

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
RESOLUTION

CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES

1990

Whereas we are a people commanded to welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and providing sanctuary for the oppressed, and

Whereas we a people who have experienced the consequences of restrictive emigration legislation that resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews, and

Whereas today hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees are homeless in the United States, are living in fear of deportation, are emotionally enslaved, and are economically disadvantaged because work authorizations are withheld from them during pendency of legal asylum proceedings, and

Whereas the United States continues, based on foreign policy considerations to arrest and deport refugees who have a well-founded fear of persecution, and

Whereas refugees who apply for asylum from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala have been denied due process and have been detained without having their cases heard by people qualified to determine their refugee status,

Whereas there is insufficient access to fair and responsible legal representation for those detained.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. The government of the United States fairly apply the Refugee Act of 1980, without regard to the political relationship between the country fled and the United States.
2. Legislation be passed which would temporarily suspend deportation of those fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala and other oppressive regimes until such a time as refugees can safely return to their countries of origin. We specifically endorse the passage of the Deconcini/Moakley refugee status bill now pending in the House of Representatives and the Senate (HR.45 & S.458).
3. We ask the United States government to immediately cease its practice of imprisoning those refugees who voluntarily apply for political asylum during the pendency of their proceedings.
4. We ask that due process be respected for all refugees applying for asylum, and that effective and informed legal counsel is provided to all refugees.
5. We call upon the government of the United States and its executive departments to desist the odious practice of the detention of minor children.
6. We call upon our members and their congregations to help provide adequate food, clothing and housing for refugee families living within their communities. We further urge all members to support legal and human rights advocacy for Central American refugees.