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Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017: Report to the Congress

Summary prepared by the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center

The **Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017: Report to the Congress** was prepared by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to meet the requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Report provides information on the nature of the refugee situation, and analysis of the conditions within the countries from which refugees came as well as the number and allocation of refugees to be admitted to the U.S., and plans and estimated costs for their movement and resettlement. Additional information regarding the state of refugees and their third-country resettlement for other countries is also described in detail. This brief summary of the Report to Congress focuses on refugee admissions and was prepared by the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center (RHTAC), with some text taken directly from the report. The full report can be found at <http://refugeehealthta.org/2012/10/09/proposed-refugee...-to-the-congress/>.

Report Highlights

The 2017 Report to Congress highlights the continued growth of the U.S. Refugee Admission Program (USRAP). The U.S. ceiling for refugee admissions has increased significantly over a two-year period (57%) with a ceiling of 70,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 85,000 in FY 2016, and 110,000 in FY 2017.

In FY 2015, 69,933 refugees were admitted to the U.S. with large numbers from Burma (18,386), Iraq (12,676), Somalia (8,858), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (7,876), and Bhutan (5,775). In FY 2016, the Administration plans to reach the ceiling of 85,000 refugee arrivals and meet or exceed the goal of admitting 10,000 Syrian refugees. More refugees are likely to be resettled to the U.S. from the Near East/South Asia region in FY 2016 than any year on record, as well as more refugees from Africa than in the past two decades. Also, in FY 2016, the Administration announced an expansion of the program to protect vulnerable children and others in Central America.

For the upcoming FY 2017, the total number of proposed refugee admissions is 110,000, as previously noted. The Administration aims to admit a significantly higher number of Syrian refugees in FY 2017. To support the increased refugee admission ceilings in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, the Refugee Affairs Division has been authorized to nearly double its staff (from 158 to 292 employees).

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U.S. Refugee Admission Program for FY 2017

Admissions, proposed and actual, are summarized in Table 1 (See page 5 of the full Report for details.)

Table 1: Refugee Admissions in FY 2015 and FY 2016*
Proposed Refugee Admissions by Region for FY 2017

Region	FY 2015 Actual Arrivals	FY 2016 Ceiling	FY 2016 Actual Arrivals**	Proposed FY 2017 Ceiling
Africa	22,472	25,000	31,183	35,000
East Asia	18,469	13,000	12,383	12,000
Europe & Central Asia	2,363	4,000	3,882	4,000
Latin America/Caribbean	2,050	3,000	1,336	5,000
Near East/South Asia	24,579	34,000	34,877	40,000
Regional Subtotal	69,933	79,000	83,661	96,000
Unallocated Reserve		6,000		14,000
Total	69,933	85,000	83,661	110,000

*FY2016 actual admissions data represent the time period from 10/1/15 to 9/23/16 from www.wrapsnet.org; accessed September 26, 2016.

**Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients who have elected and received U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Reception and Placement (R&P) benefits are not included in these totals.

There are three priorities or categories of cases that have access to the USRAP (see pages 6-14 of the full report):

- Priority 1 (P-1): Individual cases referred to USRAP by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
- Priority 2 (P-2): Groups of cases designated as having access to USRAP by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement;
 - Current in-country processing for P-2 is in place for the following groups: 1) Eurasia and Baltic Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious adherents with close family in the U.S.; 2) Cubans; 3) Iraqis associated with the U.S.; and 4) persons in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
 - Current outside the country of origin process is available for the following groups: 1) ethnic minorities and others from Burma in camps in Thailand and in Malaysia; 2) Bhutanese in Nepal; 3) Congolese in Rwanda and Tanzania; 4) Iranian religious minorities; 5) Iraqis associated with the U.S.; and 6) Syrian beneficiaries of approved I-130 petitions.
- Priority 3 (P-3): Individual cases from designated nationalities granted access to USRAP for purposes of reunification with family members already in the U.S.
 - Spouses, unmarried children under 21, and/or parents of U.S.-based anchors are qualified for P-3 access. P-3 processing is available to individuals of these nationalities: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DRC, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Uzbekistan.

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Regional Programs in FY 2017

Africa

(See pages 25-32 of the full report for details.)

Table 2: Proposed FY 2017 Africa program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	20,000
Priority 2 Groups	14,500
Priority 3 Family Reunification	500
Total Proposed Ceiling	35,000

There are approximately 5 million refugees across Africa, which is approximately 25 percent of the total global refugee population. The numbers of refugees in Africa increased by nearly half a million in 2015 due to new or intensified conflicts, primarily in Burundi, Nigeria, and South Sudan. Africa's refugee numbers have also been augmented by conflicts outside of the continent, primarily in the Near East region, with North Africa being the most affected.

In FY 2016, the U.S. projects to reach 27,500 African refugee arrivals. Refugees from Somalia and the DRC still account for the vast majority of U.S. arrivals from Africa, followed by Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia. For the first time, the number of Congolese resettled in the U.S. (more than 14,000) will surpass the number of Somalis. Nearly 7,000 refugees will be admitted from the U.S.'s two largest processing locations in Kenya and Ethiopia, the majority of whom are from Somalia or Eritrea.

Table 3: Proposed Resettlement from Africa by Region, FY 2017

Region	Proposed Number	Target Populations
Great Lakes Region	15,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congolese refugees in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and possibly Burundi (depending on in-country situation)
East Africa	9,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primarily Somali and Eritrean refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia• Eritrean unaccompanied refugee minors in northern Ethiopia
Southern Africa	3,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Somalis in South Africa• Congolese in Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
Chad and West Africa	1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudanese Darfuris in eastern Chad• Central African Republic refugees in southern Chad
Outside of sub-Saharan Africa	2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudanese, Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean and other sub-Saharan African refugees in Egypt and Malta, and through the Emergency Transit Centers in Slovakia and Romania
TOTAL	35,000	

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East Asia

(See pages 32-36 of the full report for details.)

Table 4: Proposed FY 2017 East Asia program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	1,800
Priority 2 Groups	10,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification	200
Total Proposed Ceiling	12,000

In East Asia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Malaysia continue to host large numbers of Burmese refugees and asylum-seekers. Thousands more are in the capital cities of Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and New Delhi, including Burmese, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, West Africans, Syrians, Palestinians, among others. Across the archipelago of Indonesia, there are nearly 13,800 persons of concern, according to the UNHCR, and some 6,400 refugees—an increase from previous years.

In FY 2016, the U.S. expects to admit close to 14,000 refugees from East Asia, which includes nearly 4,600 members of Burmese ethnic minorities (mostly Karen, Karenni, and Kachin) living in camps along the Thai-Burma border, over 7,900 Burmese (of various ethnic minorities) in Malaysia, and a smaller number of refugees of various nationalities residing in urban areas across the region.

In FY 2017, the proposed 12,000 refugee admissions from East Asia include the following: up to 3,500 members of Burmese ethnic minorities (mostly Karen and Karenni) living in camps along the Thai-Burma border; some 5,500 Burmese (of various ethnic minorities) in Malaysia; as well as urban refugees of various nationalities in the region.

Europe and Central Asia

(See pages 37-44 of the full report for details.)

Table 5: Proposed FY 2017 Europe and Central Asia program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	90
Priority 2 Groups	3,900
Priority 3 Family Reunification	10
Total Proposed Ceiling	4,000

In 2015, Europe experienced a sharp increase in asylum seekers. This significant increase in the number of people risking their lives at sea in search of safety in Europe is the largest mass migration since the Second World War. By the end of 2015, there were over one million arrivals in Italy and Greece. The European Union agreed upon a Joint Action Plan with Turkey to reduce the flow of arrivals. The primary challenges for Europe remain providing humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees arriving on their shores after dangerous maritime journeys and integrating the more than one million individuals who arrived since early 2015. In addition, the problem of statelessness is still a concern in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

In FY 2016, the U.S. projects admission of some 4,000 refugees from Europe and Central Asia, the majority of whom are Lautenberg religious minority cases. Applications for the Lautenberg program have increased substantially since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. In FY 2017, the proposed

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ceiling is 4,000, which will continue to include individuals from countries of the former Soviet Union and are Lautenberg religious minority cases.

Latin America and Caribbean

(See pages 44-49 of the full report for details.)

Table 6: Proposed FY 2017 Latin America and Caribbean program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	950
Priority 2 Groups	4,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification	50
Total Proposed Ceiling	5,000

In 2015, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other persons of concern in Latin American and the Caribbean surpassed seven million. The ongoing conflict in Colombia generates the largest numbers of refugees in the region and the second largest world-wide. The Government of Colombia reports 6.6 million IDPs as of February 2016. The main causes of displacement have resulted from conflict between the Colombian government and various illegal armed groups. The number of Colombia asylum seekers in nearby Ecuador, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Panama amount to some 400,000 and this number continues to grow.

In addition, violence, widespread corruption and poverty continue in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, compelling many individuals to flee their homes. To address the increasing number of unaccompanied minors from these Central American countries arriving in the U.S., the Central American Minors (CAM) program was established in December 2014. In July 2016, this program was expanded, in collaboration with UNHCR, to allow additional categories of applicants when family members accompany a qualified child, including:

- Sons and daughters of a U.S.-based lawfully present parent who are 21 years of age or older and/or married;
- In-country biological parent of the qualified children; and
- Caregivers of qualified children who are also related to the U.S.-based lawfully present parent.

DHS/USCIS and the State Department continue to work on expansion of refugee processing in Central America beyond the CAM program. The U.S. also maintains its in-country refugee resettlement program in Cuba.

In FY 2016, approximately 1,600 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean will be admitted, namely Central American minors, Colombians, and Cubans. In FY 2017, the proposed 5,000 ceiling will comprise of Cuban refugees; Central American Minors; UNHCR-referred Colombians and Central Americans; and a small number of family reunification cases.

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Near East and South Asia

(See pages 50-60 of the full report for details.)

Table 7: Proposed FY 2017 Near East and South Asia program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	19,000
Priority 2 Groups	20,900
Priority 3 Family Reunification	100
Total Proposed Ceiling	40,000

The Near East/South Asia region hosts more than 12 million refugees, primarily Palestinians, Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis, Somalis, Burmese, Bhutanese, Sri Lankans, and Tibetans. The countries hosting the largest populations of refugees are Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran and Jordan. Intense fighting in Syria has caused massive displacement throughout the region. Inside Syria, 13.5 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance and 6.5 million are internally displaced. Outside of Syria, neighboring countries are hosting 4.8 million refugees. In February 2016, direct access (Priority 2) to the USRAP was extended to Syrian beneficiaries of approved I-130 Petition for Alien Relatives and their derivatives. Refugee processing in Iraq remains a high priority for the U.S.

In FY 2016, the U.S. will admit approximately 38,000 refugees from the region, which will include 15,000 Iraqis, 13,000 Syrians, 6,000 Bhutanese, 4,000 Iranians, and approximately 500 Afghans. In FY 2017, the USRAP anticipates the continued large-scale processing of Syrians and Iraqis, and, to a lesser extent, Bhutanese, Afghans, and Iranians. The proposed regional ceiling is 40,000 for FY 2017. The U.S. will prioritize UNHCR referrals from the aforementioned nationalities and specifically individuals from various religious and ethnic groups in the region (i.e., Assyrians, Mandeans, Iranian Kurds, Syrian Kurds, and Ahmadi Muslims). Many Iraqis, Syrians, and Iranians will also access the USRAP through specific Priority 2 programs.

Admissions

Data on admissions of refugees to the U.S. are updated regularly and posted on the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) website <http://www.wrapsnet.org>.