



U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human
Trafficking
2018 World Refugee Day Campaign
June 20, 2018

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Welcome	2
Backgrounder on the Links Between Human Trafficking and the Refugee Crisis	4
Prayer for World Refugee Day	6
Stories of Trafficked Immigrants	7
World Refugee Day Call-In Script	10
Sample Social Media for World Refugee Day	12

Welcome

Dear Friends,

U.S. Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) invites you to join us in honoring refugees. On June 20, [World Refugee Day](#), we commemorate the strength, courage, and resilience of refugees. Today, more than 50 million people are displaced by war and violence, some 33.3 million in their own country and 16.7 million as refugees, mostly in neighboring countries. Every 15 minutes a family is forced to flee their homeland.

We know that there is a strong link between forced migration and human trafficking. Men, women, and children are made vulnerable to human trafficking by the mass displacement caused by violence, extreme poverty, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and conflict. Impoverished, vulnerable families are targeted by traffickers who promise to provide education and opportunity only to exploit them through forced labor, sexual exploitation, enslavement, or organ theft.

We invite you to stand in solidarity [#WithRefugees](#) and [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#) on World Refugee Day, June 20, 2018. Please plan to take action to support refugees and end human trafficking.

- Plan a [refugee welcome dinner](#)
- Plan a special [prayer service](#)
- Write a [letter to the editor](#) for your local paper
- [Urge state and local lawmakers to introduce a World Refugee Day Resolution](#)
- [Join us for a Congressional Call-In Day on June 20](#)
- Amplify your voice on [social media](#)

Resources to help you plan to [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

- [Backgrounder on connection between refugees and human trafficking.](#)
- [Social media content](#)
- [Stories of refugees and trafficking survivors](#)
- [World Refugee Day 2018 Toolkit](#) from Justice for Immigrants Campaign (JFI)

2018 World Refugee Day Campaign

- [Reaffirming U.S. Commitment to Refugee Resettlement and Protection](#), Refugee Council USA's World Refugee Day Tool Kit
- [Global Week of Action](#), June 17-24, from Share the Journey
- [Refugees Welcome Toolkit](#) from Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC)

Mark your calendar and plan to join us **June 20 for a Congressional Call-In Day**

Finally, please let us know how you are planning to commemorate World Refugee 2018. Leave us a note on the [USCSAHT Facebook page](#).

In solidarity,

-U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Backgrounder on the Links Between Human Trafficking and the Refugee Crisis

There is a strong link between forced migration and human trafficking. Trafficking victims are typically first made vulnerable by mass displacement, violence and extreme poverty. Humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and conflict situations linked to gross violations of human rights often trigger forced displacements and large migratory movements. Impoverished, vulnerable families are targeted by traffickers who promise to provide education and training and exploit them: through forced labor, sexual exploitation, begging, crimes, trafficking in organs.

Children are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation in these



contexts, as these displacements create family instability and destroy community structures. Unaccompanied or isolated minors are at an increased risk of trafficking throughout their journey, but especially in overcrowded refugee camps. Some minors are forced by their own families to work under conditions of exploitation or subjected to forced marriage.

Traffickers lure their victims with offers of transportation, asylum, employment, and even marriage. They often charge incredibly high fees to coordinate travel arrangements or

2018 World Refugee Day Campaign

paperwork, and use that fee to coerce parents and children to work until that ever-increasing “debt” is paid off.

At the same time, migrants and refugees are often regarded with fear and distain. Many believe the majority of migrants are young men seeking quick access to developed countries in order to take someone else’s job or to cause violence. But the numbers show, and the stories reveal, that this is a myth. Over 52% of migrants are women and children. The proportion of children among refugees and migrants is quickly and drastically increasing. Refugees are fleeing for their lives, not with an intent to cause harm or promote extremism. They are on the run to survive.

Sources:

- [UNICEF USA: "If You Care about Trafficking, You Should Care About Refugees"](#)
- [Caritas: "The Links Between Human Trafficking And Forced Migration"](#)

Prayer for World Refugee Day

A Moment of Grace

A Prayer for Refugees

God of our Wandering Ancestors,
Long have we known
That your heart is with the refugee:
That you were born into time
In a family of refugees
Fleeing violence in their homeland.
Who then gathered up their hungry child
And fled into alien country.
Their cry, your cry, resounds through the
ages:
“Will you let me in?”

Give us hearts that break open
When our brothers and sisters turn to us
With that same cry.
Then surely all these things will follow:
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a
threat.
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead
advocate.
And hands will reach out—
Working for peace in their homeland,
Working for justice in the lands where they
seek safe haven.
Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.
May they find a friend in me
And so make me worthy
Of the refugee I have found in you. Amen.

—Prayer courtesy of Catholic Relief Services



[Photo by Julien Harneis](#), used under [Creative Commons License](#)

Stories of Trafficked Immigrants

Salvadoran Woman Finds U.S. Safe Haven

This is an excerpt from a longer article by Joe Ruff, Catholic Voice staff

Source: [Catholic Voice, the Archdiocese of Omaha, NE](#)

January 18, 2018

Belinda, a native of El Salvador, lights up a room with her smile – until she recounts her fear of violent gangs in San Salvador, fleeing to escape them and spending months in jail in the United States.

Then her sparkling eyes cloud over, her face falls and tears flow freely. “I have nightmares. I get headaches. I’m thankful I’m alive, but I wonder how I got through it,” she said.

Speaking through an interpreter, Belinda, 36, now living in a city north of Omaha in the archdiocese, recently described 12 years of extortion, forced criminal behavior including prostitution, and escalating violence from one of her brothers and his fellow gang members.

Her life of terror began in 2003 and lasted until she fled the country in 2015, after gang members beat her and her then-15-year-old son who was trying to protect her, nearly killing him, Belinda said through interpreter Sister of Mercy Kathleen Erickson of Omaha.

“They used a machete and nearly cut off his legs,” Belinda said. “That’s when I felt the most fear.”

Belinda, who asked that her real name be withheld to protect another family member who lacks legal status in the United States, fled with her then-4-year-old son, Adan (also a pseudonym), on a bus to Guatemala, then into Mexico, where she called her parents in San Salvador and learned gang members had been to their house demanding to see her. “They were going to kill me,” she said.

ACROSS THE BORDER

Belinda is not alone in her fear of gangs in El Salvador. Many others flee Mexico and other Central and South American countries to escape criminal gangs that bribe police, threaten politicians, and contribute to a breakdown in society. Others flee political persecution or poor economic conditions...

2018 World Refugee Day Campaign

Belinda and Adan made it across the Mexico-U.S. border, and, seeking help from officials in Port Isabel, Texas, they were detained. She was told she had a criminal record, and to go back to Mexico if she wanted to remain with her son.

“I can’t go back there,” she told authorities. ““OK,”” they replied, and took him away, not telling her where Adan was going.

“I was screaming and crying,” Belinda said. “My son and I had never been separated before. Every day, over and over, I asked, ‘Where is my son, where is my son? And they would not tell me.’”

“And then they said, ‘You had no son with you. You came by yourself.’...”

To read all of Belinda’s story, go to <http://catholicvoiceomaha.com/news/salvadoran-woman-finds-us-safe-haven>.

“She tells her story in part to help increase awareness of the difficulties people can face as they live in dangerous countries and flee to safety, or simply to find a better life.

And it might help others who have gone through what she went through, to know they are not alone, she said.

“I think there might be other people who have gone through some of the same things and will see they are not the only ones this has happened to,” Belinda said. “I think there are many more who have gone through this’.”

Source of these stories is [Define America](#)

Giovanni’s Story

I was brought into the country at three years old. Despite the mental struggle of being undocumented, I was able to work my way through a private college without a single loan or government grant to study four years of mathematics. I earned private scholarships and worked overnight jobs from 5pm to 5am to pay for my tuition. Today, with DACA, I work in the fraud department for a bank preventing American’s money from being stolen through financial crimes. The lack of a document should not define me.

Alena’s Story

I’m Slovakian, U.S. wasn’t my choice to raise a family, but once my husband was offered job here, I learned to make this country my home. We came with three little children ages 3, 2 and 9 months born in Slovakia. My husband is from Costa Rica, so I thought it will be fair to live in a neutral country, though I wasn’t really thinking long-term. While living here, we had two more children born here so we are in a real sense cosmopolitan family – Slovakia-Costa Rican-American. All got complicated when the company, my husband worked for, went bankrupt – suddenly we faced a tough choice – what to do. Do we leave

2018 World Refugee Day Campaign

when this country is a real home for all our 5 children, they did all their schooling here, have friends, pledge to U.S. flag, know English the best and don't recall much from their birth country (the oldest 3). And if we leave, where? Where will be another neutral place for our multicultural family? To complicate it more our youngest one got diagnose with cancer and after surgery became a part of two years experimental study – around the time our visa was expiring. Unfortunately, because the immigration system is broken and doesn't accommodate people like us we couldn't fix our visa. With a heavy heart, knowing the difficulties facing us, we decided to stay – the main reason – our children and their life here. It is sad this administration now criminalizes people like us, decent people, who love this country. I know plenty people who cheated to get a green card, even citizenship and listening to them, how they bash this country and its people makes me really sad. They want to be here mainly for their own material benefit, not really to make this country better. To me, American is everyone who cares about this country, lives life to the fullest, reaches for their dreams, works hard and is honest and cares about making this country better place for everyone.

[Oswaldo's Story](#)

My name is Oswaldo Alanis, I was born in Mexico City and when I was three years old I was smuggled across the U.S. – Mexico Border. I didn't realize it at the time but this moment would change my life forever. That day I became an Illegal Alien, and my reality turned into living undocumented. Today I'm a recipient of DACA which stands for: Deferred Action for Early Childhood Arrivals. This program has granted me temporary work authorization and protects me from deportation. Unfortunately, DACA is only a temporary solution for a long-term problem as it offers no pathway to citizenship and no guarantee of renewal. Under the current administration, the program is under threat of being revoked. It saddens me to know that my humanity could be determined by a piece of paper with an expiration date on it. I am an American but most of all I am a Human Being.

To read more stories

[Maxime's Story](#)

[Maggie's Story](#)

[Grace's Story](#)

World Refugee Day Call-In Script



Photo by: [Russell Watkins/Department for International Development](#) used under [Creative Commons License](#)

Join Us June 20 for a Congressional Call-In Day

Call your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor the bi-partisan [S.1580](#), “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.”

You can find your Senators’ contact information [here](#). Alternatively you can call the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office.

Suggested Text

I’m your constituent from [CITY/TOWN] and as a person of faith [and a Catholic sister], on World Refugee Day I urge you to do all that you can to protect and support refugees and to ensure that our country fulfills its legal and moral obligation to welcome refugees.

Today, more than 22 million people have been forced to flee their countries to escape violence, persecution, or natural disasters. More than half of these refugees are children. Refugee children, especially girls, are vulnerable to human trafficking, early

2018 World Refugee Day Campaign

marriage, and forced labor. Providing opportunities for education is one way to reduce their risk of being trafficked.

You can support refugee children by co-sponsoring the bi-partisan [S.1580](#) "Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act." This bill will help to ensure that refugee children, especially girls, have access to education that will strengthen and empower them.

Additional Talking Points

In December 2014, Pope Francis said, "... modern slavery — in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or the trafficking of organs — is a crime 'against humanity'. The victims of this are from every walk of life, but most are found among the poorest and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

Today, more than 65 million people around the world have been forcibly displaced from their homes, over 22 million of these individuals are refugees, and more than half of those refugees are children.

The U.S. refugee protection and resettlement program has enjoyed bipartisan support for over 30 years, and is a life-saving program that protects vulnerable refugees and helps to unite families fractured by forced migration.

Children, especially girls are among the most vulnerable of refugees forced from their homes by violence, extreme poverty, or persecution.

S.1580, the "Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act," addresses human trafficking and the factors that contribute to it. We know that certain forms of protection, including education, help reduce children's risk of trafficking.

S.1580 authorizes the Secretary of State and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to prioritize efforts to support access to safe, quality primary and secondary education for displaced children, especially girls, by working with multilateral, private, and civil society organizations.

Increasing the host countries' capacity to prevent discrimination against displaced children.

Incorporating measures to evaluate the impact of education on the lives of girls with respect to reduction of child marriage, gender-based violence, trafficking, and forced labor – all factors that keep refugee children, especially girls, in poverty.

Provision of basic education is a wise and necessary use of our foreign aid resources as it reduces poverty and suffering, promotes sustainability, and enhances our own security over the long-term.

Sample Social Media for World Refugee Day



Twitter

Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger and protect the most vulnerable among us [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Refugees are vulnerable to human traffickers, especially women and girls [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Today we celebrate [#WorldRefugeeDay](#). Support and protect refugees from the danger of human trafficking [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

[#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#) We remember the people who fled their countries in search of safety for their families, only to face the danger of human trafficking.

[#Refugees](#) are people looking for the same things everyone wants: freedom, a home, and safety for their children [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

On [#WorldRefugeeDay](#) we remember those who have been trafficked either through forced labor or sex as they sought safety from violence in their home country [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Children, especially girls are among the most vulnerable of refugees forced from their homes by violence, extreme poverty, or persecution [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Take action on World Refugee Day. Call and ask your Senators to co-sponsor S. 1580, "Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act" [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Take action to protect girls from human trafficking on World Refugee Day. Call & ask your Senators to co-sponsor the bipartisan S. 1580. "Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act." More info at <https://bit.ly/2Jmg51T>

Facebook



There is a strong link between forced migration and human trafficking. Men, women, and children are made vulnerable to human trafficking by the mass displacement caused by violence, extreme poverty, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and conflict. [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

On World Refugee Day, take a moment and remember the 22 million people who have had to flee their homes and countries in search of safety for their families and loved ones, only to have fallen victim to human trafficking. [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#)

Stand in solidarity [#WithRefugees](#) and [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#) on World Refugee Day, June 20. Call and ask your Senators to co-sponsor the bi-partisan S. 1580, “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.”

Children, especially girls are among the most vulnerable of refugees forced from their homes by violence, extreme poverty, or persecution [#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#). Ask your Senators to co-sponsor the bi-partisan S. 1580, “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.”

[#StopRefugeeTrafficking](#) by taking action on World Refugee Day. Call your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor the bi-partisan S. 1580, “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.”

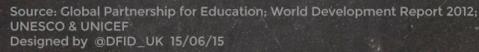
Join USCSAHT in taking action to protect girls from human trafficking on World Refugee Day. Call your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor the bi-partisan S. 1580, “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.” More info at <https://bit.ly/2Jmg51T>

Providing basic education for girls is a wise and necessary use of our foreign aid resources. It reduces poverty, promotes sustainability, and enhances our own security over the long-term. Call your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor the bi-partisan S. 1580, “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act.” More info at <https://bit.ly/2Jmg51T>

Girls who stay in
EDUCATION
and complete
secondary school are:

More Likely to	Less Likely to
- Marry Later  \$	- Contract HIV & AIDS
- Have higher incomes	- Contract Malaria
- Have fewer children	- Undergo FGM
- Have healthier children	- Die in pregnancy 
- Have children that go to school	- Die in childbirth
- Take part in decision-making 	- Have children who die in infancy
- <u>Escape poverty</u> 	

UK aid is supporting over
10 million
children to get a
good quality
education



By DFID - UK Department for International Development [CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

