

Minute on Central American Humanitarian Crisis - July 13, 2014 - #1/7/14

Inland Valley Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believes that the current crisis facing our southern borders, is a humanitarian issue, not an immigration issue. Central American children, arriving with their mothers or alone, are fleeing from violence and poverty so extreme that they are desperate to escape. They request asylum upon entering the United States. The numbers have reached more than 65,000 overwhelming the Border Patrol (BP) and Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as immigration workers. ICE has asked religious and nonprofit immigration groups for help.

Here in the Inland Empire, support for the Catholic diocese and immigration groups, such as Justice for Immigration Coalition, will go toward providing safe places for the mothers and children to stay, once they are released from ICE, until they can join their families already in the United State. Funds are also need to provide food, clothing, and transportation. Other needs include translation and local transportation services. We invite Friends in the wider Quaker fellowship to join in local groups helping in this crisis, educating others, and participating in letter writing campaigns for immigration reform.

We call on our government, with this minute, to declare these mothers and children refugees allowing for their access to resources and protection under the law. We pray that the executive and legislative branches of our government will finally work together towards a comprehensive immigration reform program that will adequately address the unique issues associated with these refugees response to the violence they experience at home, including, but not limited to, increasing the number of judges to handle the current crisis and to evaluate how our governmental policies affect the issues of violence and poverty in other countries.

We send this Minute to the wider Quaker Fellowship, and our government leaders.

Approved at Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business - July 13, 2014