

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

An Open Letter To The Honorable Doug Ducey, Governor of The State of Arizona



Dear Governor Ducey,

We write to you today to express our deep concern regarding the call to halt the placement of refugees in the State of Arizona. It is from our deep-rooted faith traditions that we speak regarding the moral and ethical responsibility to care for victims of war who are displaced and seeking refuge among us.

The Syrian refugee crisis is the worst humanitarian crisis since World War 2 according to multiple global governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. [\[1\]](#) Over 4 million Syrians have fled their homes due to the world's inability to find a solution in Syria. Millions of people have fled to escape war, poverty and almost certain death to find a safe haven where families can live without fear.

Our religious traditions state clearly that we are to welcome the stranger, to provide for those who seek refuge. It has been stated over 30 times in the Torah for Jews to remember the historical experience of being a stranger in another land. Because of this experience, the stranger should be treated with empathy. Christians hold strongly to the teachings in Matthew 25 that demonstrate God's great concern and directives as to how we are to treat those in need in our midst. In the Muslim tradition, more than 100 verses in the Qur'an state that compensation is similar to action; those who feed others will be fed, those who shelter others will be sheltered, those who relieve others will be relieved.

As faith based institutions and organizations that regularly work with and provide services to Arizona's refugee population, we are greatly concerned that the decision to halt the placement of refugees will contribute to xenophobic rhetoric and retaliation against refugee communities. We understand that some are fearful after the recent attacks and brutality suffered around the world. However, we must recognize that refugees are themselves victims of this suffering. In refusing to provide a safe place, we are denying them basic human rights and doubly victimizing them in return. The truth is, the United States has resettled 784,000 refugees since September 11, 2001 and no refugee has ever attempted to carry out a terrorist attack in the United States. [\[2\]](#)

Historically, Arizona has been proud to serve as a friendly environment to the refugee families who have escaped unimaginably harsh circumstances in pursuit of a better life. They have become part of the fabric of what makes Arizona so great, contributing to our labor force, becoming business owners and model community members.

As people of conscience, it is with utmost urgency that we call for the reconsideration of any discussion to halt the placement of refugees in our state. Rather, it is incumbent upon us to welcome those who are most in need – in accordance with faith directives, our morals, our ethics, and our American values. We appreciate your attention and it is our great desire to be in dialogue with you and policy makers around these issues of great importance.

Sincerely,

**Arizona Faith Network**