



How to talk to your family about refugees & asylum seekers

America’s proud legacy as a safe haven for people fleeing persecution has been damaged over the Trump Administration’s four years of unprecedented anti-refugee and anti-asylum policies, and false and harmful rhetoric about people who want nothing more than a chance to live their lives in safety. The new Biden Administration offers the opportunity to restore the country’s long tradition of welcome—but it will take all of us to make it happen.

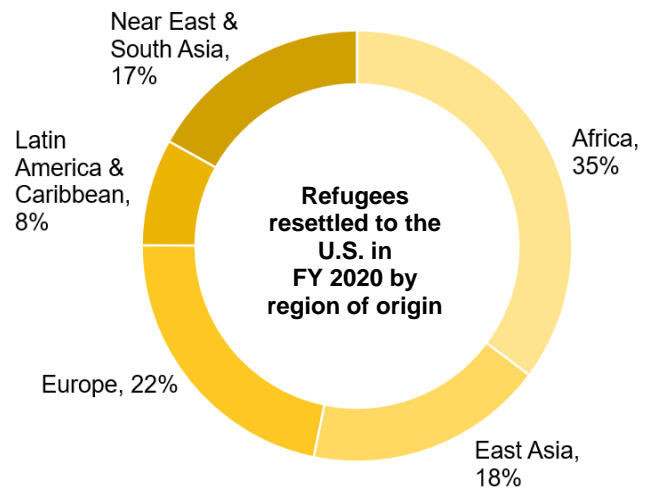
Use our guide to facilitate positive conversations and share important facts about refugees and asylum seekers with your friends and family.

Who are refugees and why are they fleeing?

Refugees are people and families forced to flee from war or persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion—and who have crossed borders to seek safety in another country. Resettlement is a solution of last resort for less than one percent of the world’s refugees who cannot safely remain in the country to which they fled, or return home.

Top countries of origin for refugees resettled to the U.S. in FY 2020

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Ukraine
- Afghanistan



How are refugees vetted?

Refugees are vetted more intensively than any other group seeking to enter the U.S. The screening process involves the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the U.S. intelligence community. Refugees undergo biographic and biometric checks, medical screenings, forensic document testing and in-person interviews.

6 Fast Facts About refugees

- 1 To obtain refugee status individuals must prove that they have a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- 2 Right now, there are 26 million refugees in the world. Over half of all refugees are children.
- 3 Only the most vulnerable refugees are referred for resettlement. Vulnerable categories include those with urgent medical needs, women and children at risk and survivors of violence and torture.
- 4 Refugees are vetted more intensively than any other group seeking to enter the U.S. It takes an average of 2+ years to go through the U.S. security process.
- 5 Refugees arrive in the U.S. eager and able to start businesses, pay taxes and contribute to their communities and local economies. The vast majority quickly find jobs and become productive members of their new communities.
- 6 The U.S. has a long, bipartisan, tradition of welcoming refugees and has, on average, set a goal of welcoming 95k refugees each fiscal year.



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Did You Know ?

- Seeking asylum is legal.
- Turning away asylum seekers is not legal.
- Many people arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border are asylum seekers escaping violence in northern Central America.
- Asylum seekers must prove that they have suffered persecution or have a well-founded fear of persecution.
- The right to seek asylum was incorporated into international law following World War II.
- Depending on the type of application, asylum cases are heard by an asylum officer within the Department of Homeland Security or by an immigration judge.

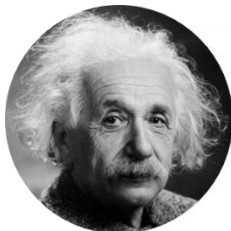
Refugees and asylees. Is there a difference?

In truth, there is no difference—both groups have fled home seeking safety. In the eyes of U.S. law, the primary difference between refugees and asylees is where their status is determined. For refugees, their status is determined overseas before they travel to the U.S. Asylum seekers must present themselves to U.S. authorities at a border or port of entry to apply or submit an application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). When asylum seekers are granted refugee status, they are known as asylees. After a year, refugees and asylees can pursue permanent residency, and after five years, they can apply for citizenship.

A crucial aspect of international refugee law is that people have the right to seek asylum without being turned away or forced to return to countries where they could be persecuted.

Five famous refugees

Meet some of the artists, scientists and other luminaries who were once refugees.



< Albert Einstein

Physicist, Nobel laureate & humanitarian



Sergey Brin >

Google co-founder



< Freddie Mercury

Frontman of the rock band Queen

M.I.A.>

Rapper & activist



^ Marc Chagall

Artist & a pioneer of modernism



Take action & learn

As a candidate, Joe Biden made bold commitments to reverse Trump Administration policies that attack refugees and asylum seekers. Learn more about how the Biden Administration can act at [Rescue.org/BidenAdmin](https://www.rescue.org/bidenadmin).

Visit [Rescue.org/take-action](https://www.rescue.org/take-action) to learn more about how you and your family can show your support for refugees and asylum seekers.