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World Relief Denounces State Department FY19 Refugee Cap
Evangelical refugee assistance charity urges a restored cap of 75,000

Baltimore, Md. – Today, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in a press conference the Administration’s refugee policy for Fiscal Year 2019, which includes a decision to lower the refugee ceiling to 30,000 people – lower, even, than Fiscal Year 2018’s historically low cap of 45,000. With just two weeks left in Fiscal Year 2018, the U.S. has admitted fewer than 21,000 refugees, which makes clear that the administration sees this ceiling merely as a maximum, not as a goal.

World Relief CEO Tim Breene commented: “This repeated reduction in the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. is incredibly troubling. Not only is it a continuation of a series of unprecedented attacks on our American values and on the humanitarian nature of the refugee resettlement program, but it falls far short of helping the large number of vulnerable people around the world. This is just another step in the systematic dismantling of a program that exists to shelter people who need our support and protection. America can do better.”

Throughout the nearly 40 years of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, the average refugee ceiling was above 90,000 until last year when it was cut to 45,000 individuals. This shift comes in the midst of the worst refugee crisis in history; over 68 million people are forcibly displaced throughout the world, and over 25 million are refugees.

World Relief President Scott Arbeiter responded: “A cap of 30,000 jeopardizes the safety of future refugees, including persecuted Christians, who will no longer be able to find refuge in the U.S., nor does it reflect the actual capacity or willingness of Americans to receive and resettle refugees. This decision contradicts the administration’s declared commitment to helping persecuted Christian and religious minorities in dangerous and oppressive countries. Evangelicals should be concerned by this assault against our call to support ‘the least of these.’”

World Relief believes America has a responsibility to welcome refugees both as a nation of faith and as a nation founded by immigrants. It is time for America’s policies to reflect this responsibility with a cap of at least 75,000.

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About World Relief:
World Relief is a global humanitarian relief and development organization that stands with the vulnerable and partners with local churches to end the cycle of suffering, transform lives and build sustainable communities. With over 70 years of experience, World Relief works in 20 countries worldwide through disaster response, health and child development, economic development and peacebuilding and has offices in the United States that specialize in refugee and immigration services. Learn more at worldrelief.org.