

Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2018: Report to the Congress

Summary prepared by the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center

The **Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2018: 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 <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/274857.pdf>

Report Highlights

The 2018 Report to Congress highlights major changes to the U.S. Refugee Admission Program (USRAP). The U.S. ceiling for refugee admissions will be decreased significantly from 85,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and 110,000 in FY 2017 to 45,000 in FY 2018.

In FY 2016, 84,994 refugees were admitted to the U.S. with large numbers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (16,370), Syria (12,587), Burma (12,347), Iraq (9,880), and Somalia (9,020). The Report to Congress includes the projected refugee admissions figure of 53,500 for FY 2017. Using final admissions data that have been posted on-line¹, the number of refugees admitted in FY 2017 was 53,716.

For the FY 2018, the Administration plans to shift some of its resources in refugee processing activities to the adjudication of asylum cases. This decision comes from a growing backlog of affirmative asylum cases from approximately 15,000 at the end of FY 2012 to more than 300,000 in early FY 2018. At the same time, the program to protect vulnerable children and others in Central America will be phased out in 2018.

¹ Refugee Processing Center. Summary of Refugee Admissions as of 30 November 2017. <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>. Accessed December 19, 2017.

U.S. Refugee Admission Program for FY 2018

Admissions, proposed and actual, are summarized in Table 1 (*See page 6 of the full Report for details.*)

**Table 1: Refugee Admissions in FY 2016 and FY 2017
Proposed Refugee Admissions by Region for FY 2018***

Region	FY 2016 Actual Arrivals	FY 2017 Ceiling	FY 2017 Arrivals ²	Proposed FY 2018 Ceiling
Africa	31,624	35,000	20,232	19,000
East Asia	12,518	12,000	5,173	5,000
Europe & Central Asia	3,957	4,000	5,205	2,000
Latin America/Caribbean	1,340	5,000	1,688	1,500
Near East/South Asia	35,555	40,000	21,418	17,500
Regional Subtotal	84,994	96,000	53,716	45,000
Unallocated Reserve		14,000		
Total	84,994	110,000	53,716	45,000

*These proposed figures assume enactment by Congress of the President's budget levels related to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program elements.

Three priorities or categories of cases have access to the USRAP (*see pages 7-14 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 as follows: (1) in Eurasia and the Baltics for Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox religious adherents with close family in the U.S.; (2) in Cuba for human rights activities, members of persecuted religious minorities and other priority groups; and (3) in Iraq for employees of the U.S. Government and others associated with the U.S.
 - The P-2 in-country processing program in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for certain Central American Minors and other designated qualifying family members will be phased out in FY 2018.
 - Current P-2 groups outside the country of origin are designated as groups of concern and processing 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 immigrant visa 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,

² Refugee Processing Center. Summary of Refugee Admissions as of 30 November 2017. <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>. Accessed December 19, 2017.

Burundi, Central African Republic, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria.

Regional Programs in FY 2018

Africa

(See pages 22-28 of the full report for details.)

Table 2: Proposed FY 2018 Africa program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	13,500
Priority 2 Groups	5,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification	500
Total Proposed Ceiling	19,000

There are over 5.6 million refugees across Africa, which constitutes over 30 percent of the total global refugee population. The numbers of refugees in Africa increased by 1.5 million since 2015 due to new or intensified conflicts, primarily in Burundi, Nigeria, and South Sudan. Instability and violence in numerous countries, with the associated displacement of individuals, are cited in the report. Africa’s refugee numbers have also been amplified by conflicts outside of the continent, primarily in the Near East region, with North Africa being the most affected.

In FY 2017, the U.S. admitted over 20,000 African refugees. Refugees from Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo still account for the vast majority of U.S. arrivals from Africa, followed by Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia. In total, the U.S. admitted refugees of nearly 30 African nationalities, processed in over 20 different countries. The two largest processing locations for the U.S. are in Kenya and Ethiopia, where the majority of refugees are from Somalia or Eritrea.

Table 3: Proposed Resettlement from Africa by Region, FY 2018

Region	Proposed Number	Target Populations
Great Lakes Region	9,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congolese refugees in Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda (and Burundi if the situation allows)
East Africa	6,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily Somali, Eritrean, and South Sudanese refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia Eritrean unaccompanied refugee minors in northern Ethiopia
Southern Africa	1,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somalis from South Africa Congolese from 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	1,000	<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	19,000	

East Asia

(See pages 28-32 of the full report for details.)

Table 4: Proposed FY 2018 East Asia program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	750
Priority 2 Groups	4,150
Priority 3 Family Reunification	100
Total Proposed Ceiling	5,000

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, the number of persons of concern to UNHCR has increased in recent years to over 14,000, including over 8,000 refugees.

In FY 2017, the U.S. admitted close to 5,200 refugees from East Asia, which included more than 4,500 members of Burmese ethnic minorities living in camps along the Thai-Burma border and urban Burmese in Malaysia, and some 700 refugees of various nationalities residing in urban areas across the region.

In FY 2018, the proposed 5,000 refugee admissions from East Asia include the following: up to 1,750 members of Burmese ethnic minorities living in camps along the Thai-Burma border; 1,750 urban Burmese in Malaysia, as well as 1,500 refugees of various nationalities in the region.

Europe and Central Asia

(See pages 33-38 of the full report for details.)

Table 5: Proposed FY 2018 Europe and Central Asia program

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

The migration crisis that Europe experienced starting in 2015 stabilized after widespread border closures throughout Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Aegean activity, and the European Union's agreement with Turkey to stem outmigration from Turkey. 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 1.4 million individuals who arrived since early 2015. Humanitarian emergencies in 2016 also affected at least 5.2 million refugees and forcibly displaced people in Ukraine, Turkey, and Southwest Europe. In addition, the problem of statelessness is still a concern in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

In FY 2017, the U.S. admitted over 5,200 refugees from Europe and Central Asia, the majority of whom are religious minority cases adjudicated under the standards of the Lautenberg Amendment.

In FY 2018, the proposed ceiling for refugees from Europe and Central Asia is 2,000, which will continue to include individuals from countries of the former Soviet Union who are Lautenberg religious minority

cases. Applications for the Lautenberg program have increased substantially since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine.

Latin America and Caribbean

(See pages 39-43 of the full report for details.)

Table 6: Proposed FY 2017 Latin America and Caribbean program

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	200
Priority 2 Groups	1,250
Priority 3 Family Reunification	50
Total Proposed Ceiling	1,500

In 2016, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other persons of concern in Latin American and the Caribbean reached nearly eight 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 7.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of March 2017. Despite a peace agreement between the Colombia government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in 2016, many Colombians continue to be displaced by other armed groups fighting for control over illegal business operations. The number of Colombia asylum seekers in Ecuador, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Panama amount to some 340,000 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. After an expansion in 2016, the CAM program will be phased out in FY 2018 because the vast majority of individuals accessing the program were ineligible for refugee resettlement. Instead, the Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the State Department will focus on more targeted refugee processing through the Protection Transfer Arrangement with Costa Rica, UNHCR, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The U.S. continues to maintain its in-country refugee resettlement program in Cuba.

In FY 2017, over 1,600 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean were admitted, including Central Americans, Colombians, and Cubans.

In FY 2018, the proposed 1,500 admissions ceiling will include Cuban refugees eligible for in-country processing, Central American Minors eligible for in-country processing, UNHCR-referred P-1 Colombians and Central Americans, and a small number of family reunification cases.

Near East and South Asia

(See pages 43-52 of the full report for details.)

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

Priority 1 Individual Referrals	8,400
Priority 2 Groups	9,000
Priority 3 Family Reunification	100
Total Proposed Ceiling	17,500

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 6.3 million are internally displaced. Outside of Syria, neighboring countries are hosting 5.2 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 2017, the U.S. admitted approximately 21,500 refugees from the region, which included 7,000 Iraqis, 6,500 Syrians, 3,500 Bhutanese, 1,200 Iranians, and approximately 500 Afghans.

In FY 2018, the U.S. has proposed 17,500 admissions from the Near East and South Asia, including vulnerable Syrians, Iraqis, Bhutanese, Iranians, Pakistanis, and Afghans. The U.S. also anticipates receiving P-1 UNHCR referrals from the aforementioned nationalities, including individuals from various religious and ethnic groups in the region (i.e., Assyrians, Yezidis, Mandeans, Iranian Kurds, Syrian Kurds, and Ahmadi Muslims). Many Iraqis, Syrians, and Iranians will also access the USRAP through specific P-2 programs.

Admissions Data

Data on refugee admissions to the U.S. are updated regularly and posted on the Refugee Processing Center website <http://www.wrapsnet.org>. The Refugee Processing Center is operated by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.