

# **Durbin Presses Trump Administration On Dismal Refugee Resettlement Goal**

October 21 2020 10:39 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, today on a call with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli pressed the Trump Administration on its dismal refugee resettlement goal of merely 15,000 refugees to the U.S. in the coming year, the lowest target in history.

Prior to any presidential determination on the number of refugees to be admitted in the upcoming fiscal year, the law requires that Cabinet-level officials representing the President engage in an in-person consultation with Senate and House Judiciary Committee leaders. The law is clear that the consultation must occur before the start of the fiscal year. This consultation, on October 20, is after the start of the new fiscal year and in violation of the statute. For the third year in a row, the Trump Administration willfully disregarded the law regarding their obligation to consult with Congress prior to the end of the fiscal year.

“In the midst of the worst refugee crisis in history, it is no surprise that the Trump Administration has dropped America’s moral standing to a new low by setting a refugee admissions goal of only 15,000—the lowest target in history,” Durbin said. “President

Trump punishes innocent refugees fleeing war and terrorism while coddling the dictators they are escaping. The Administration's actions are a shameful betrayal of our longstanding bipartisan tradition of generosity and strength and accomplish nothing except failing to protect innocent victims of persecution who pose no threat to our security and have turned to America for safety."

Last month, Durbin, along with Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee; U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY-10), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee; and U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-19), Chairwoman of the House Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, [pressed](#) the Trump Administration to restore our nation's long-standing bipartisan tradition of providing safety to the world's most vulnerable refugees and to immediately engage in meaningful consultations with Congress, as required by law, before setting the annual refugee admission target for FY21.

Since the enactment of the *Refugee Act of 1980*, the United States resettled an average of more than 80,000 refugees per year. However, the Trump Administration has set the annual refugee admissions target at embarrassingly low numbers for four years in a row. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the Administration set a target of 45,000 refugees and ultimately allowed just 22,507 refugees into the United States. In FY 2019, the Administration slashed the target to just 30,000, which was the number of refugees ultimately admitted. Last fiscal year, the Administration set a target of only 18,000 refugees and just 11,814 refugees were admitted.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were more than 79 million people displaced worldwide at the end of 2019, a record high. Among this displaced population are 26 million refugees – the highest number in history – more than half of whom are children. UNHCR estimates that 1.4 million refugees are in urgent need of resettlement.