

US measures suspending refugee resettlement should be lifted, says UN chief Guterres

1 February 2017 – Reacting to the recent suspension by the United States of its longstanding refugee programme, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today said resettlement is often “the only possible solution” for people fleeing conflict and persecution, and that the US policy, which bars entry of Syrians into the country, “should be removed sooner rather than later.”

Asked about the impact of the Executive Order signed by President Donald Trump on 27 January, that, among things, halts the entire US refugee programme for 120 days, bars entry of refugees from seven mostly Muslim countries for 90 days and suspends entry of Syrians until further notice, the UN chief said resettlement is “a must [...] and the United States has always been at the forefront of refugee protection. Syrians are those that at present have the most dramatic needs.”

Mr. Guterres, speaking to the press at UN headquarters just after returning from a trip to Ethiopia for the African Union Summit, emphasized: “In my opinion, the US policy is not the way [...] to best protect the US or any other country, in relation to the serious concerns that exist about the possibility of terrorist infiltration. I don’t think this is the effective way to do so and I think these measures should be removed sooner rather than later.”

Noting that the measures “violate our basic principles,” he said they are not effective if the objective is to avoid terrorist entering the US.

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