



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

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For Immediate Release

February 15, 2019

Contact: Susan Gunn, Interim Director
(202) 832-1780, Email: sgunn@maryknoll.org

No to State of Emergency on the Border, Yes to Human Rights

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, President Trump declared a national state of emergency. Yesterday, Congress passed a funding bill that includes an increase in immigrant detention and \$1.375 billion for wall construction. The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) condemned both the emergency declaration and the legislation.

“The Omnibus Appropriations Bill passed by Congress increases both deadly immigrant detention and the militarization of border communities,” said Susan Gunn, Interim Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. “While the deal includes a cap on detention space, it is ultimately meaningless since, at the same time, the bill gives Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) the freedom to divert funds from elsewhere to exceed that cap. The fact that the President is also declaring the U.S.-Mexico border a ‘national emergency’ in order to circumvent congressional oversight and divert federal funds toward his border wall is unjust and unconstitutional.”

“What is the just and humane way to secure our borders and treat those fleeing persecution? It is not with more immigrant detention and a border wall,” Gunn said.

MOGC has long called for the end of immigrant detention and the demilitarization of border communities. When immigration detention rates skyrocketed in 2016 under the Obama administration, MOGC [advocated](#) to Congress to eliminate the detention bed quota for immigrants and implement alternatives to immigrant detention. “Detaining men, women, and children who are fleeing persecution and violence demeans the God-given human dignity of these vulnerable people,” MOGC wrote to Congress. “Alternatives to detention such as community-based models and case management are effective at ensuring people comply with immigration court proceedings, are more affordable, and fundamentally fair.” And when, in 2017, Congress considered increasing funding for a border wall and further militarized infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border, MOGC and 38 interfaith organizations with experience on the border [issued a joint statement](#) urging Congress to reject such funding because border walls hurt communities, increase risk of floods, infringe on the rights of indigenous border communities, and ultimately do not deter migration. “As communities of faith, we believe that government spending should reflect our values,” our statement reads. “Funding for further border militarization falls far short of these values.”

“We call on President Trump to reverse this declaration and instead implement policies that protect human rights,” said Gunn. “And we call on Congress to take real action to address our broken immigration system and care for vulnerable people asking our nation for refuge.”

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missionaries, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missionaries serve.

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Maryknoll Sisters • Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers • Maryknoll Lay Missioners

200 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202)832-1780 phone
(202)832-5195 fax
ogc@maryknoll.org

P.O. Box 311
Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545
(914)941-7575 phone
(914)923-0733 fax

777 First Avenue, 10th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10115
(212)973-9551 phone