

RT HON DAVID CAMERON MP
10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON
SW1A 2AA
10 SEPTEMBER 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

Like you, your Government, and the people of our nation we are deeply concerned for the refugee crisis that we have to face together. We are grateful to you and your ministers for the conversations they have already held with the Archbishop of Canterbury and others around these issues.

We pray for the millions of people fleeing war and violence in one of the largest refugee crises ever recorded, and we remember those who have tragically died seeking sanctuary on European shores: those like Alan Kurdi, the three year old boy who heartbreakingly died and was washed up on a beach in Turkey.

It is a command in Judaism, "to welcome and love the stranger as you would yourself because you were strangers in the land of Egypt". Followers of Islam are obliged to provide food, shelter and safety to the traveller. Christ himself and his family were refugees. We are reminded that in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral there is a 17th century notice which pays tribute to "the large and liberal spirit of the English church and the glorious asylum which England has in all times given to foreigners flying for refuge against oppression and tyranny."

Such traditions and prayers must be joined with action. A moral crisis of this magnitude calls each and all of us to play our parts.

We recognise and applaud the leadership you and your government are showing in this crisis, both as one of the world's top international donors and the recent announcement that the government will resettle 20,000 people over the next five years.

We stand ready to play our part as well. We will:

1. Encourage our church members to work alongside the wider community in offering welcome, orientation, integration, sign-posting and support to all refugees who come
2. Encourage, where possible and feasible, churches, congregations and individuals to make rental properties and spare housing available for use by resettled refugees
3. Promote and support foster caring among churches, congregations and individuals where appropriate to help find the homes needed to care for the increasing number of unaccompanied minors
4. Pray for, act with and stand alongside your government, to rise to the challenge that this crisis poses to our shared humanity

From what we see in congregations across the United Kingdom we are confident that the country stands ready and willing to support the government to be even more ambitious as it responds to this historic crisis.

We believe such is this country's great tradition of sanctuary and generosity of spirit that we could feasibly resettle at least 10,000 people a year for the next two years, **rising to a minimum of 50,000** in total over the five year period you foresaw in your announcement. Such a number would bring us into line with comparable commitments made by other countries. It would be a meaningful and substantial response to the scale of human suffering we see daily.

We believe that should a National Welcome and Resettlement Board be established in response to the crisis drawing together civic, corporate and government leadership to coordinate efforts and mobilise the nation as in times past, such an effort would not be beyond the British people. A senior Bishop would gladly serve on such a board on our behalf and at your pleasure.

This letter is written to you privately at present. The College of Bishops meets in Oxford next week and will spend some time on Thursday 17th considering our practical response. If you were able to respond to me ahead of that date it would help our discussions.

Faithfully,

+Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham
+Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely
+John Inge, Bishop of Worcester
+Graham James, Bishop of Norwich
+Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath & Wells
+Martin Seeley, Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
+Mike Hill, Bishop of Bristol
+Nick Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury
+Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds
+James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester
+Richard Frith, Bishop of Hereford
+Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth
+Tim Thornton, Bishop of Truro
+Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans
+David Walker, Bishop of Manchester
+Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester
+Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough
+James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle
+Stephen Cotterell, Bishop of Chelmsford
+Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn
+Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry
+Trevor Wilmott, Bishop of Dover
+Jonathan Gledhill, Bishop of Lichfield
+Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester
+Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool
+Stephen Croft, Bishop of Sheffield
+Alastair Redfern, Bishop of Derby
+Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford
+Christopher Lawson, Bishop of Lincoln
+Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester
+Rachel Trewick, Bishop of Gloucester
+Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark
+Tim Dakin, Bishop of Winchester
+Adrian Newman, Bishop of Stepney
+Peter Hill, Bishop of Barking
+Jonathan Clark, Bishop of Croydon
+David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham
+Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield
+Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden
+Ian Brackley, Bishop of Dorking
+John Wraw, Bishop of Bradwell
+Richard Blackburn, Bishop of Warrington
+Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford
+Chris Goldsmith, Bishop of St Germans
+Robert Freeman, Bishop of Penrith

+Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading
+Mark Sowerby, Bishop of Horsham
+Chris Edmondton, Bishop of Bolton
+Jonathan Frost, Bishop of Southampton
+Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham
+Ric Thorpe, Bishop of Islington
+Jonathan Baker, Bishop of Fulham
+Rod Thomas, Bishop of Maidstone
+David Courth, Bishop of Grimsby
+David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon
+Sarah Mulally, Bishop of Crediton
+Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham
+Paul Slater, Bishop of Richmond
+John Stroyan, Bishop of Warwick
+James Bell, Bishop of Ripon
+Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford
+Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead
+Paul Ferguson, Bishop of Whitby
+Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston
+Peter Burrows, Bishop of Doncaster
+Phillip North, Bishop of Burnley
+Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Woolwich
+Libby Lane, Bishop of Stockport
+Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon
+Frank White, Acting Bishop of Newcastle
+Graham Tomlin, Bishop of Kensington
+Roger Morris, Bishop of Colchester
+Jonathan Meyrick, Bishop of Lynn
+Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton
+Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford
+Alison White, Bishop of Hull
+Richard Jackson, Bishop of Lewes
+Geoff Pearson, Bishop of Lancaster
+John Holbrook, Acting Bishop of Leicester
+Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter
+Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet
+Alan Winton, Bishop of Thetford
+Graham Usher, Bishop of Dudley
+Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston
+Glyn Webster, Bishop of Beverly
Viv Faull, Dean of York
Annette Cooper, Archdeacon of Colchester
Christine Wilson, Archdeacon of Chesterfield
Joanne Grenfell, Archdeacon of Portsdown