

Syrian Refugee Fact Sheet

FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS WORLDWIDE: 59.5 million ([UNHCR](#))

[What is a “forcibly displaced person?”](#)

REFUGEES WORLDWIDE: 19.5 million ([UNHCR](#))

[How does the UN define “refugee”?](#)

TOTAL SYRIAN POPULATION: 17.1 million ([PRB](#))

INTERNALLY DISPLACED SYRIANS: 7.6 million ([UNOCHA](#))

REGISTERED SYRIAN REFUGEES: 4.3 million ([UNHCR](#))

- Refugees from Syria comprise almost a quarter (22%) of total refugees worldwide.
- Over four million Syrians have been classified as refugees by the United Nations. Most of these refugees are in temporary camps in neighboring countries.

Turkey	2,181,293
Lebanon	1,075,637
Jordan	633,644
Iraq	244,765
Egypt	127,681

- **The Gulf States: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates have taken in no Syrian refugees.**

PERMANENTLY RESETTLED REFUGEES: Most refugees are seeking temporary asylum in a country not their own while they await conditions in their own country to improve so that they can return home. Permanent resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to a third country where they will be granted permanent legal residence. Only about one percent of refugees are permanently resettled ([UNHCR](#)).

The United Nations views permanent resettlement as the last resort of refugee policy, instead recommending that refugees return to their home country when conditions allow. The United Nations recognizes no right to resettlement. It is up to individual countries to decide their own refugee policies. ([UNHCR](#))

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS TO THE UNITED STATES: A refugee is admitted into the United States *from abroad* under that designation because that individual has demonstrated to the U.S. government he or she was persecuted or feared persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, and does not pose a threat to the American people. A refugee may bring into the United States a spouse and any unmarried children under the age of 21.

[How does the U.S. designate refugee status in law?](#)

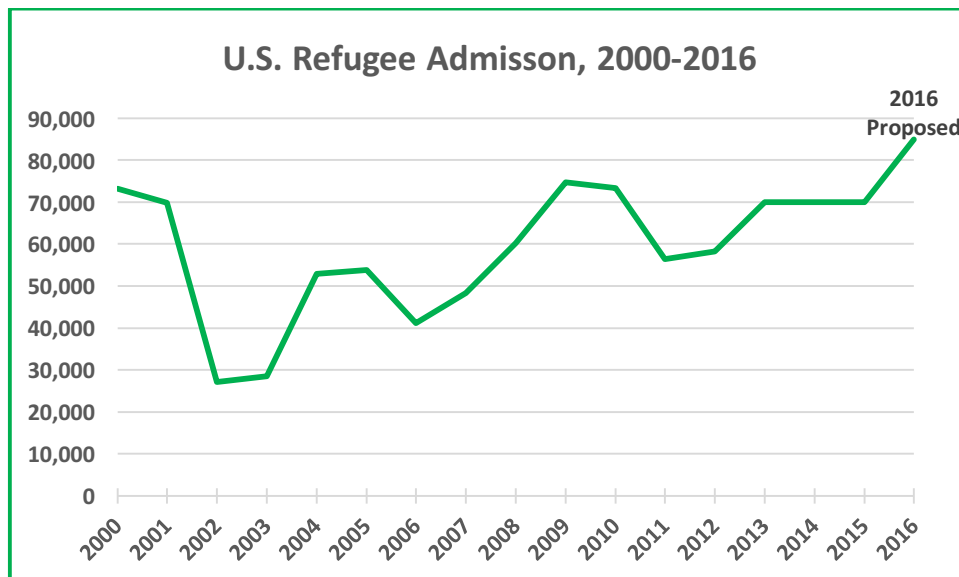
The President, in consultation with Congress, which budgets for the refugee program, sets a yearly numerical limit on refugee admissions. From 2004 to 2014 (fiscal years), the ceiling has

remained between 70,000 and 80,000 a year ([CRS](#)). The proposed ceiling for 2016 is 85,000 with 10,000 of those spots allocated for Syrian nationals ([Dept. of State](#)).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFUGEE AND AN ASYLUM SEEKER: Asylum is a legal status granted by the U.S. government that extends protection to individuals *already in the United States* who meet the criterion of a refugee. Anyone, regardless of their immigration status, may apply for asylum once in the United States, though according to law, an individual must apply for asylum within a year of arriving in the United States, and the Attorney General shall not grant asylum to individuals, excepting Cuban nationals, who entered a “safe third country” on way to the United States. An asylum seeker may also bring in a spouse and any unmarried children under the age of 21.

PERMANENTLY RESETTLED REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES: The United States takes in, by far, the most permanently resettled refugees. Since 2009, the United States has taken in 70 percent of all refugees who have been settled worldwide ([CIS](#)). As of November 2015, the U.S. has taken in 2,147 Syrian refugees for permanent resettlement, according to a State Department spokesperson ([USA Today](#)). The President has submitted a plan to Congress to take 10,000 Syrian refugees in 2016. Fourteen Members of Congress, led by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) sent a letter to President Obama urging him to ask for 65,000 Syrian refugees to be admitted in 2016. Since 1975, a total 3.3 million refugees have been permanently resettled in the United States ([RPC](#)).

- **Very few countries in the world have agreed to take in any Syrian refugees. The United States and countries of Western Europe, along with Australia and Canada receive 98 percent of all permanently resettled refugees ([UNHCR](#)).**
- **The United States has an “open-ended resettlement” commitment with the United Nations, meaning it has placed no limits on how many refugees it may accept in the future. ([UNHCR](#))**



THE ROLE OF “VOLAGS”: Voluntary Agencies, most often referred to as volags, are nine privately run organizations that receive funding from the federal government for the purpose of permanently resettling refugees in the United States ([HHS](#)). These organizations receive hundreds of millions in taxpayer money every year and are run by well-compensated executives ([CIS](#), [RRW](#)). At the same time that they receive money from the federal government, they lobby for increase in the flow of refugees to the United States, which would also increase their funding ([USCCB](#)).

[According to the UN](#), there are several types of “forcibly displaced persons.”

1. **Refugee:** someone who fled his or her home and country owing to “a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”, according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention.
2. **Asylum Seekers:** asylum seekers say they are refugees and have fled their homes as refugees do, but their claim to refugee status is not yet definitively evaluated in the country to which they fled.
3. **Internally Displaced Persons:** people who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home within their own country.
4. **Stateless persons:** stateless persons do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country.
5. **Returnees:** former refugees who return to their own countries or regions of origin after time in exile. Returnees need continuous support and reintegration assistance to ensure that they can rebuild their lives at home.

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UN refugee definition:

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[101\(a\)\(42\) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](#) (INA).

The term “refugee” means...any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or...in such circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation ...may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. [\(back to top\)](#)