myriad ways.

Albert Einstein, Henry Kissinger, Madeleine Albright, and Sergey Brin, the founder of Google are all famous refugees who have all without doubt contributed to the wellbeing of America. Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon, Oracle, Tesla, IBM, Uber, Yahoo, eBay and AT&T were all started by the entrepreneurial spirit of the first or second generation immigrants – some from the countries that are on the Executive Order list of banned countries.

**Why is the Catholic Church involved in refugee resettlement?**
As Catholics and Americans we welcome refugee families that come to the United States to start their lives again in safety and dignity. It is closely tied to our identity and our values, as Catholics and Americans, to welcome vulnerable refugee families, regardless of their nationality or religion. The U.S. resettlement program has its historical underpinnings in the actions of the Catholic Church and other faith communities.

Welcoming refugees is not a political issue - it is first and foremost about people. Churches, synagogues and other communities of faith continue to stand in partnership to help refugees of all faiths find safety and hope as they start their lives as new Americans. The tens of thousands of volunteers, members of community groups and religious congregations that support and engage in welcoming refugees come from across the political spectrum. Most support refugees due to deeply-held religious, moral or ethical convictions. Refugee resettlement is the living embodiment of the religious commitment to “welcome the stranger,” and helps keep families together.

**How is the Catholic Church involved in the resettlement process?**
For the Catholic Church, assisting the vulnerable and recognizing the inherent human dignity of all – particularly those fleeing persecution – is part of our beliefs as Catholics. Last year USCCB’s office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) helped resettle more than 22,000 people from various countries around the world. Since 1975 the Catholic Church has helped to resettle more than one million people, making us the largest non-governmental resettlement organization in the world. The Catholic refugee resettlement network includes over 82 agencies across the country.

**Where can I find more information on refugee resettlement?**
Visit [http://justiceforimmigrants.org/what-we-are-working-on/refugees/](http://justiceforimmigrants.org/what-we-are-working-on/refugees/) and [http://www.usccb.org/about/resettlement-services/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/about/resettlement-services/index.cfm) or contact Matthew Wilch, Department of Migration and Refugee Studies, USCCB, 202-541-3448, MWilch@usccb.org