



MRS DONOR DIGEST

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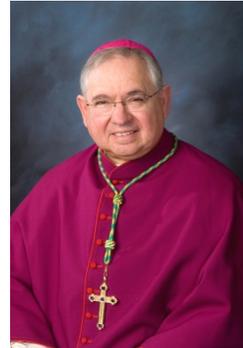
“Creating a world where immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move are treated with dignity, respect, welcome, and belonging.”—our Vision

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Greetings from the Most Reverend José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to announce the launch of the **MRS Donor Digest**— a publication to keep our loyal supporters abreast of current developments in Migration and Refugee Services (MRS).

The Catholic Church is in solidarity with refugees and displaced persons around the world. We have seen the suffering that thousands of refugees endure every day. Even in the midst of such hardship, their spirit of hope is an inspiration and a reminder to us that we must never abandon them.

In reaching out to assist refugees, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, and unaccompanied minors, the Church is blessed with an extensive network of diocesan and other partner agencies, in addition to the support of countless individuals across the country including you, our loyal donors.

My sincere thanks to all who share in this ministry of welcome for newcomers to our nation. May God continue to bless the work of those who renew hope and seek justice for them.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

DREAM Act Developments

On June 15, 2012, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it will offer deferred action on a case-by-case basis to youth who entered the U.S. before the age of 16 and meet certain criteria. Under the memorandum, individuals who demonstrate that they meet the following criteria will be eligible, on a case-by-case basis, to receive deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and

will be eligible to apply for work authorization. The requirements are:

- Came to the U.S. under the age of 16 and are not above the age of 30;
- Are in the U.S. on 06/15/12 and continuously resided in the U.S. for a least 5 years;
- Are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a G.E.D. certificate, or are honorably discharged veterans of the Coast

- Guard or Armed Forces of the U.S.;
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, multiple misdemeanor offenses, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Individuals must also pass a background check.

As of September 10th more than 70,000 young persons had applied for deferred action.

Fact Finding Mission to Dominican Republic



Photo credit: David Snyder/CRS

“In January 2010 the Dominican Republic made changes to its constitution dictating that anyone born to diplomats, parents “in transit” i.e. non-residents, or anyone illegally in the Dominican Republic were not citizens of the country.’



Photo credit: David Snyder/CRS

A delegation from Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (MRS/USCCB) traveled to the Dominican Republic from May 28-June 2, 2012 to assess the situation of Haitians. The delegation consisted of Bishop Anthony Taylor, bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas and member of the USCCB Committee on Migration and several MRS staff members. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) staff also joined the delegation.

The protection of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian origin in the Dominican Republic has been an ongoing challenge, further exacerbated by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Since the earthquake, the General Directorate of Migration of the Dominican Republic estimates that almost 200,000 undocumented Haitian migrants have entered the Dominican Republic. This number is in addition to the 1 million undocumented Haitians estimated in 2009 to be living in the country. The notable increase in the number of Haitians entering the Dominican Republic has created a migration crisis to which the Dominican government is neither

equipped nor politically motivated to respond.

To compound matters, in January 2010 the Dominican Republic made changes to its constitution dictating that anyone born to diplomats, parents “in transit” i.e. non-residents, or anyone illegally in the Dominican Republic were not citizens of the country. The application of this law has a disproportionate effect on Dominicans of Haitian descent that were born in the country and had already established their Dominican nationality, as well as the children of Haitian migrant workers born before 2010.

The roughly 1 million undocumented Haitian migrants and people of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic includes children and young adults that were born in the country, but have been denied access to citizenship; long-staying Haitian migrants that entered the country for economic reasons; those that fled Haiti because of their political affiliation during repressive regimes; and Haitians that fled to the Dominican Republic in the aftermath of the earthquake. Their lack of documentation does not allow them access to post-primary schooling, gainful

employment, courts and judicial procedures, ownership of land or property, and it makes it difficult for them to travel within and outside of the country.

In theory, the Dominican government has a formal system for processing asylum seekers; however, it has largely been inactive and thus far ineffective. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that about 200 asylum cases, equaling about 800 individuals, are pending and yet to be processed by the Dominican government’s National Commission for Refugees (CONARE). Many of these applicants are Haitians, some of whom have been awaiting a decision since 2000. While they wait, these individuals lack documentation, employment authorization, and the retroactive implementation of the 2004 Migration law dictates that their children do not have rights to citizenship or legal protection because they were born to non-residents.

A full copy of the report can be found at

www.usccb.org

SYRAIN REFUGEE CRISIS

Syrian refugee plight began with individually targeted activists and army defectors, but now includes those fleeing escalation and brutalization of the conflict, including direct targeting, generalized violence, rape, torture, lack of access to basic services such as medical care for pregnant women, and inability to sustain themselves in a collapsing economy. Most Syrians are fleeing cities affected by conflict and are fleeing with families.

While some have fled a year ago, the region experienced an influx beginning in early 2012. The number of women among Syrian refugees is disproportionately high, including female-headed households with young children, pregnant women

and nursing mothers.

In Turkey Syrian refugees are confined to refugee camps. In Lebanon and Jordan they mostly live among host community with friends, extended family members, or renting space in urban centers. However, in Lebanon movement for refugees is restricted and in Jordan many stay in "transit centers" lacking means or legal authorization to leave.

The number of Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR in Syria has declined from over 100,000 in February to over 87,000 in May 2012. They fall victim to increasing violence and in some cases have reportedly been targeted for attacks. They are now

being secondarily displaced in neighboring countries seeking safety in Turkey and Jordan, and some have returned to Iraq.

Many Iraqi refugees in the region eke out a living in the informal economy. Some remain dependent on international assistance, which is diminishing in both the amount per person and the number of beneficiaries. In Jordan and Lebanon, Iraqis have access to public education and health systems. Many Iraqis have now been displaced for over eight years; Iraqi youth are finishing school and have limited options for meaningful employment or further education which is out of their reach due to financial constraints.



Photo credit: David Snyder/CRS

Passing on Hope

Former refugees helping new refugees

Passing on Hope is your opportunity to give others what is needed to come and get started in the United States.

Contributions are tax-deductible. USCCB is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization.

Send your contribution to:
Passing on Hope
 Resource Development-5th
 Floor
 USCCB-MRS
 3211 4th St., NE
 Washington, DC 20017

BRYCS: A Special Program of MRS

BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services) was conceived as a bridge between service providers aiding refugees and public child welfare professionals in the United States.

In 2001, a Middle Eastern refugee family, resettled in the U.S., had their six children removed by child protective services after the parents disciplined their teenager according to the customs of their native country. Cultural differences regarding child-rearing practices, discipline methods, appropriate adolescent behavior, and intergenerational expectations were central to the case. In desperation, the parents ultimately traveled to Washington, DC to seek the intervention of the president in getting the children returned to their home.

The experience of these refugees, and others like them, led the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to fund a national technical assistance program focused on refugee child welfare, which became BRYCS. Since its beginning at USCCB-MRS, BRYCS has conducted national needs assessments, cross-service trainings, and roundtable discussions; presented workshops at hundreds of conferences; consulted on numerous complex cases; and responded to thousands of technical assistance requests. BRYCS now serves all those assisting refugee children, youth, and families in the U.S., including refugee resettlement programs; ethnic community based organizations; public child welfare agencies, public school systems; family strengthening programs; and youth services.

For additional information visit www.brycs.org

Cuban Haitian Entrance Program (CHEP)

In late August CHEP participants met in Miami to reflect on the last year and plan for 2013. Several USCCB programs presented their accomplishments for the year. Trends worth noting include a significant increase of clients with complicated healthcare needs and an increase in unaccompanied minors crossing the border

Additionally, a significant change was reported on the way that Cubans and Haitians are entering the United States. Data from the US coast Guard on sea interdictions shows a significant reduction in people trying to reach the USA by sea from FY 2008. This change directly correlated with an increase in border crossings. In 2012 border crossings are have increased to 63 percent and rafters are down to 11 percent. Only 8 percent of people crossing the border are from Haiti.

Ken Tota, Deputy Director, of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), shared the perspective of the ORR Match Grant program office. This office is working to provide consistency in the health screening process. When medical issues are identified, the medical care act will provide a wider range of options, he said. He also addressed the increase of unaccompanied minors crossing the border. By April 2012 the capacity for these children was exhausted and their office has now added 3,200 beds.

In 2012 it is projected that there will be 14,000 placements (up from an average of 8,000). Over 80% of the unaccompanied minors are coming from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

On the last morning of the conference, six immigrants shared their experience. It was inspirational and rewarding to hear how the work we do every day makes a difference for people that struggle for freedom and opportunity. In the coming months USCCB/MRS will be sharing some of this inspirational stories with all of you and the media.

New Refugee Arrivals

In an August meeting hosted by PRM and DHS, it was reported that changes made to the inter-agency security checks has been successful and there would be a noticeable increase in refugee arrivals for the 4th quarter of the fiscal year, revising projected arrivals to the US to 59,000.

As of August 2012, USCCB/MRS has received about 15,000 refugees and expects to receive between 1600-1800 refugees in September, a notable increase from prior months, but still significantly less than previous fiscal years.

During last month's meeting, PRM and DHS also indicated that they would be planning for 70,000 arrivals for fiscal year 2013, less than the Presidential Determination for fiscal years 2011 and 2012. In light of the roughly 80,000 refugees already approved for resettlement to the United States and some 73,000 ready for interview, USCCB/MRS will continue to advocate for a return to the 80,000 admissions level target.



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