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'TRUMP WOULD DO WELL TO READ HIS BIBLE BEFORE ENACTING DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES', SAYS CHRISTIAN AID

A rejection of refugees, whatever their faith, is a rejection of Christian values, UK-based charity Christian Aid has warned.

Responding to President Trump's comments over the weekend, in which he asserted his intention to prioritise Syrian Christian refugees, Christian Aid has spoken out against favouring specific religious minorities, saying that to do so ignores the central message of the Gospel.

Tom Viita, Head of Advocacy at Christian Aid, commented: 'At the heart of the Christian faith is a clear command to 'love the stranger' and to stand with the vulnerable, whoever they may be. To follow Christian teaching means to welcome people in need - whatever their faith - not prioritise people who happen to share one's own beliefs.'

'A rejection of refugees, whatever their faith, is a rejection of Christian values. Trump would do well to read his bible before enacting discriminatory policies.'

Responding to President Trump's executive order to halt all refugee admissions and bar people temporarily from seven Muslim-majority countries, Viita continued:

'Six decades ago we came together to establish international laws to avoid repeating the horrors experienced by millions of people during the first two world wars. President Trump is now effectively ripping up the principle that every person, irrespective of their faith or nationality, has the right to seek protection and sanctuary.'

'World leaders and ordinary people need to take a stand against Trump's attempts to destroy hard won freedoms and human rights.'

'President Trump is not alone in his abhorrent attitude towards refugees. We are seeing the normalisation of an increasingly hostile rhetoric towards people whose suffering is, frankly, beyond what most of us can imagine.

'More than eleven million people from Syria alone have been displaced from their homes, owing to the bloodshed of the six-year civil war in the country. The reality is that most Syrian refugees are hosted in, and by, developing countries. Rich nations, including the UK and the US, must not turn a blind eye to people in desperate need. Resettlement of refugees is part of the path to peace.'

Christian Aid works through its local partners around the world to support refugee communities displaced by conflict. In the UK and Europe, we advocate for long-term practical solutions to global displacement, including the resettlement and relocation of refugees, as well as greater investment in addressing the root causes of displacement worldwide.

Notes to Editors:

1. Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in around 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is great need, regardless of religion, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the root causes of poverty as well as its effects.

2. Christian Aid's core belief is that the world can and must be changed so that poverty is ended: this is what we stand for. Everything we do is about ending poverty and injustice: swiftly, effectively, sustainably. Our strategy document Partnership for Change www.christianaid.org.uk/images/partnership-for-change-summary.pdf explains how we set about this task.

3. Christian Aid is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development. Further details at <http://actalliance.org>

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