

TESTIGOS CRISTIANOS DE JEHOVÁ

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SE:SC March 22, 2019

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

Re: Support for refugees

Dear Brothers:

Due to the ban of our work in Russia, many brothers and sisters have fled the country in order to find a safe place for them and their families, including young children. In other parts of the world, brothers are also leaving home due to conflicts and insecurity. Many congregations have received some of them, coming mostly from Russia and Venezuela.

In most cases, there are official institutions ready to support these refugees. However, we know that congregations have received these brothers and sisters with “extraordinary kindness”, and they should be commended by this. (Acts 28:1, 2) It is also very encouraging to know of their efforts to help these brothers to attend meetings and carry on with their spiritual routine. In the case of Russian brothers, the language has been a minor issue, which has been dealt with love and faith. We are very proud for that and for being part of this unique worldwide brotherhood!

For this reason, we would like to express our sincere commendation and gratitude for your interest in the welfare of these brothers. Jesus said that his true disciples would be identified by love. How true those words are! (John 13:35) The apostle Paul encouraged Christians to follow “the course of hospitality.” (Romans 12:13) It is strengthening to see those qualities in action, as it happened in the first century. And it is also encouraging and upbuilding to see the grateful attitude of the brothers who have come from abroad.

We long for the time when the problems of this present system of things will be things of the past. (Revelation 21:4) Meanwhile, we will continue giving help and support to brothers and sisters who must seek for refuge and security in other countries. We beg that Jehovah will continue to care for these brothers, as well as for those who remain back home, with all the challenges they face there. May Jehovah keep blessing the spirit of unity and love you are showing. (Philippians 4:23)

Please receive our Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Testigos Cristianos de Jehová

Note: This letter should be read at the next midweek meeting. The note at the back is only for the body of elders.

PS to the body of elders:

Thank you very much for the support you are giving to the brothers coming from abroad. *The Watchtower*, May 2017, page 3 and October 2016, page 8, includes practical suggestions that you can apply in these cases. If you receive a high number of brothers and you cannot handle the situation locally, please call the circuit overseer and send us a report. The branch would send specific instructions in order to guide the congregations, if needed.

On the other hand, you should reasonably confirm that you receive the S-21 cards and letters of introduction from the congregations, as it is indicated in the *Organized* book, chapter 8 and paragraph 30. Nevertheless, that correspondence could be delayed for different reasons. If that's the case, despite the language issue, by means of a brief and simple conversation with the brothers, you could obtain the name of their former congregation and other practical information. Even if this is not possible, you can still go on and show kindness and hospitality toward those who are our brothers. (Hebrews 13:1, 2) It would also be good to inform the Russian brothers the dates and locations of the circuit assemblies in their language. They will appreciate your assistance and support to attend these.

Finally, many brothers are coming with a good recommendation to continue serving as ministerial servants or elders. The fact that they do not speak Spanish would not be an obstacle to keep their appointment and serve as such, if they meet the legal requirements. In fact, they will be very useful in helping other Russian brothers and sisters, who have moved to local congregations, "on one-on-one basis". (*od* chapter 5, par. 16) As they progress in their knowledge of the Spanish language, they will have a more significant participation at meetings and congregation-related tasks. Thank you very much for your kind collaboration and assistance in this matter.