

CVT Welcomes Executive Order as Encouraging First Step in Restoring Refugee Resettlement

ST. PAUL, Minn. and WASHINGTON — The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today issued this statement after President Biden signed an [Executive Order](#) to restore and enhance refugee resettlement in the United States.

“CVT applauds these critical steps toward rebuilding and improving the refugee admissions program and otherwise enhancing refugees’ access to protection in the United States,” said Curt Goering, CVT executive director. “With this Executive Order, the Biden/Harris administration is sending a clear signal that the United States seeks to be a beacon of hope and a place of safety for some of the world’s most persecuted people, including the many torture survivors among them.”

This Executive Order revokes Executive Order 13815, that led to enhanced vetting, and Executive Order 13888, which set barriers to resettlement by requiring state and local governments to consent to resettlement in their jurisdictions. It also commands the relevant agencies to conduct a review to identify whether additional populations, beyond Iraqi and Afghan allies, would qualify for protection for assisting the United States. It also takes valuable steps to improve the efficacy, integrity, security and transparency of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, calls for improvements to address backlogs, and orders a report on the effects climate change has on migration to assess how the U.S. should respond.

In an announcement accompanying the Executive Order, President Biden committed to raising the annual refugee admissions goal to 125,000 for Fiscal Year 2022. President Trump set the FY 2021 admissions ceiling at just 15,000—lowering it each of his four years in office and each time to a new historic low.

“We’re thrilled that the president will set a refugee admissions goal for next year that reflects unprecedented global need, and appreciate the difficult—but achievable—road ahead to reaching that goal,” Goering continued. “We hope that the president will reach out soon to Congress to notify members that he intends to increase this year’s admissions goal as well.”

Yesterday’s Executive Order comes on the heels of three related orders that the president issued earlier this week, one on developing welcoming strategies to promote integration and inclusion for “New Americans”; a second on creating a framework for addressing regional migration and repairing and strengthening the U.S. asylum system; and a third on reuniting families separated through Trump’s “Zero-Tolerance” policy.

In an [article for Just Security](#), CVT Washington Director Scott Roehm analyzed the three Executive Orders through the lens of a new CVT report: [“Designing a Trauma-Informed Asylum System in the United States.”](#)

CVT’s report explores the definition of and sources of trauma, its impact on refugees and asylum seekers, and established aspects of the asylum system which exacerbate trauma, such

as detention, interactions with Customs and Border Protection, immigration court proceedings and the asylum backlog. The report also highlights the prevalence of secondary trauma among those who regularly interact with refugees and asylum seekers.

-###-

The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with offices in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, D.C.; and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org