

Statement by Rabbi Dan Moskowitz to Assembled Press on US Immigration Policy

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We stand together this morning as clergy from a broad spectrum of faiths. Joining with us in solidarity are more than 60 Ministers, Priests, Rabbis, Imans, Pastors, Religious Scholars and leaders from across the Province of British Columbia, and indeed across the whole of Canada who have joined our Call of Conscience and signed our letter calling on the Canadian Government to immediately issue Temporary Resident Visas to US Bound Refugees holding Valid US Visas Stranded at US Ports of Entry or in transit as a result of the Presidential Executive Order on Refugees and Immigration.

Each one of our scriptures and holy books tells a story of having been refugees and strangers ourselves, having been outcast or persecuted. These sacred teachings are there to remind us to see ourselves in the suffering and misfortune of others, because we were once them – we are all immigrants to some degree, we have every one of us been the other, the widow, the orphan, the stranger. We have been here before and we promised and prayed this would not happen again. Not in 2017. Not in North America.

These are refugees who are fleeing war torn countries, these are immigrants holding valid visas to the US, these are our brothers and sisters. To obtain the visa they hold in their hands they have gone through years of extensive screening and processing and now at the moment when they arrive at freedom's shore the US government on the direct orders of President Trump closes its doors to them.

We will not stand idly by, Canada must not stand idly by. We know of our own nation's history when 'none is too many' was our response to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. We stand just steps away from the memorial to the Komagata Maru incident. We cannot go back, the world cannot go backwards. There is nothing to be made Great Again by those dark chapters in human history.

We call upon the Government of Canada and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to immediately extend temporary resident visas to individuals who have been recognized as refugees by the United States and having passed American security and background checks now hold American Visas. These human beings who have been through so much are now stranded at American ports of entry.

In this moment of humanitarian urgency Canada must shine our light brighter and be a beacon of hope to the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. If America won't take them then Canada must. We urge Prime Minister Trudeau to immediately issue Temporary Resident Visas to US Bound Refugees holding Valid US Visas Stranded at US Ports of Entry or in transit as a result of the Presidential Executive Order on Refugees and Immigration.