October 25, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

As 322 religious leaders and 100 national, state, and local faith-based organizations across traditions, we write to express our deep concern over the announcement that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is expanding the use of “Title 42” to expel Venezuelans seeking refuge at the U.S.-Mexico border (with an exception for approx. 24,000 Venezuelans who already have a sponsor in the United States). Though the Biden administration had already promised to end the policy, we urge you to immediately reverse this Title 42 expansion and invest in expanding our nation’s capacity to welcome asylum seekers. This harmful Title 42 policy undermines international and U.S. law by blocking asylum access and sending people directly into harmful and dangerous conditions.

Across faith traditions and practices, the message is clear: We are called by our sacred texts and faith principles to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. Venezuelans are facing an acute humanitarian crisis with 7.1 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide. The Venezuelan government is responsible for extrajudicial executions, persecution of political opponents, disappearances, tortured detainees, and many more violent crimes—and COVID-19 restrictions intensified this severe political, economic, and social turmoil. We are encouraged by the administration’s steps to establish temporary protections for Venezuelans with U.S. ties—and we recognize the Venezuelan parole program will positively impact a comparatively low number of at-risk Venezuelans in need of (permanent) protection. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home. It is our nation’s responsibility to uphold our moral and legal obligations to those seeking asylum and offer equitable opportunities for protection to Venezuelans escaping desperation and a repressive government.

Title 42 expulsions violate U.S. and international law, have no basis as a public health measure, have fueled a humanitarian crisis, and return people seeking asylum to grave human rights abuses. Since President Biden took office, there have been at least 10,318 reports of violent attacks—including rape, kidnapping, and assault—against people blocked from requesting protection at the U.S.-Mexico border and/or expelled to Mexico under Title 42, as tracked by Human Rights First. It has been used disparately to expel Black migrants, particularly Haitians, back to a country ill-equipped to support their safe return and reintegration. There are also severe physical and mental health consequences for asylum seekers expelled under the policy, particularly for children, families, and minorities. Additionally, Title 42 has increased the likelihood of repeat crossings.

As people of faith, we are ready and eager to welcome all people with dignity and urge you to take every step possible to restore and rebuild an equitable, humane, and anti-racist asylum system. Rather than basing asylum eligibility on nationality, we call on the administration to immediately reverse this Title 42 expansion and embrace the legal right to seek protection from persecution for all. Instead of entrenching immoral and unlawful anti-asylum policies, the administration should fully restore asylum protections, invest in community-based case management for asylum seekers, and scale up access to the life-saving U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Notwithstanding their U.S.-based supporters, Venezuelans with U.S. ties arriving through the new parole program should also have access to community-based and integration services.

Our faith traditions call us to welcome vulnerable people with warmth and open arms, and we call on the Biden administration to facilitate the humane and safe reception of people seeking refuge in the United States in compliance with U.S. law and international treaty obligations. Our places of worship and faith communities stand ready to welcome all in need of refuge.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.
Sincerely,

**Faith Organizations**
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Beacon Presbyterian Fellowship
Beth Shalom Pittsburgh
Bridges Faith Initiative
Broadway United Methodist Church
Catholic Legal Immigration Network
Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church Women United in New York State
Church World Service
California Council of Churches
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Clerics of St. Viator
Comunidades Sin Fronteras CSF-CT INC
Congregation of Saint Joseph
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids (MI)
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dorothy Day House of Youngstown Ohio
Epiphany United Church of Christ
Eden United Church of Christ
F-R Church of Christ/ North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson
First Congregational UCC Elyria
First Parish UU Concord - Immigration Justice Task Force
First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
Faith Commons
Faithful America
Fellowship Southwest
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Florida Justice For Our Neighbors
Franciscan Network for Migrants--US Team
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Peace Center, Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Hindus for Human Rights
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Hope Border Institute
Humboldt Park UMC
Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
Jemez Peacemakers
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice
Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.
Justice For Our Neighbors North Central Texas
Justice for Our Neighbors El Paso
Kino Border Initiative
Lawrence Interfaith Refugee and Immigrant Ministry
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church Chicago
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area
Medical Mission Sisters, Justice Office
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Justice For Our Neighbors
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Sanctuary Movement
One to One Learning
Parity
Plymouth Congregational UCC, Colorado
Plymouth UCC, Wisconsin
Portland First Congregational Church, UCC
Presbyterian Church USA
Pax Christi Florida
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Quixote Center
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Francis
St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology
Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods IN
St. Anthony Social Justice Ministry
Strangers No Longer
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society
The Episcopal Church
The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ
Tzedek Chicago
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Wellington United Church of Christ
Wellspring United Church of Christ
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

**Faith Leaders**

**National**
Rev. Joshua Baird, United Church of Christ
Rev. Marilyn Chilcote, St. John’s Presbyterian Church of Berkeley
Sister Eileen Gannon, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Brother Michael Gosch, Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Rev. Ruben Ortiz
Rabbi Joshua Lesser, Bridges Faith Initiative
Sister Dominica Lo Bianco Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Reverend Robert McKenzie, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley
Ms. Kascha Sanor, Congregation of St. Joseph
Mr. Johnny Sears, The Academy for Spiritual Formation
Cantor/Chaplain Michael Zoosman, "L'chaim! Jews Against the Death Penalty"
Executive Director Pablo DeJesus, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
The Rev. Nathan Empsall, Faithful America
Deacon Carlos Reyes Rodriguez
Rev. Marilyn Chilcote, St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley
Rev. Michael Neuroth, United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries

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Elder Lori Bryant, First Christian Church, Tucson
Reverend Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Brother Ignatius Harding of Brother Ignatius, Order of Minor Brothers (Franciscans)
Sister Tracey Horan Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
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Elder Salena Petersen-Keesecker, Guadalupe Presbyterian Church
Rev. Randy Mayer, The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ

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Rev. Dr. Clint Schnekloth, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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Ms. Cathy Chambers, First Congregational Church of Long Beach, UCC
Reverend Carla Dietz, First Congregational Church of San Jose
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Rev. Elizabeth Gibbs Zehnder, Presbyterian Church
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Vice Moderator, Parkside Community Church
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Sister Corbin Hannah, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Sister Claire Hanson, Sisters of Providence
Sister Mary Lois Hennel, Sisters Pt Evidence
Matilda Holloran Matildal Holloran, Sisters of Providence
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Rabbi Mara Young, Woodlands Community Temple
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Associate Kevin Weber, Humility of Mary Sisters
Sister Carla Rutter, Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sr. Helen Novy, Humility of Mary
Loretta Rafter, Sisters of Humility of Mary
Sister Kathy McIntyre, Sisters of Mary
Sister Laurel Smith, Sisters of the humility of Mary
Sr. Zoe Reiter, HM Sisters
Dan Eicher, Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown
Minister Christine Silvestri Dorothy, Day House of Hospitality
Sister Anne Victory, Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sr. Toby Lardie, Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sister Eilis McCulloh, Sisters of the Humility of Mary
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Rev. Adam Hange, First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Ann Muir Ann Muir, United Church of Christ
Dr. John Munson, Multnomah Friends Meeting
Mike Nichols, UCC Hillsboro
Nancy Nichols, United Church of Christ, Hillsboro, Oregon
Ms. Ruth Reeder, First Congregational Church of Hillsboro OR
Dr. Patricia Rumer, Ainsworth UCC
Rev. Caroline Zaworski, First Congregational United Church of Christ
Rev. Linda-Jaramillo Ainsworth, United Church Of Christ
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Sister Cecelia J Cavanaugh SSJ, Sisters of Saint Joseph
Sister Colleen Dauerbach, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill
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Bonnie Rhoads, Church of the Brethren
Mr. George J Schofield III, St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Rev. Ruth Sheets, UCC
The Rev. Roy Stetler, Quickel Ev. Lutheran Church
Sister Maryann Golonka, Sisters of the Humility of Mary

Texas
Sister Sharon Altendorf, Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM US Unit
Rev. Laurie Anderson Midway Hills Christian Church
Reverend James L. Caldwell, Coalition of Community Organizations
Sister Odile Coirier, Franciscans Missionary of Mary
Rev. Gabriella Conklin, First Lutheran Church
Deacon Lisa Diana, Christ Lutheran Church
Reverend Wade Edwards Sr, Fatherhood Mentoring Foundation
Rev. Julie Girards Wilshire Baptist Church
Dr. Francis Hymel, New Hope Counseling
Rev. Dr. Edward Kern, Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA)
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Rev. Fr. Alvin McMenamy, Society of Mary
Mrs. Judith Garrett, Misfits Bible Study
Ms. Karen Morrow, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Rev. Lee Ann Rathbun, First Baptist Church
Pastor Jorge Zapata, Hearts 4Kids Inc.
Reverend Heather Mustain, Wilshire Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. W. Dennis Tucker, George W. Truett Theological Seminary
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AJ Bush, First United Methodist Church

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David Hamilton, St. Andrews Church

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Elder Vickie Carothers, Trinity Presbyterian Church
Lay Minister Sally Diaz-Wells, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Rev. Dr. Jerrold Foltz, Wellspring United Church of Christ
Rev. Steve Jones, Shalom Mennonite Congregation
Sister Adarsh Khalsa, Raj Khalsa Gurdwara
Jessica Sapailo, Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists
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Margaret Snell, Bellevue, First Congregational Church
Rev. Cara Tanis Emmaus Table, ELCA
Rev. Wendy Taylor, United Church of Christ Olympia
Rev. Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans

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Mr. Anthony Khair, Mennonite Central Committee
Sister Louise Lears, Franciscan Action Network
Mr. Jason Miller Parishioner, St. Martin's Parish

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