**National Day of Action: Monday, December 4th**

Join us on Monday, December 4th for a National Day of Action in support of children seeking safety and protection in the United States from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. It is critical we amplify the urgent need to protect these kids from harm. Here are three ways you can take action:

1. **Twitterstorm at 1pm ET:** On Monday, 12/4 at 1pm ET,numerous refugee and immigrants’ rights organizations will participate in a twitterstorm to draw attention to the Central American Minors program, and the impact of its abrupt termination. Stories from impacted individuals will be highlighted, and organizations will call on their followers to act. To join or follow the twitterstorm, use and search the hashtag **#RefugeeKids**. Sample social media posts are on pages 4-5.
2. **Mobilize your supporters to call key Congressional leaders:** Members of Congress – especially those in leadership positions in Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Foreign Relations – need to hear that their constituents demand that current applications for the Central American Minors (CAM) program be processed. Ask your supporters to make calls on Monday to key Congressional leaders to ask them to stand for the protection of Central American kids. An action alert with a sample script is available on page 3.
3. **Amplify the Message with Media:** Use our messaging and social media guide to amplify the urgent need to protect kids from life-threatening conditions. Consider writing and submitting a short Letter-to-the-Editor (LTE) or op-ed to your local media outlets. For an LTE/op-ed how-to guide, please visit: <http://bit.ly/2AkRaai>.

**Background on CAM-AOR**

The Central American Minors-Affidavit of Relationship program (CAM-AOR) has, since its inception in January 2015, provided protection to over 3,000 vulnerable Salvadoran, Honduran and Guatemalan children and their immediate family members, by allowing them to reunify with parents in the United States through in-country processing of their applications. The majority of children who have been admitted to the U.S. through CAM-AOR have reunified with a parent or parents with TPS, while a small percentage have joined parents with DACA or another form of lawful stay making them qualify to apply for their children. Approximately 55% of those children admitted to date were admitted with refugee status, while 45% were granted humanitarian parole[[1]](#footnote-1). ( ). Prior to the creation of the CAM-AOR program, there was no means for Central American children (or adults) to access resettlement through the US refugee admissions program.

In August 2017, the Trump Administration cancelled the parole component of the CAM-AOR program, informing approximately 2,700 children who had already been approved for parole that their acceptance was revoked. In September, the Administration then signaled its intent to cancel the entire CAM-AOR program, with language to that effect in its Report to Congress on the FY18 US Refugee Admissions Program. On November 8, the Administration announced that it would stop accepting new applications on November 10, giving resettlement agencies only 24 hours to submit all pending applications. Finally, on November 15, DHS announced that it would stop interviewing CAM cases on January 31, 2018. This is an extremely short time to phase down a resettlement processing operation, given the volume of applications in the pipeline.

As of November 15, there were 6,910 persons who had applied to the CAM-AOR program but were still pending a DHS interview.[[2]](#footnote-2) With almost 7,000 applicants still pending a DHS interview and only one circuit ride[[3]](#footnote-3) (of uncertain size) known to be planned before January 31, it is reasonable to assume that hundreds or *more likely* thousands of children who have already applied to the program and are in some stage of processing may see their cases administratively closed. The abrupt termination of the program leaves 7,000 children in limbo without an alternative process to protection.

More than 85% of children entering the US through the CAM-AOR program have a parent with Temporary Protected Status in the United States. TPS is a lawful immigration status granted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to nationals of countries that experience natural disasters, armed conflict, or other extraordinary conditions that make return unsafe. By statute, a country may be designated for up to 18 months at a time, with extensions are available so long as unsafe conditions continue. People in the U.S. at the time of the original designation are able to remain here and work legally until the designation expires. The Trump Administration has recently terminated TPS designations for Sudan, Nicaragua, and Haiti. The deadline to decide whether to extend TPS for El Salvador and the nearly 200,000 Salvadoran TPS holders in the U.S. is January 8, 2018; the deadline to extend TPS for the 57,000 Hondurans living in the U.S. is July 5, 2018. Given that more than 85% of children entering the United States through the CAM-AOR program have a TPS holder parent, it is deeply concerning that a TPS holder parent could be deported, forced to leave behind their child who entered as a refugee or parolee.

**Talking Points & Asks**

***Topline*:**

* **The US is reneging on its promise to kids by leaving 7,000 Central American children in limbo.**

***Talking points:***

* **Children deserve a safe pathway to protection when facing persecution and violence**. In Central America—the CAM AOR program was the *only* way. Without it, children will be forced to make a dangerous and often deadly journey to reunite with family in the U.S.
* **There are nearly 7,000 vulnerable children in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala who have applied for visas that would reunite them with family and they are *still* awaiting an interview**.
* **Failure to process all of these pending applications for these children in a timely manner is cruel and un-American, abruptly taking away a lifesaving tool that these children have risked their lives for.**
* **The United States has asked children to trust them by coming forward—and now we will be leaving them exposed.** Children who have applied for this program have put themselves in situations of greater risk by applying for protection while still in their own country. Many of these children already face life-threatening situations, and the steps they have had to take in order to be considered for this program (including travel to US government processing sites for multiple interviews) has for many put them at greater risk.
* **The phase-down of any refugee resettlement program anywhere in the world requires a *plan*--with adequate time and appropriate resourcing**. As a matter of fundamental fairness, processing of all remaining cases should be (and always has been) routine. But the uniquely sensitive nature of the CAM program – one that involves separated children and youth still inside their countries of origin, at an arm’s length from violence – creates a special responsibility to process all current applications.
* **If the Administration does not commit to process the pending CAM-AOR applications, many of these children will be forced to find alternatives to flee their countries.** They will be at a high risk for being taken advantage of by unscrupulous smugglers and traffickers, subjected to physical or sexual exploitation, or seriously injured or killed on their journeys.
* **The Central American Minors program was borne out of Americans’ values** that all people—especially children—should live free of fear for their safety and security, free from persecution. Now, as the Trump Administration has begun to dismantle the program, it is turning its backs on thousands of vulnerable children in Central America, and the shared values of our country.

**Ask: The Trump Administration must keep the United States’ promise to these vulnerable children.**

* All children deserve what we promised them—protection from harm. All pending applications for the CAM-AOR refugee program should be processed in a fair and timely manner.

**Additional Asks:**

* The Trump Administration should extend the TPS designations for El Salvador and Honduras, currently set to expire in March 2018 and July 2018 respectively, for at least another 18 months.
* Congress should support a legislative solution for all TPS holders to stabilize their status, offer a pathway to citizenship, and protect them from family separation.

**Suggested Take Action Language**

**TAKE ACTION: Tell Congress to keep our promises we make to children and demand that current applications to reunify refugee children from Central America with family in United States be processed.**

As part of its anti-refugee agenda, the Trump Administration has just slammed the door on children in danger. The Administration cancelled the Central American Minors program (CAM) – a protection mechanism that saved the lives of 3,000 children in the past few years. By screening refugee children in Central America, the US aimed to discourage irregular migration and provide at-risk children with a safe alternative to extremely dangerous migration journeys. The sudden cancellation of this life-saving program raises questions about what will happen to the 7,000 children whose applications are still in process. The Administration has signaled that no interviews will be conducted after January 31, 2018, but has made insufficient plans to ensure that all children who have applied are interviewed by that date. Failing to process all of the 7,000 kids who have put their faith in a life-saving program is not just unfair. It is cruel and un-American.

**This is why we need your help. [Call 1-855-472-8930 today]**

Congress must insist that the Administration keep its promise to the 7,000 children who have already applied for protection through the Central American Minors program, and ensure that their applications are processed. The promise of safety -- given and then withdrawn -- is particularly cruel in a program for vulnerable children and youth.

**Congress needs to hear from you. [Dial 1-855-472-8930 now]**

**On December 4th, ask key legislators to stand with these 7,000 children in need of protection.** Urge your legislators to demand that the Trump Administration ensure that the applications already submitted are properly processed. Each child was promised, and deserves, an interview. Congress must demand that the promise made to these innocent children and their parents to process their cases is not broken.

**Call Congress Today!**

**Urge Congress to Stand with 7,000 Children in Need of Protection**

Dial **1-855-472-8930** to be connected with key members of the House and Senate.

Here’s a sample of what to say:

*My name is \_\_\_. I am deeply troubled by the Trump Administration’s decision to end the resettlement program for Central American children. I am calling to urge Representative/Senator \_\_\_ to call the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and demand that they keep their promise to these vulnerable children and their parents. DHS must interview every child who has applied before they end this program.*

**Please also post to Facebook and Tweet key leaders of Congress and the Administration!**

**Sample Facebook posts:**

The Trump Administration is abruptly ending a life-saving program for Central American children at risk of violence. 7,000 children who have already applied will have their hopes shattered if the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) suspends the program without processing their applications. Stand with [@yourorg]. Urge Congressional leadership to demand that DHS keep its promise and process all of these children’s pending applications. [action alert]

URGENT: As part of its anti-refugee agenda, the Trump Administration has slammed the door on vulnerable children from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala who have applied for the Central American Minors program. Nearly 7,000 children have put their lives on the line to apply for refugee resettlement to the United States, but may be told that their applications will no longer be processed. This is unconscionable. We need your help pushing back. Call **1-855-472-8930** today and demand that Congress hold Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) accountable. They MUST keep their promise to interview the children who have already applied for protection through the program. [action alert]

 **Sample Tweets:**

I #StandWithRefugees. I stand with the 7,000 Central American kids who are waiting an interview for refugee resettlement through the Central American Minors resettlement program. RT and tell @USCIS they MUST keep their promise to these vulnerable children! @Senator/Rep

The Trump Administration’s decision to abruptly close the only safe pathway to protection for Central American refugee children in the U.S. is misguided and cruel. More children will be vulnerable to trafficking. Take action now. [action alert]

The US made a promise that we’d do our part to help Central American kids out of harm’s way. Now we’re breaking that promise. We call on@realDonaldTrump and@Senator/Rep to ensure that all kids’ applications be considered. #RefugeeKids

.@DHSgov announced that the Central American Minors resettlement program will end on January 31. The sudden end of the ONLY safe pathway for refugee kids facing violence and persecution in the Central America is cruel and inconsistent with our nation’s values. #RefugeeKids @Senator/Rep

The Trump Administration is gambling with the lives of 7,000 vulnerable Central American children. @SenJudiciary tell DHS that they must interview all 7,000 kids who have applied for resettlement, before closing the Central American Minors program. #RefugeeKids

Without the Central American Minors resettlement and family reunification program, more kids will be forced to flee violence and embark on a dangerous journey to seek protection at the border. Take action by calling Congress now! [action alert]

The lives of 7,000 kids from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras hang in the balance. @Senator/Representative tell @DHSgov that all that Central American children who have already applied for resettlement must be interviewed before the program is closed.

.@Senator/Rep Terminating the CAM program removes the only safe path that Central American Minors have to flee violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Tell @USCIS to keep the promise to the 7,000 kids awaiting an interview.

[Your org] denounces the rushed closure of the Central American Minors program—the only safe pathway to protection Honduran, Salvadoran and Guatemalan kids at risk. With 7,000 at-risk kids still awaiting an interview and MUST be interviewed. #RefugeeKids. Take Action now [action alert]

.@Senator/Rep Terminating the Central American Minors program means leaving at least 7,000 kids who have already applied in harm’s way, in countries where murders of women and girls have increased by 346%. Communities of faith will not allow this to happen @realDonaldTrump , #RefugeeKids

The Central American Minors program has protected over 3,000 kids from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The Trump administration is ending it, without a plan to interview the 7,000 kids with pending applications. Unfair. Un-American. Ask Congress to stand up for 7,000 kids. [action alert]

The abrupt end of a refugee program for Central American kids is heartless and un-American. 7,000 vulnerable kids who have already applied may not get an interview. RT and tell @DHSgov to keep its promise to at-risk children.

**Use these Twitter handles:**

@DHSgov

@USCIS

@realDonaldTrump

@SenJudiciary

@HouseJudiciary

@HouseHomeland

@HouseForeign

@SenBobCorker

@SenatorCardin

@ChuckGrassley

@SenFeinstein

@SenRonJohnson

@clairecmc

@RepEliotEngel

@RepEdRoyce

Note: We are asking action takers to focus their calls on Chair and Ranking Members of Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, insofar as they are allies (or reasonably receptive) to this issue.

1. Parole is a statutory mechanism used by US Citizenship and Immigration Services that allows an individual, who may not qualify for admission to the U.S. through any other means, to be admitted into the U.S. for a temporary period for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. Parole was used in the Central American Minors program to grant admission to children who did not strictly qualify for refugee status as interpreted by CIS, but for whom there was a compelling humanitarian, protection or family reunification need. Children granted parole were admitted only after the same security vetting and other requirements (eg DNA testing) as children admitted with refugee status.   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This number includes both principal applicants and derivative family members. Since the average case size in the CAM-AOR program is around 1.25, this means that there are an approximate 5,500 cases pending a DHS interview. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Overseas refugee processing is conducted by specially-trained DHS/CIS Refugee Corps officers, who are fielded to overseas locations to conduct refugee interviews and collect security screening information during trips called “circuit rides.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)