



U.S. Reaches its Refugee Admissions Target for the First Time Since 1980

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson
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The United States announced today it brought 69,930 refugees to safety and new lives in the United States in fiscal year 2013. That number is closer to the authorized ceiling – 70,000 in 2013 – than in any year since 1980. Reaching this threshold is a demonstration of the Administration's efforts to create a refugee admissions program which meets the important security screening standards required by the American people and the growing humanitarian need.

The United States has a strong tradition of welcoming refugees, many of whom have fled unspeakable horrors and persecution. The Obama Administration is committed to maintaining a strong refugee admissions program as an integral component of our effort to offer protection to some of the world's most vulnerable people. Their presence makes our country more diverse, our culture richer, and our national character stronger.

For fiscal year 2014, the President authorized the admission of up to 70,000 refugees from around the world. We expect to admit more than 60 nationalities with continued strong arrivals from Iraq, Burma, and Bhutan. We are also working to increase Congolese and Syrian arrivals given the numbers in need of protection through resettlement. As we enter fiscal year 2014, we remain committed to doing everything in our power to live up to our values and to meet the needs of the world's most vulnerable people.

The top five nationalities resettled to the United States in 2013 were Iraqi, Burmese, Bhutanese, Somali, and Cuban. Our commitment to Iraqi refugees and those that worked with our troops and our government continues, as evidenced by admitting over 19,000 Iraqis, our highest annual level since the program began in 2007. Through use of transit centers hosted by the governments of Romania and Slovakia, we have been able to resettle Iraqi refugees trapped by the war in Syria as well as at-risk Afghan women who were formerly in Iran.

Here at home, refugees were resettled in 186 communities in 49 states. The welcome that these U.S. communities have offered is essential in giving our newly arrived refugees a fresh start at life. Resettled refugees have seized this opportunity by becoming taxpayers, starting small businesses, engaging in civic society, and becoming citizens of our great country. Thousands of people overseas and across the United States make the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program possible each year, a testament to the effective partnership between the public and private sectors that make the program so successful.

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