

Who is a Refugee?

Refugees are people who leave everything behind in search of safety and a chance for a new beginning, often facing incredible challenges along the way. Below is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide on refugees and federal refugee policy in the United States.

Who is a refugee?

As defined by the 1951 [United Nations Refugee Convention](#) and the [U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act](#), refugees are individuals who have fled their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees apply for protection through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or directly at U.S. embassies while still outside of the U.S.

Why is there a need for resettlement?

According to the latest data from UNHCR, there are [currently nearly 120 million people worldwide](#) who have been forcibly displaced by persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order. There are a few internationally accepted mechanisms to support those who have been displaced as they pursue safety: voluntary repatriation when conditions allow them to safely return to their home country, local integration in their country of initial asylum, or less frequently, resettlement to a third country.

Resettlement is an important tool and durable solution that provides refugees with protection as they relocate to another country that has agreed to admit them. It provides life-saving protection to refugees who have been vetted and granted legal entry to the host country.

What is the Presidential Determination and why is it important? What is the Presidential Determination for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025?

A Presidential Determination is a directive issued by the President of the United States that sets the official number of refugees that can be admitted in that year. Each fiscal year, the President, consulting Congress, makes a Presidential Determination on refugee admissions for the upcoming fiscal year. This crucial step sets expectation for how many refugees will resettle in the United States, as well as the resources and community support necessary for their successful transition as new Americans.

For Fiscal Year 2025, [the refugee admissions goal is 125,000](#), building on efforts to ensure that the United States remains a leader in providing safe refuge for those seeking it.

How many refugees did the United States resettle in FY24?

In [Fiscal Year 2024](#), the United States resettled approximately 100,034 refugees, the highest annual number in 30 years.

What can you do to help refugees?

- **Advocate:** Advocate with Global Refuge by [signing up for our Advocacy Alerts](#) to see all of our advocacy opportunities and [take action!](#)
- **Learn more:** [Read about](#) how the resettlement process works and the role that Global Refuge plays.
- **Pray and engage:** Find out [how your faith community can help](#) welcome immigrants and refugees.
- **Volunteer:** Discover ways to [help a newly arrived refugee family](#) in your community.