IRAP URGES ADMINISTRATION TO CONSULT WITH CONGRESS ON REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

New York, NY – The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) condemns the Administration’s failure to comply with federal law in establishing this year’s Presidential Determination for refugee admissions. The 1980 Refugee Act gives the President authority to determine the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States each fiscal year. Before doing so, however, the Administration is required to consult in person with Congress, which it has failed to do. This means that refugee admissions for Fiscal Year 2019, which begins on October 1, 2018, are delayed until consultations are held and the Presidential Determination is formally issued. Refugees in urgent need of resettlement, who have already been held in limbo by the reduced refugee cap from last year, will be even further delayed from reaching safety if the Determination is not issued immediately.

Betsy Fisher, Policy Director at IRAP, said: “The Administration is making a mockery of the rule of law and congressional oversight. Officials claimed that federal law justified ripping children from the arms of parents who are fleeing persecution, but it failed to comply with federal law that requires consultation with the Judiciary Committees about refugee admissions. The Administration cannot claim to be advancing the rule of law while brazenly ignoring its own legal constraints and the authority of Congress.”

On September 17, 2018, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the Administration had decided to set the refugee ceiling at 30,000 for Fiscal Year 2019 without the required consultations. Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley and House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte immediately reacted with frustration, noting that the Administration had failed to even schedule the required consultations. Chairman Grassley noted that “[d]espite significant bipartisan and bicameral outreach . . . for the second year in a row, the administration has willfully ignored its statutory mandate to inform and consult with Congress . . . ”

IRAP calls on the Administration to immediately consult with Congress and to increase the Presidential Determination for Fiscal Year 2019. IRAP urges Members of the Judiciary Committees to comply with statutory requirements moving forward and to urge the Administration to restore U.S. leadership on refugee resettlement.

To view the press release, click here.