FXB's Commitment to Global Health and Human Rights

The FXB Center for Health and Human Rights fully endorses the responses (see excerpts and links below) of Harvard President Drew Faust and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Dean Michelle Williams to the policy changes embodied in the January 27 executive order restricting travel, immigration, and refugee entry to the United States.

Across many borders, FXB is committed to long-term engagement with diverse scholars, students, policy makers, and civil society as we all work for a world which fulfills the health and human rights of all children and protects them from injustices imposed by poverty, discrimination, disaster, and conflict. This newsletter provides a few examples.

"We Look Toward Our Deepest Values and Ideals"

President Drew Faust's message to the community on January 29 referred to Harvard's global nature as one of its strengths, "drawing people together from across the nation and around the world." She also sought to reassure Muslims in the Harvard community, saying "We must not and will not conflate people of a venerable faith with people predisposed to acts of terrorism and violence," and announced Harvard's first Muslim chaplain. She further pointed out that almost "half of the deans of Harvard's schools are immigrants-from India, China, Northern Ireland, Jamaica, and Iran."

Read the full statement.

"International Students and
Immigrants Form A Vital Part of Our Community"

Dean Michelle Williams of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health pledged "unwavering support for the many international students and immigrants who form such a vital part of our community," as well as the school's "commitment to serving refugee populations in Syria and elsewhere." She asked the school to "continue to champion public health and higher education as vital means of engaging with the world and having a positive impact on populations globally--especially those who have been driven from their homes by war, natural disaster, and religious persecution."

Read the full statement.

On February 3, Dean Williams convened a Town Hall meeting to discuss the likely effect of the new administration on public health policies. She urged responsibility in discourse, "I encourage you to ground your actions not just in your moral convictions, but also in your knowledge as scientists. Fight misinformation and injustice with well-reasoned arguments and hard evidence." FXB director Jennifer Leaning also spoke, counseling students, "Discern moral turning points and practice how you will face them."

Read the article.

"What Is Best About Ourselves: We Welcome Others and Grow Together"

FXB’s director Jennifer Leaning and director of research Jacqueline Bhabha have recently been speaking recently about the executive order and its impact through a variety of media, including a podcast and Facebook sessions. In the podcast, they explored how the order harms the international image of the United States, violates its core values (and treaty obligations), and creates severe hardship. Dr. Leaning characterized the order as a denial of what is best about the United States, that "we welcome others and grow together." Go to the podcast or the blog post summary.

The February 6 FacebookLive Chat has received more than 19,000 views as of February 11. In it, Dr. Leaning and Professor Bhabha discussed how the order casts a pall of fear, how refugees pose little threat in the United States, and how the order worsens the plight of Syrian refugees. Go to the Facebook video or the blog post summary.

In addition, FXB has actively been tweeting relevant information, along with our colleagues at Harvard Chan. This graphic, along with the following quote from Jennifer Leaning from a fall 2016 article on migration in Harvard Public Health, gained more than 120,000 impressions and 400 retweets in twenty-four hours, making it Harvard Chan's most popular tweet ever:

"We have prospered because of our history of immigration and our current experience with migrants." Read the article.

No Correlation Between Refugees and Terrorists
In a February 3 FacebookLive event at the Kennedy School, Professor Jacqueline Bhabha offered background on the executive order, the international refugee situation, and the problems with the idea of a "safe zone" for Syrian refugees.

Watch the webcast. Read the blog post summary.

Recent Related FXB Work

- For more information on migration and children, see our Children on the Move page and report
- February 9, Why the Australia-US Deal?
  Unwanted, Stranded Refugees
- February 6, In the News: FXB and the US Immigration Executive Order
- January 29, A Chilling Environment: Icy Conditions Threaten Migrants' Health
- January 23, Who Will Act on Behalf of the Rohingya People of Myanmar?
- January 12, "Building Bridges" Seminar: An Interdisciplinary Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis
- December 20, Health in Conflict: New Lancet-AUB Commission on Syria
- December 17, A Harsh New Reality: Transactional Sex Among Refugee Minors

Upcoming FXB Events

- February 16, Building a Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Displaced Syrian Youths’ Education and Migration Aspirations and Their Sources of Support, Vidur Chopra, PhD Candidate, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Rights, Refugees, and Executive Disorder: A Legal Perspective with Kathleen Hamill, JD, MALD, Human Rights Lawyer, FXB Fellow. RSVP required.
- March 2, Protection for Syrian Refugees: Laws, Policies and Global Responsibility Sharing, Susan Akram, Clinical Professor of Law and Director, International Human Rights Clinic, Boston University School of Law and BU Law Students, RSVP required.
- March 23, Building Environmentally Sound, Culturally Compatible Schools for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon, Richard Mollica, MD MAR, Director, Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma at Harvard Medical School. RSVP required.
- Save April 10 for "Culture Beyond Borders: The Roma Contribution," a FXB academic symposium with related cultural events, centered around International Roma Day. The conference will document, contextualize, and celebrate Roma creative and artistic
achievement.

Note that speakers, titles, places, and dates may change, so always check our event page for the current information. Go to Upcoming Events.

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