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Nobody chooses to be a refugee. Nobody chooses to lose their home, livelihoods, culture and careers to go into the unknown. Half of the world's 21.3 million refugees are children. These children have been witness to things that children should never be exposed to – the true horrors of the world. Welcoming refugees who are fleeing violence and terrorism is our duty as a human race, to help others in their time of need.

On Friday, 27 January, President Trump signed executive orders suspending the U.S. refugee program for 120 days, slashing refugee admissions by more than half and indefinitely barring Syrian refugees from access to American territory. The president's orders place the U.S. in direct violation of Articles 32 and 33 of the Refugee Convention, which includes the principles of no-refoulement: that no contracting state shall expel a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his or her life or freedom would be threatened.

Refugees deserve equal protection, assistance and opportunities for resettlement regardless of their religion, nationality or race. Those fleeing conflict zones and persecution must be protected through the implementation of safe and secure resettlement and immigration programs and receive fair treatment. Such programs save the lives of the most vulnerable and enrich and strengthen host societies as well. Refugees have helped to build America. It was only 41 years ago when Vietnamese refugees came to America after the Vietnam war and since, have made significant contributions to America's entrepreneurship.

The U.S. vetting process for prospective refugees is already robust involving biometric screening and up to 36 months of vetting by 12 to 15 government agencies. These processes are in place to ensure the country has a clear understanding of every refugee's background and can pinpoint any links to known radical organizations.

At a time when there are record-breaking levels of refugee flow around the world and we are facing the largest displacement since the Second World War, now is not the time for America to renounce its leadership role as a sanctuary.

RMF is deeply concerned by President Trump's move to restrict refugee arrivals and urges the U.S. not to turn its back on refugees – we all have a moral obligation to help. We call on the nation to demonstrate global leadership and share in our global responsibility to provide refuge to the most vulnerable, regardless of religion or nationality.

Depriving families of safety based on their religion or country of origin is irresponsible and immoral, putting innocent lives – especially children – at risk and there is no proof that doing so would make Americans safer.

This is a call to elected leaders to oppose these measures. America must stand up for human rights and the principles of respect, safety and dignity for all. We must stand for freedom and hope and rise against fear because it is only together that we can overcome.

Real Medicine Foundation – Liberating Human Potential.