

## Joint Statement of Sonoma County Jewish Clergy on the Recent Refugee Ban

In synagogues around the world this week, Jews are reading of the Biblical process leading to the exodus from slavery in ancient Egypt. We are reading of the people's longing for freedom, and of Moses' advocacy for his people to be able to worship freely. As the story unfolds, our ancestors become refugees, fleeing the armies of Pharaoh and risking the arduous journey through a wilderness to a land of promise. How poignant is the call to us to remember that we were strangers in the land of Egypt! How many times in the course of the intervening millennia have the Jewish people been refugees?!

America is a nation of refugees and immigrants. The fabric of our democracy is woven with the colors and textures of the millions and millions of people who have brought genius, vitality, creativity and productivity to our land.

Friday's decree by the new President banning refugees from various war-torn Muslim countries served to create more chaos in the lives of people who were already suffering from war, displacement, and loss of family members. Such a decree on International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an affront to human sensibilities.

As Americans and Jews, the undersigned Jewish clergy of Sonoma County, call upon our community to publicly express our outrage at this course of events. While the security and safety of Americans is a priority, it is clear that the extensive vetting process of refugees, immigrants, and permanent residents has been thorough and deep. Most refugees wait at least two years to come to this country, others even more.

The implicit banning of Muslims from certain countries is a dizzying call for reaction. The assumption that all Muslims are terrorists is outrageous.

When Jewish refugees were banned from this country at the height of the Holocaust, there was little outcry. At this time we cannot sit on the sidelines as similar events unfold. Now is the time to do for Muslim refugees what we wish had been done for Jews fleeing Hitler: to truly be a Mother of Exiles.

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