

U.S. Bishops express solidarity with Muslim community



Protests at Los Angeles International Airport in support of travelers affected by the executive order restricting travel from 7 primarily Muslim countries - AP

(Vatican Radio, 1 February 2017) Expressing solidarity with the Muslim community, U.S. Bishops have expressed deep concern over religious freedom issues raised by President Trump's Executive Order on refugees.

In a statement published Tuesday, January 31, on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website and signed by Bishops Mitchell Rozanski, William Lori and Oscar Cantù, the Bishops respond to the Order and join other faith leaders to stand in solidarity with those affected by it.

Please find below the full USCCB statement:

WASHINGTON—On January 27, 2017, President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order that, among other things: suspends issuance of visas and other immigration benefits to nationals of seven predominantly Muslim countries for 90 days; indefinitely suspends resettlement of refugees from Syria, which is also predominantly Muslim, subject to a possible exception for those who are "religious minorities" in their home countries and facing religious persecution; and suspends virtually the entire U.S. refugee resettlement program for 120 days, also subject to a possible exception for such "religious minorities."

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Bishop of Springfield and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Most Reverend William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore and Chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, and Most Reverend Oscar Cantù, Bishop of Las Cruces and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace, jointly issued the following statement in response to this action:

We recognize that Friday evening's Executive Order has generated fear and untold anxiety among refugees, immigrants, and others throughout the faith community in the United States. In response to the Order, we join with other faith leaders to stand in solidarity again with those affected by this order, especially our Muslim sisters and brothers. We also express our firm resolution that the Order's stated preference for "religious minorities" should be applied to protect not only Christians where they are a minority, but all religious minorities who suffer persecution, which includes Yazidis, Shia Muslims in majority Sunni areas, and vice versa. While we also recognize that the United States government has a duty to protect the

security of its people, we must nevertheless employ means that respect both religious liberty for all, and the urgency of protecting the lives of those who desperately flee violence and persecution. It is our conviction as followers of the Lord Jesus that welcoming the stranger and protecting the vulnerable lie at the core of the Christian life. And so, to our Muslim brothers and sisters and all people of faith, we stand with you and welcome you.