



DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DE L'ADMINISTRATION
ET DE LA MODERNISATION

DIRECTION DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES

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ANGLAIS

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d'un texte rédigé en anglais*

Texte au verso

Trump Wants to Make it Hard to Get Asylum. Other Countries Feel the Same.

By Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, The New York Times Nov. 2, 2018

LONDON — President Trump's promise to stop a caravan of Central American migrants from reaching the United States border, might seem like just another effort by the president to unilaterally dismantle international laws and accepted practices.

But there is one important difference between this and Mr. Trump's defiance of climate change agreements, trade deals or arms control treaties. In attacking the long accepted means of protecting refugees, he's got company.

There is no shortage of countries that also undermine global refugee rules. The European Union and Australia are two of the biggest offenders. Peru and Ecuador are restricting Venezuelan refugees, while Tanzania is working to push out Burundians. In 2015, as Rohingya refugees fled Myanmar on overcrowded boats, the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand pushed the boats out to sea.

Still, countries tend to hide their violations by presenting themselves as following the letter of the law. But Mr. Trump is selling his harsh treatment of asylum-seekers as deliberate. And even if he is not the first to breach the rules, he is contributing to their breakdown in ways that could have global consequences.

To consider how that would happen and what it would mean, it helps to understand the basics of asylum. The basic principle is straightforward: If you make it to the border of a foreign country, you have a right to request asylum.

That country is obligated to hear and evaluate your claim. It cannot kick you out while it's processing you or if you face a credible threat of persecution at home. If the country finds you meet the definition of a refugee, it is obligated to shelter you. If you don't, only then can it expel you.

Refugees' rights came out of World War II, which created huge numbers of refugees in Europe. These rights became enshrined in international law through global agreements signed in 1951 and again in 1967. Not all countries signed these pacts. But they are considered to be so widely agreed upon that they constrain everyone.

Still, what makes asylum one of the world's strongest norms is that it is written into the domestic laws of many countries, including the United States. This means that a leader like Mr. Trump cannot simply defy his obligations by ignoring global agreements for that would mean breaking American law.

But on the world stage there is no enforcement mechanism. There is nothing to stop a country from repealing its asylum laws or ignoring them.