



August 15... Alert on Immigration

What's Happening?

“We are ambassadors for the other refugees. We cannot forget this chance that you gave us,” Olympian Yiech Pur Biel, a refugee from South Sudan told the IOC (International Olympic Committee) members. “We are not bad people. It’s only a name to be a refugee.” Syrian refugee Yusra Mardini, a swimmer, thanked the IOC for giving the refugee athletes the opportunity to show that refugees can contribute to society. “We still are humans. We are not only refugees. We are like everyone in the world. We can do something. We can achieve something,” she said. “We didn’t choose to leave our homelands. We didn’t choose the name of refugees... We promise again that we are going to do what it takes to inspire everyone.”

The President of the IOC, Thomas Bach, said the IOC established the ROT in part to raise awareness of the magnitude of the refugee crisis. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that more than 65 million people have been forced from their homes by war, famine and other man-made and natural disasters. They include 21 million refugees who have fled to other countries. “We wanted to send a signal of hope to all refugees in the world,” the IOC President said. “These great athletes will show everyone that, despite the unimaginable tragedies that they have faced, anyone can contribute to society through their talent, and most important, through the strength of the human spirit.” At the height of the European refugee crisis last summer, the IOC created a \$2 million Refugee Emergency Fund to help National Olympic Committees (NOCs) support and integrate refugees. The participation of refugee athletes in the Olympic Games Rio 2016 is the culmination of a process that began in October 2015 when President Bach announced in a speech to the UN General Assembly that refugees would be allowed to compete under the Olympic flag. That set in motion a collaborative process involving the IOC, NOCs, International Federations and UNHCR to identify athletes with refugee status and sufficient talent to compete at an Olympic level. The 10 refugee Olympians were selected from 43 potential candidates narrowed down from nearly 1,000 possible Olympic competitors.

The IOC is also using its Giving is Winning campaign, a philanthropic initiative that has become a regular part of the Games, to raise awareness of refugee issues among more fortunate athletes. At the dedicated booth in the IOC Space at the Olympic Village, athletes can learn more about the reality of refugees through short films featuring young refugees. The films highlight three values that are important to athletes as well as refugees: hope, courage and perseverance.

(Adapted from Olympic.org)

Action One: Prayer

God of Compassion, hear the cries of the people of Syria. Bring healing to those suffering from violence. Bring comfort to those mourning the dead. Strengthen Syria’s neighbors in their care and welcome for refugees. Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms and protect those committed to peace. God of Hope, inspire leaders to choose peace over violence and to seek reconciliation with enemies. Inspire the Church around the world with compassion for the people of Syria. Give us hope for a future of peace built on justice for all. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Light of the World. Amen.

(Adapted from Prayer for Peace in Syria; Source: Catholic Relief Services)

Action Two: Calls/Letters

Sign Petition – All Refugee Children Deserve an Education: https://act.one.org/sign/education_refugees_us

Call for Justice in Border Communities:

https://action.aclu.org/secure/hold_border_patrol_accountable?emsrc=Nat_Appeal_AutologinEnabled&emissue=immigration&emtype=petition&ms=eml_160728_immigration_borderpatrol&_af=query_string_encrypted

Tell DHS & ICE to Halt Deadly Deportations of Dozens of South Asians: <https://act.mpowerchange.org/sign/dhs-ice-halt-deadly-deportations/?t=1&akid=59.47858.3yRVAX>

Support the Refugee Protection Act of 2016: <http://cqrcengage.com/jesuit/app/write-a-letter?5&engagementId=231633#.V4-PpWRTcGw.facebook>

Sign Petition to Support Civilian Protection in Burundi:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/African_Union_Peace_and_Security_Council_Save_Lives_in_Burundi/

If you're a religious leader from Chicago please consider signing on to an interfaith religious leader letter to increase protections for Chicago immigrant residents:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rLCexccC3PLLnU7kdpVxkzXCXPwGxmRG7Oh5Ie1NXgw/viewform?edit_requested=true

President Obama: It's Time for Emergency Moral Action for Immigrant Families: <https://action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/president-obama-it-s-time-for-emergency-moral-action-for-immigrant-families?source=gse1>

Action Three: Education

Syrian Refugee – Part of First Refugee Olympic Team – Saved Fellow Migrants When Boat Broke:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/syrian-refugees-heroic-journey-to-rio-olympics-will-amaze-you_us_57a08da4e4b0693164c27955

Refugee Olympic Athletes Deliver Message of Hope for Displaced People: <https://www.olympic.org/news/refugee-olympic-athletes-deliver-message-of-hope-for-displaced-people>

Immigration Agents Don't Follow the Law When It Comes to Asylum Seekers:

<http://thinkprogress.org/immigration/2016/08/02/3803915/immigration-agents-asylum-claims/>

Action Four: Events/Resources

See Where Your Senate Candidates Stand on Immigration: <https://networklobby.org/election2016/sidebysides>

RCUSA Local Congressional Visits Toolkit:

http://www.rcusa.org/uploads/images/RCUSA%20FY17%20Appropriations%20Toolkit_07.28.16.pdf

Sign up to Join the Week of Action to Stop the Detention Quota – August 22-26:

http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/50601/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=88149

“Families Seeking Freedom” Faith Reflection and Action Resource contains personal stories of immigrant families as well as some reflections from our faith teachings:

http://cqrcengage.com/franciscanaction/app/thru?ep=AAAAC2Flc0NpcGhlcjAxijMKnaZzscYeLntzghRbqmII12VAhfaOFFbjGsjVS7U0nofWMKMjxIoTRbzcaOEXFiVQjG_bF_TpV3hFHIpJbuw-JR5aUHziOER9vyWft2a0HMI39_JX_Ikk5kJQdjkW4yixU4I2QFihhmdm3rV34do0FwyDjkbkVRqitCZ9Y75SkmqIIyB4JGpBoepoo_dnUipw-KGJ9dZPNcHevRibR8sZD0-j2urBLaRnSgoQ14AmgNgXLX5mx-bQBehJpJu&lp=0

Action Five: Social Media

Sample Tweet: #Refugees bring unique experiences, talents & skills to our communities. @REPNAME, help protect & resettle refugees! #WelcomeWorld **Thank you for your efforts!**