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IRAP AND MORE THAN 100 ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND VISAS, DEADLINES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES DURING PANDEMIC

(New York, NY) - Today, IRAP and more than 100 other advocacy organizations working with immigrants and refugees sent a letter to the Departments of State and Department of Homeland Security expressing their concern that the pandemic will unjustly prevent individuals with visas or travel permits from traveling to the United States. The letter urges Secretary Mike Pompeo and Acting Secretary Chad Wolf to extend validity periods for visas and other entry permits during travel restrictions and to extend application deadlines.

This would ensure that applicants and visa holders don’t lose their permission to enter the United States before it is safe for them to do so. Applicants have often waited for many months or even years and pay significant sums of money to pursue visas or travel permits. Allowing these visas to expire could harm thousands of people, including valued employees of U.S. companies, close relatives of U.S. citizens, individuals persecuted for their faith or sexual identity, and individuals who face risk because of faithful and valuable service to the U.S. Government.

The letter also urges the Departments to resume refugee admissions as soon as it can be safely done and to take steps to ensure that the FY2020 refugee admissions goal will be met.

IRAP would like to thank all supporting organizations, as well as Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) for leading a letter urging Congress to include refugee protections in its coronavirus response.

To view the letter and signatories, click here.

To view the press release, click here.

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