

Upcoming Meetings & Events

USCRI QUARTERLY POLICY BRIEFING – OCT 15

On Thursday, October 15 at 12PM EDT, USCRI will host its first quarterly policy briefing. The topic of the briefing will be the global refugee situation, including the effects of COVID-19. More information will be distributed closer to the event.

ONCE UPON AN AMERICAN DREAM: INTEGRATION – OCT 14

On Wednesday, October 14 at 4 PM EDT, the Heurich House Museum and the Bipartisan Policy Center will present the third segment of “Once Upon an American Dream,” a panel series exploring the stages of the immigrant experience in America: migration, arrival, and integration. The final event’s discussion will focus on how immigrants of the past and present integrate into our communities and the challenges they faced and continue to face. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

IMMIGRATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC RENEWAL – OCT 16

On Friday, October 16, at 10AM EDT, the Georgetown University Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor will host a virtual discussion on how countries can balance a generous policy towards refugees and immigrants with domestic concerns surrounding wages and employment. Panelists include Muzaffar Chisti of the Migration Policy Institute and Felix Braunsdorf of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



this issue

- U.S. Issue Updates **P.1**
- Around the World in International Migration **P.2**
- Whispers from Washington **P.4**
- Global Gigabyte **P.4**

United States Issue Updates

• 9th Circuit Denies Government Request for Stay in Continuing Flores Litigation

On Sunday, October 4, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit denied the government’s motion to stay a lower-court order that requires the government to end its practice of detaining minors in hotels. The panel found that it likely did not have jurisdiction over the claims in the appeal and that the appeal was unlikely to prevail on the merits. A status conference on compliance with the court orders remains scheduled for October 23. The Administration has chosen to pursue its appeal despite the panel’s finding.

• Washington District Court Enjoins Stricter Rules on SIJs

On Monday, October 5, Robert Lasnik of Washington District Court issued a summary judgement in favor of plaintiffs in the case *Moreno Galvez v. Cuccinelli*. The judge found that youth are eligible for Special Immigration Juvenile (SIJ) status until they turn 21 years old, not 18 as the government had sought. The court also found that “defendants have engaged in a practice of delaying the adjudication of SIJ petitions” and ordered USCIS to adjudicate any SIJ petitions within 180 days when originating from the District Court’s jurisdiction. Read the ruling [here](#).

• California District Court Upholds State Ban on Private Immigration Detention

On Thursday, October 8, Janis Sammartino of the Southern District Court of California ruled that a California law to phase out private immigration detention centers and private prisons is constitutional. However, the court also granted a preliminary injunction on California’s ban on private immigration detention and allowed a portion of the case to proceed. The law is AB32 and the court ruled on the consolidated cases *Geo Group, Inc. v. Newsom* and *United States v. Newsom*. Read the ruling [here](#).

United States Issue Updates (cont'd)

Upcoming Meetings & Events (cont'd)

THE POLITICIZATION OF ASYLUM – OCT 27

On Tuesday, October 27 from 7-10 pm Eastern Time, Western Sydney University will hold a symposium on prevailing trends that make a political issue out of people seeking asylum. Learn more and register [here](#).

USCRI COVID-19 RESOURCES

[Nonprofit Organizations and the CARES Act](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #1: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act \(March 6\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #2: Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(March 18\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #3: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act \(March 28\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #4: Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act \(April 23, 2020\)](#)

[Executive Order: Suspension of Immigration Following COVID-19 Outbreak \(April 23\)](#)

[Flores Enforcement Actions and COVID-19 \(April 27\)](#)

[The HEROES Act \(May 12, 2020\)](#)

[The Impact of COVID-19 in Refugee Camps \(June 9, 2020\)](#)

• BIA rules on Cancellation of Removal and Subsequent Removal Proceedings

On Thursday, October 8, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) ruled that a cancellation of removal is binding on subsequent immigration actions by the government. The case, *Matter of VOSS*, pertained to a Costa Rican national and legal resident who had been convicted of drug offenses in 2013 but granted cancellation of removal. After a 2019 conviction, the Department of Homeland Security sought to remove her on the basis of the first conviction. The BIA held that “if a criminal conviction was charged as a ground of removability or was known to the Immigration Judge at the time cancellation of removal was granted...that conviction cannot serve as the sole factual predicate for a charge of removability in subsequent removal proceedings.” Read *Matter of VOSS* [here](#).

Around the World in International Migration

• Poland Sends Mobile Housing to Refugees Displaced by Moria Fire

On October 7, Poland’s ambassador to Greece presented the country with [156 mobile housing units](#) to help alleviate the crisis created by the recent arson that largely destroyed Greece’s Moria refugee camp. The fires were set after fighting broke out when several refugees who tested positive for Covid-19 refused to isolate. The incident left over 10,000 refugees without any shelter, and for the past month these refugees have mainly lived in makeshift tents with almost no supplies. Poland’s donation comes as many countries in Europe have refused to take in any of the displaced refugees, leaving them living in more dire conditions than they experienced in Moria.

• 25 IDPs killed in Burkina Faso

On October 4, an attack by an unidentified armed group left 25 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) dead in Burkina Faso. A convoy of almost 50 men, women, and children was heading towards the town of Pissila to flee danger in a neighboring town when they were ambushed. The killings are the latest in a slew of attacks by various militia groups in the country. The UNHCR condemned the attack while noting that Burkina Faso is facing the world’s fastest-growing [displacement crisis](#). Between an escalating climate crisis and the growth of terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIL, it is estimated that almost 2,000 people were killed and one million displaced in the last year.

Around the World in International Migration (cont'd)

- **World Food Program wins 2020 Nobel Peace Prize**

The Nobel Committee announced on October 9 that this year's Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the World Food Program (WFP) for its work to combat hunger during a time of global crisis. WFP is the largest humanitarian organization in the world addressing food insecurity. In its announcement, the Nobel Committee emphasized the relationship between food security and peace. While war and armed conflict displace people, ruin crops, and cause hunger, hunger and desperation for basic needs can also lead to conflict. In recent years, the international community has begun to recognize starvation as a weapon of war, and WFP has worked with UN member states to combat this grave issue.

- **Ethiopian Migrants Experience Human Rights Abuses in Detention**

When the pandemic escalated in March, Saudi security forces detained thousands of Ethiopians in overcrowded and unsanitary detention centers, following crisis in Yemen. The Ethiopians had been living and working in Yemen before being forced into Saudi Arabia by fighting and expulsion. Investigations have now revealed that the lack of sanitation combined with the denial of basic healthcare has led to several deaths in the centers, including at least five young children. In addition, several detainees reported receiving electric shocks, witnessing beatings, and even watching guards shoot escapees.

- **UNHCR Launches Database of Higher Education Opportunities for Refugees**

- <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/10/5f7709524/unhcr-launches-new-portal-verified-higher-education-opportunities-refugees.html>

Whispers from Washington

Current Capitol Hill Considerations

Presidential Determination on Refugees in Limbo

The Refugee Act, passed in 1980, established the Presidential Determination (PD), a cap on the number of refugees that will be resettled in the United States for the year. The Act mandates that the president shall make this determination before the beginning of the fiscal year (October 1), and after appropriate consultation with Congress.

This year, the Administration released a report to Congress at 11:45 PM on September 30th, proposing to lower the refugee admissions cap to only 15,000. However, 13 days into the new fiscal year, the official Presidential Determination still has not been made. As of Friday, October 9, there is no evidence that the required Congressional consultation has been scheduled.

Moving forward, the Administration is required hold a consultation between its Cabinet-level representatives and the Judiciary Committees of both the House and Senate. This consultation must address the current refugee situation, an appropriate cap, and the costs and impacts of the proposal. Once the consultation has been completed and a number proposed, the record of this consultation must be made public and a hearing must be held to review and sign the proposed PD.

Every day that this process is dragged out, the future of refugee admissions remains in limbo. Refugees cannot be admitted without an official PD, so it is vital that this process be completed quickly. Some have urged Congress to force the Administration to complete the process, but so far nothing substantive has been done to push the Administration to act.

Global Gigabyte

Little Amal may not be a real child, but she represents the millions of refugee children across the globe who have been displaced from their homes by conflict and unrest. So, who is Little Amal? She is an 11.5-foot-tall puppet of a young Syrian refugee girl, created by the Handspring Puppet Company as part of an art project to raise awareness of the global refugee crisis. Starting next April, she and her creators will complete “[The Walk](#),” a 5,000 mile journey from Syria to the United Kingdom, largely on foot. This journey is set to take three months, and the art project will stop in over 70 cities to tell the stories of refugee children and raise awareness of their plight. The project will also raise funds for refugee advocacy and to help refugee children gain access to education. The project organizers have said the walk will be “a traveling festival of art and hope,” changing the narrative around refugees and shedding light on the realities of their lives.

If you have any questions
or comments, please
contact

Kelly Ann Whelan at
kwhelan@uscrimail.org.

