



# Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigration Services

## Overseas Refugee Processing

Boston Bar Association  
15 December 2015





Resilient • Future Citizens • Survivors



# Global Data: “Persons of Concern”

## UN High Commissioner for Refugees:

### FY15: 59.5 Million forcibly displaced worldwide

- **19.5 million refugees** worldwide at the end of 2014, around 2.9 million more than in 2013
- **42,500** persons per day to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their countries or in other countries
- **50%** of refugees were under 18 years old and **49%** were female
- **86%** of refugees hosted by Developing Countries; **Turkey** is largest with **1.59M**
- **50%** live in urban areas; ↑ from prior years

# Global Definition: Refugee

**International Law:** 1951 Refugee Convention Article 1(A)2, the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who

“...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”



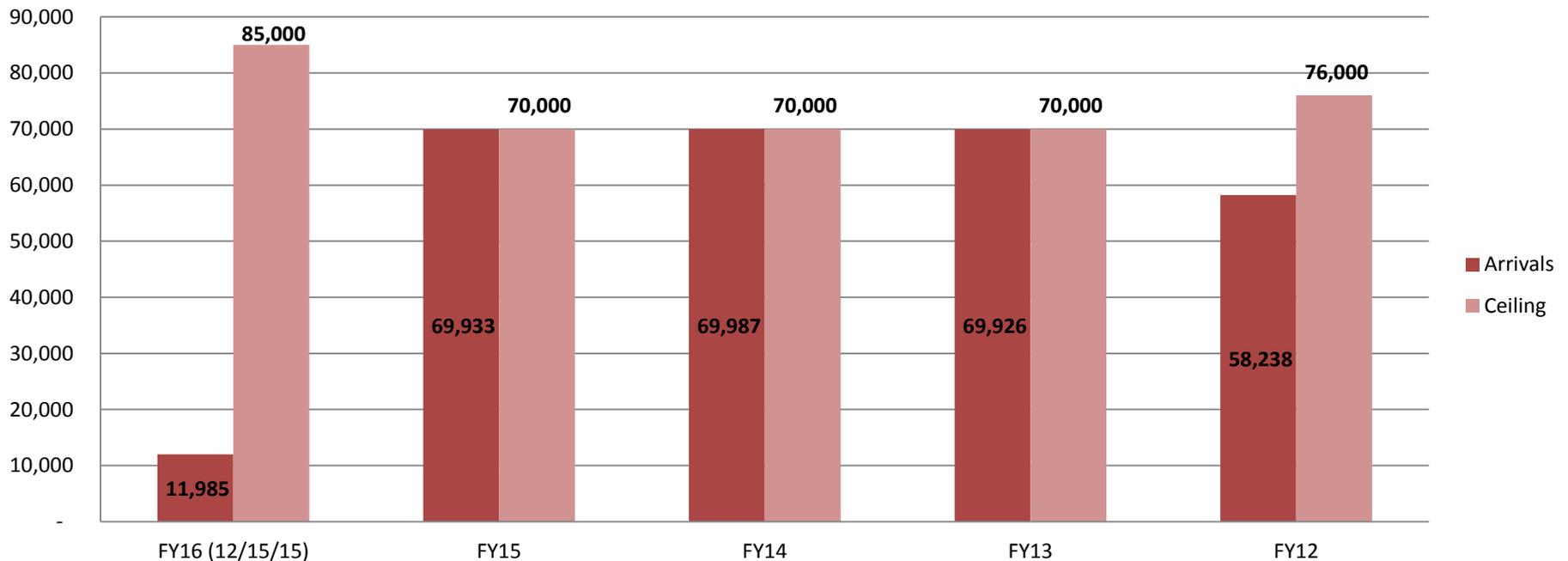
# Options for Refugees

## Durable Solutions (in order of preference)

1. Voluntary Repatriation to home country
2. Local integration into country of first asylum
3. Resettlement to 3<sup>rd</sup> country: less than 1% of refugees worldwide are resettled to 3<sup>rd</sup> country

# US Refugee Arrivals

US Refugee Arrivals  
FY12--FY16 YTD (12/15/15)



- Top 5 Countries of Origin: Burma, Iraq, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bhutan
- Syria FY16: 567



# Access to US Refugee Admissions Program

Source:

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/wh\\_blog\\_refugee\\_workflow\\_1125.jpg](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/wh_blog_refugee_workflow_1125.jpg) White House.gov

## THE SCREENING PROCESS

# FOR REFUGEE ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

1

MANY REFUGEE APPLICANTS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES TO THE U.N. REFUGEE AGENCY, UNHCR. UNHCR, THEN:

Collects identifying documents

Performs initial assessment



Collects biodata: name, address, birthday, place of birth, etc.



Collects biometrics: iris scans (for Syrians, and other refugee populations in the Middle East)

Interviews applicants to confirm refugee status and the need for resettlement



Initial information checked again



Only applicants who are strong candidates for resettlement move forward (less than 1% of global refugee population).



2

APPLICANTS ARE RECEIVED BY A FEDERALLY-FUNDED RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT CENTER (RSC):

Collects identifying documents

Creates an applicant file

Compiles information to conduct biographic security checks

### 3

#### BIOGRAPHIC SECURITY CHECKS START WITH ENHANCED INTERAGENCY SECURITY CHECKS:

**REFUGEES ARE SUBJECT TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SECURITY CHECKS**

of any category of traveler to the United States.

U.S. security agencies screen the candidate, including:

- + National Counterterrorism Center/ Intelligence Community
- + FBI
- + Department of Homeland Security
- + State Department

The screening looks for indicators, like:

- + Information that the individual is a security risk
- + Connections to known bad actors
- + Outstanding warrants/immigration or criminal violations

*DHS conducts an enhanced review of Syrian cases, which may be referred to USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate for review. Research that is used by the interviewing officer informs lines of question related to the applicant's eligibility and credibility.*

**This process is repeated any time new information is provided, such as a previously used name or different phone number. Otherwise, the process continues.**

### 4

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS)/USCIS INTERVIEW:

Interviews are conducted by USCIS Officers specially trained for interviews

Fingerprints are collected and submitted (biometric check)

**Re-interviews can be conducted if fingerprint results or new information raises questions. If new biographic information is identified by USCIS at an interview, additional security checks on the information are conducted. USCIS may place a case on hold to do additional research or investigation. Otherwise, the process continues.**

## 5

### BIOMETRIC SECURITY CHECKS:

- Applicant's fingerprints are taken by U.S. government employees
- + ● Fingerprints are screened against the FBI's biometric database
- + ● Fingerprints are screened against the DHS biometric database, containing watch-list information and previous immigration encounters in the U.S. and overseas.
- + ● Fingerprints are screened against the U.S. Department of Defense biometric database, which includes fingerprint records captured in Iraq and other locations.

x

**IF NOT ALREADY HALTED, THIS IS THE END POINT FOR CASES WITH SECURITY CONCERNS.**  
Otherwise, the process continues.

## 6

### MEDICAL CHECK:

- The need for medical screening is determined

x

**THIS IS THE END POINT FOR CASES DENIED DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS.**  
Refugees may be provided medical treatment for communicable diseases such as tuberculosis.

## 7

### CULTURAL ORIENTATION AND ASSIGNMENT TO DOMESTIC RESETTLEMENT LOCATIONS:

- Applicants complete cultural orientation classes.
- An assessment is made by a U.S.-based non-governmental organization to determine the best resettlement location for the candidate(s). Considerations include:
  - + ● Family; candidates with family in a certain area may be placed in that area.
  - + ● Health; a candidate with asthma may be matched to certain regions.
- A location is chosen.

## RECURRENT VETTING:

Throughout this process, pending applications continue to be checked against terrorist databases, to ensure new, relevant terrorism information has not come to light. If a match is found, that case is paused for further review.

**IF THERE IS DOUBT** about whether an applicant poses a security risk, they will not be admitted.

x

Applicants who continue to have no flags continue the process.

# 8

## TRAVEL:

International Organization for Migration books travel

Prior to entry in the United States, applicants are subject to:

- + Screening from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's National Targeting Center-Passenger
- + The Transportation Security Administration's Secure Flight Program

x

**THIS IS THE END POINT FOR SOME APPLICANTS.**  
Applicants who have no flags continue the process.

# 9

## U.S. ARRIVAL:

All refugees are required to apply for a green card within a year of their arrival to the United States, which triggers:

- + Another set of security procedures with the U.S. government.

**REFUGEES ARE WOVEN INTO THE RICH FABRIC OF AMERICAN SOCIETY!**