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### **REFUGEE ACTION COALITION OF COLORADO CONDEMNS LOWERING OF CAP ON REFUGEE ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES**

**Denver, CO**—Members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado strongly condemn the lowering of the [Presidential Determination](#)—or cap—set for the number of [refugee admissions](#) to the United States [announced yesterday](#) by the Trump Administration.

The unprecedented new cap, set at just 18,000, reflects the Administration’s continued trend of reversing the country’s longstanding global leadership in welcoming refugees. Down even further from the alarmingly low cap set for the 2019 fiscal year, the number of refugee admissions to the U.S. in 2020 will be vastly disproportionate to the continuously growing international need.

“This is just the latest appalling step by this Administration to effectively gut our country’s refugee resettlement program,” said Paula Schriefer, President of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. “Refugees are part of our vibrant social fabric, not intruders to be ignored or dismissed. Their presence benefits us all and slamming the door on them is not only disgraceful and counterproductive, it flies in the face of our core patriotic ideals.”

The U.S. settled nearly 85,000 refugees in 2016, the final year of the Obama Administration, and the cap for refugees in 2017 was set at 110,000 by the outgoing Administration. However, as a result of the Executive Orders on immigration and a slowing down of vetting under the Trump White House, only 53,000 refugees were actually resettled in 2017. The 2018 cap was subsequently set at a then record low of 45,000 with only 22,000 admitted. The 2019 cap was further reduced by a third to 30,000.

While the Trump Administration has cited security and economic concerns, particularly regarding the southern U.S. border, to justify repeated cuts to the refugee resettlement program, there is no evidence to back up these claims. On the contrary, a May 2018 report, [Economic and Fiscal Impact of Refugees in Colorado](#), found that refugees play a vital role in our economy and shared prosperity by generating \$1.68 in economic activity for every \$1 provided to them in assistance. An [open letter](#) addressed to Secretary of State Pompeo last summer and signed by dozens of former national security officials and humanitarian leaders warns that the diminishment of U.S. refugee resettlement has catastrophic

worldwide ramifications in terms of undermining U.S. diplomatic standing and further destabilizing already fragile global regions.

“The resettlement program is emblematic of the very principles on which our country was founded. People who have suffered persecution and who yearn for peace, safety, and freedom should be welcomed,” said Jennifer Wilson, Executive Director of the International Rescue Committee in Denver. “The Trump Administration’s unprecedented slashing of refugee admissions harms vulnerable people, many of them women and children, and promotes family separation. It is inconsistent with longstanding bipartisan support for refugee resettlement, and signals to our allies around the world that the U.S. cannot be counted on to stand with them as they grapple with the largest global displacement crisis in history.”

Advocates assert that targeting refugees with increasingly restrictive policies is unnecessary and inhumane. Prior to the Trump Administration, refugees admitted to the U.S. were already the most heavily vetted individuals to arrive on U.S. soil. The vetting process took, on average, well over a year and included in-person interviews, biometric screening, and background checks by multiple agencies. Applications for the U.S. refugee program are limited to only those who fall into [three principal categories](#) and selection is effectively prioritized based on urgency of need. Those seeking to reunite with relatives already settled in the U.S. are considered the lowest priority, meaning that the cap will prevent tens of thousands of children, parents, and siblings from seeing their loved ones again.

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The **Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado** is a coalition of organizations dedicated to defending the rights and interests of refugees at the local and national level and to providing a platform for refugees to share their contributions and concerns.

**Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning** is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures. To find out more, visit our website at <http://www.springinstitute.org/> and follow us on [Facebook](#).

**The International Rescue Committee (IRC)** is a global leader in humanitarian assistance that helps people affected by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and regain control of their future. The IRC currently works in 42 countries around the world and 26 U.S., including Denver, where the IRC delivers a comprehensive range of services to assist refugees and other newcomers who are rebuilding their lives. Visit [rescue.org/Denver](https://www.rescue.org/Denver) for more information and follow us on [Facebook](#).