

Trump reportedly considering stopping all refugee admissions

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On July 18, Politico reported that Trump administration officials are mulling the option of setting the annual ceiling for refugee admissions to zero. The shift could devastate the refugee resettlement program, which is largely operated by religious groups. Of the nine nonprofit organizations that currently partner with the federal government to resettle refugees, six are faith-based.

Jen Smyers, director of policy and advocacy for Church World Service, criticized that possible move. She and other experts argue that ending refugee resettlement would not only leave thousands of refugees stranded but also demolish a refugee resettlement program—one that includes CWS—designed to help people facing persecution.

“I think we would appeal to the president, the vice president, and really everyone in the administration who professes to be a person of faith to look at the consequences that this would have and to really go back to basics in terms of the commandment to welcome the stranger,” she said.

Smyers was echoed by Anne Richard, the former assistant secretary of state for the Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

“I think it’s pretty clear that the Trump administration is trying to drive the US refugee resettlement program into the ground,” Richard said. “The Trump administration is trying to ruin a successful public-private partnership.”

Politico reported that officials are also considering reducing the refugee cap to 3,000 or 10,000 instead of zero. The current number, 30,000, is the lowest in the history of the refugee resettlement program, which started in the 1980s. —Religion News Service