

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Relief Responds to Trump Administration's Finalized Regulation to Limit Asylum

BALTIMORE – The Trump administration announced Thursday that it has finalized a regulation that would make it increasingly difficult for individuals to claim asylum in the United States, the most recent in a number of rules of similar effect. As a Christian organization committed to honoring the dignity of every human person, World Relief decries this new rule, which is poised to go into effect on January 11, and adamantly calls for its immediate reversal. For many vulnerable individuals, including many persecuted religious minorities, the United States is their only safe harbor. Instead of shutting out asylum-seekers, the U.S. government should offer protection to those fleeing danger and partner with organizations committed to upholding the value of every individual and their right to seek refuge.

“U.S. law rightly offers safety and protection to individuals who reach the U.S. who can demonstrate a credible fear of persecution in their country of origin. These new regulations dramatically restrict the number of individuals who will qualify for this life-saving refuge,” said **Scott Arbeiter, World Relief president**. “The U.S. has both a moral and a legal obligation to protect those fleeing persecution that we must not betray.”

As World Relief noted in formal comments submitted shortly after these proposed rules were first announced, this asylum regulation's broad changes would impact those applying for asylum at the border as well as from within the U.S. The now-finalized rule dramatically redefines key legal terms – including “persecution,” “well-founded fear,” “torture,” “political opinion” and “particular social group” – in absurdly restrictive ways, which will mean that individuals who would previously have won their asylum cases will now be denied and, in most cases, be deported back to their persecutors.

“Being a safe country and a compassionate country are not mutually exclusive traits,” says **Tim Breene, World Relief CEO**. “While we ought to insist that our government enforce laws designed to prevent anyone who would seek to do harm from entering the U.S., we must be equally committed to respecting laws designed to offer refuge to those fleeing persecution. As Christians, we believe this new regulation is inconsistent with our conviction that all human life is made in God's image and thus worthy of protection.”

In July, World Relief partnered with Open Doors USA, an organization focused on advocating for persecuted Christians globally, to release a report that examined the harm that these regulations, as initially proposed, would cause to persecuted Christians and other religious minorities. That report urged Christians to file formal public comments opposing these changes, which contributed to the more than 88,000 public comments filed. Nevertheless, the administration has finalized this rule with only minimal

amendments. World Relief urges the Trump administration to reverse this rule immediately, consistent with its stated commitment to international religious freedom.

Presuming the Trump administration does not reconsider this decision, World Relief calls on President-elect Biden to reverse these restrictive regulations as expeditiously as possible and urges local churches to unite in advocacy and in prayer as they seek to welcome the asylum seekers and other immigrants into their communities.

To learn more about World Relief, visit worldrelief.org.

About World Relief

World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world's greatest problems – disasters, extreme poverty, violence, oppression, and mass displacement. For over 75 years, we've partnered with churches and community leaders in the U.S. and abroad to bring hope, healing and transformation to the most vulnerable.

Learn more at worldrelief.org.

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