

The Refugee Crisis Update- May 2017



Serving Refugee & Immigrant Neighbors Together

Worldwide (Source- UNHCR):

- 21.7 million refugees worldwide
 - 5 million Syrian have fled as refugees
 - More than 1.2 million children have fled Southern Sudan as refugees
 - More than 5,000 drowned in the Mediterranean seeking safety in Europe in 2016
 - 17 Years is the average length of time from when a refugee first flees their country until they reach a “durable solution.” Less than ½ a percent of refugees are resettled each year.
- 45 million Internally Displaced People (IDP)
 - 6.3 million Syrians are internally displaced persons
 - 2.5 million Yemenis are internally displaced persons

United States (Source- US State Department, unless otherwise noted):

- 3,000,000 refugees from all countries have arrived in the U.S. over the past 30+ years
- From fiscal years 2002 to 2016, the U.S. admitted 399,677 Christian refugees and 279,339 Muslim refugees, meaning that 46% of all refugees who have entered the U.S. during this time have been Christian while 32% have been Muslim. (Pew Research Center)
- More than 250,000 women and children resettled in the US since 2011 (70% of total)
- 18 to 24 months (avg.) of security screening and interviews for a refugee before arriving in the U.S.
- President Trump has lowered the number of refugees to be allowed into the United States annually from 110,000 to 50,000 (or one refugee for every 7,000 U.S. residents)

What the Presidential Executive Order (currently under a court restraining order) says:

- **No new refugees from ANY COUNTRY can travel into the U.S. for 120 days** while the US government evaluates its security and vetting processes.
- **There is a 90-day ban on the issuance of visas for citizens** from the following six countries: Iran, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. (Iraq is no longer on the list)
- People with valid visas from the above listed countries will continue to be allowed to travel to the U.S.
- The total number of refugees to be resettled to the US this federal budget year will be a **maximum of 50,000** a significant drop from the planned 110,000.

Important Development: Regardless of the “fate” of the Executive Order, the Department of Homeland Security stopped sending investigators overseas to interview refugees seeking status in the United States. That is, in effect, a cold stop on processing new applications. The face-to-face interviews are a required part of the vetting process to ensure that potential immigrants pose no risk to American public safety or national security.

What this means for refugees in the U.S.:

- Refugees already in the United States are safe and protected by U.S. law
- Refugee status does not expire, but we encourage all refugees to apply for green cards (after 1 year) and apply to become a U.S. Citizen (after 5 years).
- All nationals of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen should not travel abroad at this time if they do not have a valid reentry visa to the U.S. and/or a green card (Legal Permanent Resident status) or U.S. citizenship. They should talk with a Department of Justice representative or immigration attorney about their situation if they have any questions.
- If you have family or friends who are refugees trying to come to the United States, do not give up hope that they will come. However, you should prepare yourself for difficult news or for a long delay.

How we can respond:

- **Pray** for our country’s leaders, refugees around the world, and the church to respond generously.
- **Love** your friends, neighbors, and coworkers who are refugees. They are feeling afraid right now and unsure of their future.
- **Advocate** for refugees. Many are writing their representatives. Tell them that we can be pro-security, pro-refugee and most importantly we must be pro-Bible. Dial the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121.
- **Volunteer and Support Arrive Ministries.** We have refugees weekly still being resettled and have many families already here who desire friendship partners, ESL/tutoring help, employment mentors, and other practical help.

