

Top 5 Ways to Take Action: Interfaith Toolkit to Defend Refugees and Families Seeking Protection

November 2018

The Trump administration is considering [an executive order](#) to turn away families fleeing violence in Central America and block access to asylum at the southern border, as the caravan of people seeking protection continues on their a long journey. These families are [fleeing violence, desperation, and persecution](#) and are traveling together for safety on their dangerous journey. Blocking vulnerable people fleeing violence and persecution from accessing protection is a violation of both U.S. and international law. It is also immoral, cruel and unnecessary.

On November 1st, President Trump announced an asylum ban, barring any person who crosses between ports of entry from applying for asylum. He also announced that the administration will **indefinitely imprison all immigrants, including vulnerable families fleeing violence and persecution**, until their immigration court hearings, which may take years. CWS's statement is [available here](#). We must demand that our elected officials defend our values and protect the right of people who have undertaken the difficult journey to legally seek asylum.

#1: Write for Media

Publishing opinion editorials (op-eds) and letters to the editor (LTEs) are a great way to get the attention of the administration and your Members of Congress. But first, you need to write a piece that tells your story – not just the facts.

1. Include your faith tradition, scriptural grounding, and congregational affiliation to demonstrate your connection to the community.
2. Call on the Trump administration and your Member of Congress (**by name!**) to defend our values and protect the right of people who have undertaken the difficult journey to legally seek asylum.
3. This [template](#) contains a sample op-ed to pitch to local media outlets. Interfaith talking points are available here: <http://bit.ly/FaithCaravanTalkingPoints>.
4. Let us know if you get published by sending a link and the text of your media piece to Bilal Askaryar at media@cwsglobal.org, so that we can share these with your Member of Congress.

If you are a faith leader and would like support writing, pitching, or placing a faith leader piece, please reach out to Bilal Askaryar at media@cwsglobal.org.

The faith community is **collecting stories** among caravan members. Click [here](#) to submit stories to the collection form. Click [here](#) to download & print a PDF to hand-write answers, and please submit answers to Meredith Owen at mowen@cwsglobal.org. Please contribute & share with your networks!

#2: Call Congress

Urge your networks to call their Members of Congress using the alert below

URGENT: Stop the Administration from Slamming the Door on Families Seeking Protection
[Click here](#) to receive a call that connects you to your 2 Senators and 1 Representative

Sample Script: "I'm your constituent from [City, State, Congregation], and [as a person of faith], I urge you to affirm the right of all people to seek asylum and protection. Central American families – men, women and children – are fleeing safety wherever they can. This must be treated as a humanitarian crisis and refugee situation, rather than as an immigration enforcement issue. I call on you to do everything in your power to ensure the administration processes and welcomes asylum seekers and upholds family unity. To turn them away, incarcerate or prosecute them, or separate their families runs counter to our moral duty to ensure that people are properly screened to determine if they qualify as trafficking victims,

asylum seekers, or others in need of protection. My community welcomes asylum seekers and immigrants, and I urge you to do the same.”

#3: Share on Social Media

[Tweet this now](#) and amplify this message on social media

Graphics are available [here](#). Here are sample posts:

- .@[Senator/Representative] Our nation was built as a refuge for the persecuted. Defend American values. Stop @realDonaldTrump from slamming the door on Central American refugees seeking asylum #MigrantCaravan
- .@[Senator/Representative] Everyone has the legal right to seek protection from persecution. As a caravan of asylum seekers arrives, urge @DHSgov & @CBP to process & welcome asylum seekers, not incarcerate, separate, or close our doors.
- People over politics! Everyone has the right to seek protection from violence and persecution. #EndFamilySeparation #MigrantCaravan
- Politicians should be upholding our laws, not manipulating Americans. Congress needs to make sure @DHSgov and @CBP agents understand asylum protections are the law of the land!
- Central American families -- people like you and me -- are fleeing violence and persecution. This is a humanitarian crisis, NOT a political football. #MigrantCaravan
- .@realDonaldTrump administration wants to slash family sponsorship visas as part of their attack on families .@[Senator/Representative] #ValueOurFamilies #FamiliesBelongTogether

#4: Bear Prophetic Witness: Host Direct Action or Interfaith Vigil

[Click here](#) for an interfaith vigil toolkit on family unity

Mobilizing actions or vigils at strategic locations, such as at [ICE](#), CBP, or local Representatives and Senators offices are important for sustained opposition to family separation and the ban on asylum seekers at the southern border. Hosting events like interfaith vigils also provide the opportunity for faith leaders to express how welcoming immigrants is part of all faith traditions, reflecting on the deep scriptural and spiritual roots of our work to support immigrants. Even small events, multiplied across the country, will send a powerful message to the Trump administration and Congress that upholding family unity and welcoming immigrants is moral issue that is important to people of faith and conscience.

Rapid response actions must be done extremely quickly to effectively share a bold and prophetic voice that is relevant to the news media cycle. [Click here](#) for a template advisory and release. [Click here](#) for Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea's "Breach Beyond Barriers" Sermon on Micah 2:1-5 & 12-13. Here are some tips for rapid response mobilizations within 24-48 hours of the announcement:

- Identify key leaders from partner organizations who are willing to help mobilize. Be sure to contact them ahead of the announcement when possible.
- Decide on the strategic location for the event, such as a city center or ICE office.
- Put together a Facebook event and share the link with an email invite to your base of followers.
- Identify speakers who are trusted on the issue ahead of time and divide up the talking points among speakers.
- Contact an organization with a simple PA sound system or megaphone.
- Send out the media advisory the day before and the morning of the event, and be sure to follow up with personal contacts to reporters in your network.
- Identify organizations that can Facebook Live the event, and capture pictures & videos to share on social media.
- After the event, send out a media release to press list with quotes from speakers. (CWS media staff can help prepare and send a media advisory or release if you don't have your own press list. Contact media@cwsglobal.org for assistance.

#5: Faith Leaders & Faith Organizations: Sign On to Interfaith Letter

Sign on to protect families and uphold moral & legal obligations

Faith Leaders: [Click here](#) to sign on.

Faith-based Organizations: [Click here](#) to sign on.

Sign this letter to express unequivocal support for the caravan of people seeking protection from violence in Central America, as well as categorical opposition to the proposed executive order that violates our moral and legal obligations to those fleeing violence and persecution.