

RIGHT WING WATCH

Anti-Immigration Activist Mark Krikorian Backs Trump Slashing Refugee Resettlement

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The Trump administration this week capped the number of refugees that the U.S. would consider resettling in 2019 at a historic low. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the ceiling would be set at 30,000, a huge drop from the 2018 cap of 45,000, which had already been decried by refugee advocates as irresponsibly low in a time of great global upheaval and humanitarian crisis.

And that's only the cap. The Associate Press reported that with only two weeks left in this fiscal year, the U.S. had admitted only 20,918 refugees, while the UN High Commissioner on Refugees reported that there were 25.4 million refugees last year.

Pompeo's announcement this week was greeted with dismay and denunciations from public officials, humanitarian organizations, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and even the Libertarian CATO Institute.

But anti-immigration activist Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies, who has argued that refugee resettlement is "immoral," called the criticism "hyperbole." From Krikorian's Tuesday column in National Review:

Critics have engaged in the usual hyperbole: "shameful abdication of our humanity" which "will lead to innocent people dying." I'm sure they're sincere in the outrage, but that doesn't mean they're correct. The refugee-resettlement contractors — whom the State Department pays by the head for each refugee admitted — have pushed for a ceiling of 75,000, a little more than double the announced number. But would that really make any difference? There are 25 million refugees in the world, plus another 40 million people displaced within their own countries — any politically plausible numbers of admissions is a drop in the ocean.

Breitbart jumped in with a headline seemingly designed to give Trump supporters a reason to cheer the move: "Trump Boosts Christian Share of Refugees Up to 71 Percent." Breitbart reported that the Trump administration "raised the Christian share of the refugee inflow from under 50 percent in 2016 up to 71 percent in 2018." Breitbart emphasized that Trump was slamming the door on Muslim Refugees:

The Christian share rose as Muslim refugee resettlement was cut by more than 92 percent compared to former President Obama's 2016 resettlement total. The Muslim share dropped from 50 percent to 15 percent.

Since the beginning of 2018, Trump's Department of State has admitted 2,341 Muslim refugees to the United States. In 2016, Obama admitted 30,201 Muslim refugees for settlement across the U.S.

Breitbart, of course, did not note that the *actual* number of Christian refugees resettled in the U.S. has *dropped* under Trump because the overall number plummeted so dramatically. As Mike Allen noted at Axios, "The Trump administration has vowed to protect persecuted Christians around the world" and "Vice President Mike Pence even pressured the U.S. Agency for International Development to specifically allocate millions of dollars for groups that help persecuted communities in Iraq":

But Christian refugees have faced increased rejection due to President Trump's lowering of the refugee cap.

The number of Christian refugees admitted to the U.S. dropped by more than 40% over the last year. One group of Iranian Christians who have been stranded in Austria have sued the administration as religious minorities.