

Key facts about refugees to the U.S.



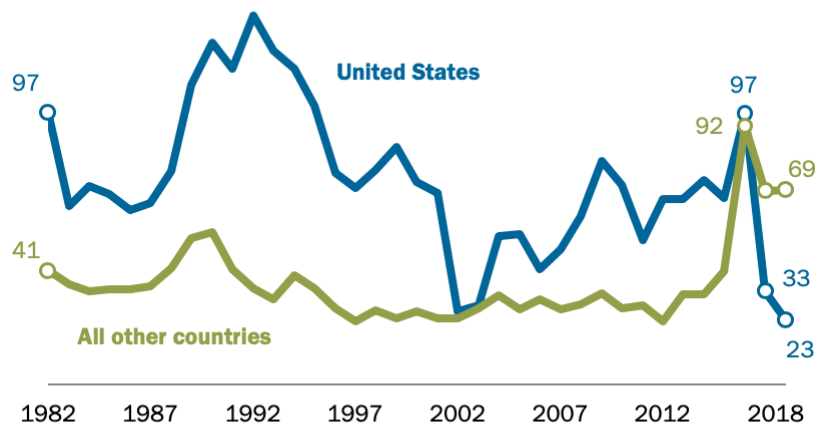
Syrian refugees take notes during their vocational ESL class at the International Rescue Committee center in San Diego on Aug. 31, 2016. (Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images)

The United States plans to admit a maximum of 18,000 refugees in fiscal year 2020, down from a cap of 30,000 in the one that ended Sept. 30, 2019, under a new refugee admissions ceiling set by the Trump administration. This would be the lowest number of refugees resettled by the U.S. in a single year since 1980, when Congress created the nation's refugee resettlement program.

Even before the administration's announcement, refugee resettlement in the U.S. had dropped to historic lows during Donald Trump's presidency, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of State Department data. As a result, the U.S. is no longer the world's top country for refugee admissions. It had previously led the world on this measure for decades, admitting more refugees each year than all other countries combined.

U.S. trailed rest of world in refugee resettlement in 2017 and 2018 after leading it for decades

Number of refugee admissions, in thousands, by calendar year



Note: Figures rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data, accessed June 12, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The decline in U.S. refugee admissions comes at a time when the number of refugees worldwide has reached the highest levels since World War II.

Here are key facts from our research about refugees entering the United States:

How the U.S. refugee resettlement program works

1 Refugee admissions into the U.S. have declined substantially during Donald Trump's presidency.

Every fall, the U.S. president sets a refugee ceiling - the maximum number of refugees who may enter the country in a fiscal year. In fiscal 2017 (Oct. 1, 2016, to Sept. 30, 2017), about 53,700 refugees resettled in the U.S. - a figure that reflects a temporary freeze on refugee admissions that Trump ordered shortly after taking office. The following year, Trump's first full fiscal year in office, he set the nation's refugee ceiling at 45,000, a

new low at the time, and the U.S. ultimately admitted about 22,500. Trump then set the refugee ceiling at 30,000 for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2019, and refugee admissions reached this cap. For fiscal 2020, which started Oct. 1, 2019, Trump has set a ceiling of 18,000 refugees.

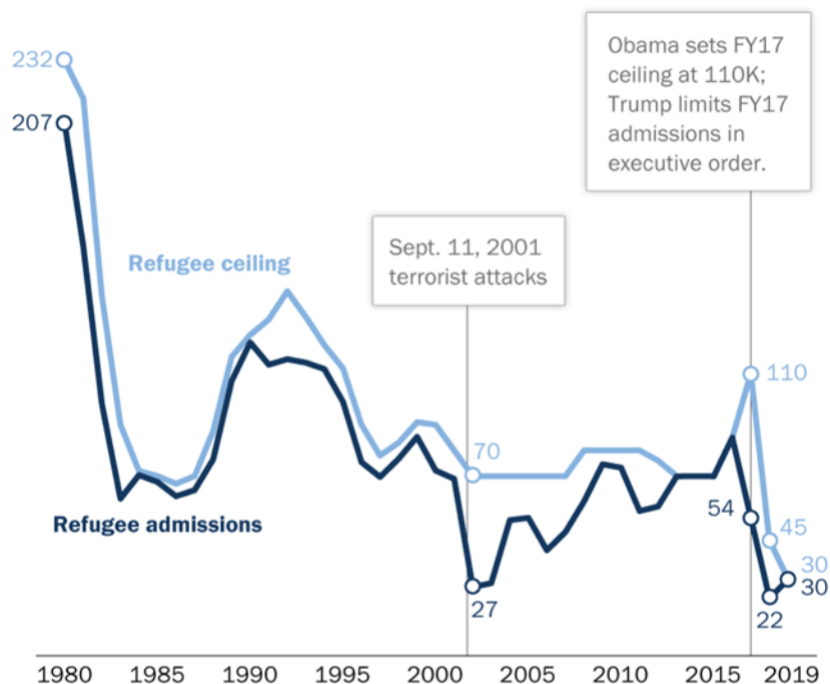
Overall, the U.S. has admitted about 76,200 refugees so far under the Trump administration (Jan. 20, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2019). By comparison, the U.S. admitted nearly 85,000 refugees in fiscal 2016 alone, the last full fiscal year of the Obama administration.

2 Historically, the total number of refugees coming to the U.S. has fluctuated with global events and U.S. priorities.

From fiscal years 1990 to 1995, an average of about 116,000 refugees arrived in the U.S. each year, with many coming from the former Soviet Union. However, refugee admissions dropped off to roughly 27,100 in fiscal 2002, a new low at the time, after the

U.S. refugee ceiling and admissions have declined in recent years

In thousands, by fiscal year



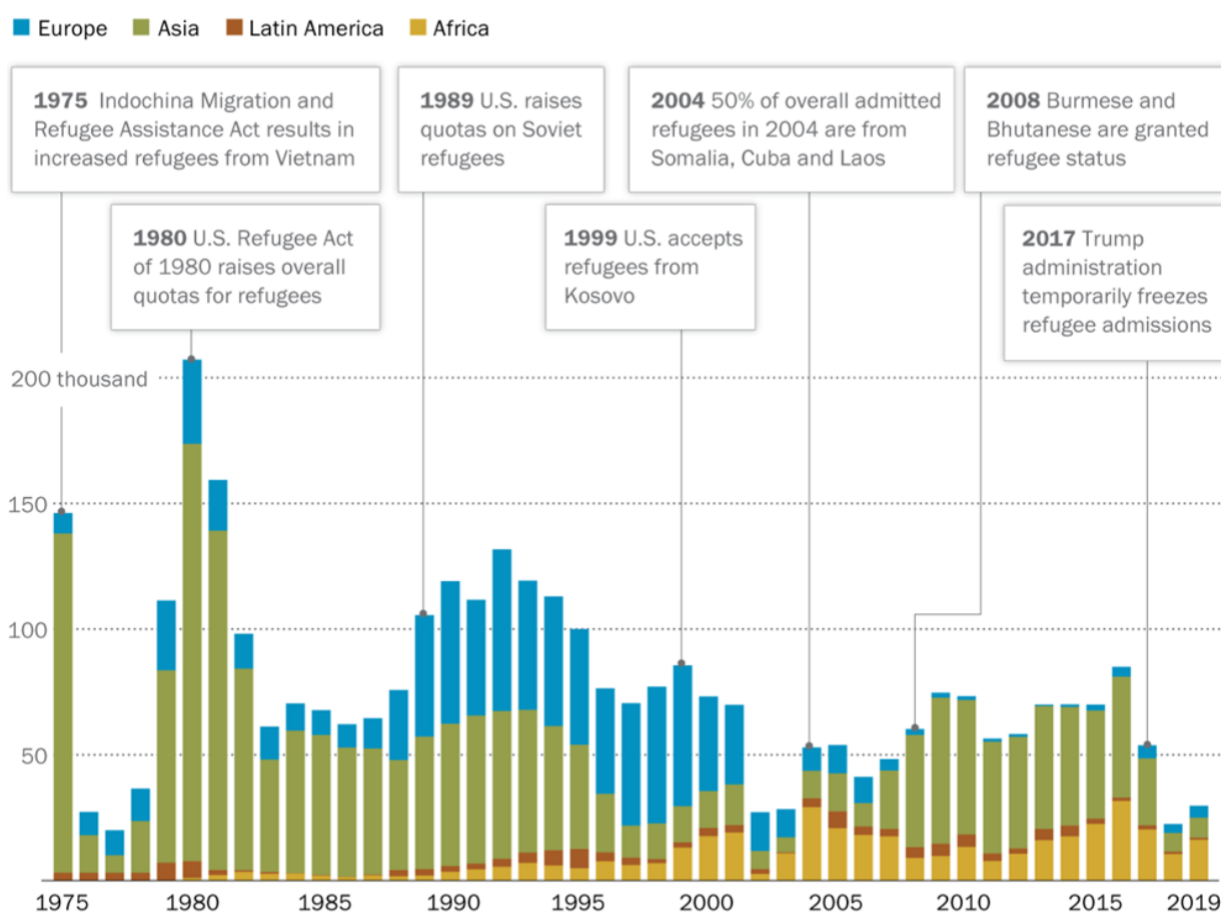
Note: Fiscal years end on Sept. 30 of the years shown. Figures rounded to the nearest thousand. Refugee ceiling is the maximum number of refugees allowed to enter the U.S.; the ceiling is set by the U.S. president after consultation with Congress. Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center, accessed Oct. 1, 2019. U.S. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 1980-2017. "Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy," Congressional Research Service, December 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

U.S. largely suspended admissions following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Refugee admissions rebounded from this low point. From fiscal 2008 to 2017, an average of about 67,100 refugees arrived each year. Half or more of refugees during this time came from Asia, with many from Iraq and Burma (Myanmar). (Iraq is counted as a part of Asia in this data source.) Since fiscal 1980, 55% of refugees have come from Asia, a far higher share than from Europe (28%), Africa (13%) or Latin America (4%).

The shifting origins of refugees to the U.S. since 1975

Number of refugees admitted to the U.S., by region of origin and fiscal year



Notes: Fiscal years end on Sept. 30 of the years shown. Data do not include special immigrant visas and certain humanitarian parole entrants or refugees admitted under the Private Sector Initiative. Europe includes Russia and former Soviet Union states. Asia includes Middle Eastern and North African countries. Africa includes sub-Saharan Africa, plus Sudan and South Sudan. Latin America includes the Caribbean. Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center, accessed Oct. 1, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

3
R
e
f
u
g
e
e
s
f
r
o
m
t
h
e
D
e
m
o
c
r
a
t
i
c

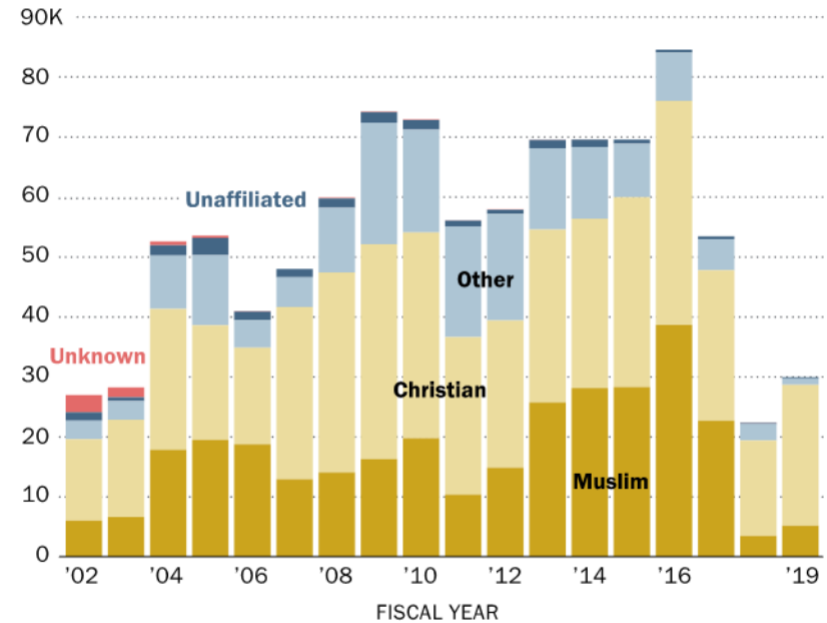
Republic of Congo far outnumbered those from other countries in fiscal 2019. D.R. Congo accounted for nearly 13,000 refugees, followed by Burma (Myanmar) with about 4,900, then Ukraine (4,500), Eritrea (1,800) and Afghanistan (1,200). The picture looks different over the longer term. Since fiscal 2002 (Oct. 1, 2001, to Sept. 30, 2019), the most refugees have come from Burma

(about 177,700), Iraq (144,400) and Somalia (104,100).

4The U.S. has admitted far more Christian refugees than Muslim refugees in recent years. Christians accounted for 79% of refugees who came to the U.S. in fiscal 2019. The U.S. admitted about 23,800 Christians, compared with about 4,900 Muslims and smaller numbers of other religious groups.

More Christians than Muslims have entered the U.S. as refugees since fiscal 2017

Number of refugees entering the U.S., by religious affiliation



Note: Fiscal years end on Sept. 30 of the years shown. "Other religions" include Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and other religions. Data do not include special immigrant visas and certain humanitarian parole entrants.

Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center, accessed Oct. 1, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

This pattern marks a sharp reversal from several years ago. In fiscal 2016, the number of Muslim refugees admitted reached 38,900, a historic high that narrowly outpaced Christian refugee admissions (about 37,500). That year, Muslims accounted for 46% of the year's refugees, the highest share since fiscal 2006.

Since fiscal 2002 (Oct. 1, 2001, to Sept. 30, 2019), the U.S. has admitted about 464,700 Christian refugees and about 310,700 Muslim refugees.

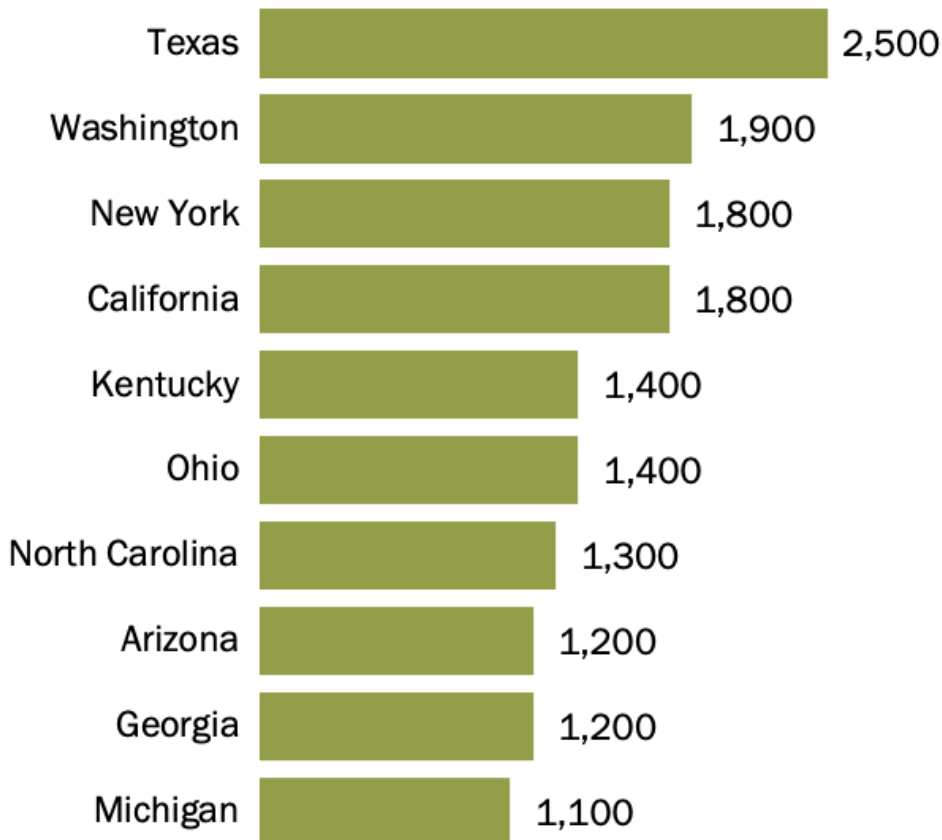
5 Texas, Washington, New York and California resettled roughly a quarter of all refugees in fiscal 2019. Together, these states took in nearly 8,100 refugees. Other states that received at least 1,000 refugees include Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Arizona, Georgia and Michigan. By contrast, the District of Columbia, Delaware and West Virginia each resettled fewer than 10 refugees. Hawaii and Wyoming took in no refugees in fiscal 2019.

Since fiscal 2002, California has resettled the most refugees (about 108,600), followed by Texas (88,300), New York (58,500) and Florida (48,700).

6 Americans have been divided in recent years over whether the U.S. should accept refugees, with large differences by political party affiliation. In a May 2018 survey, for example, about half of Americans (51%) said the U.S. has a responsibility to accept refugees into the country, while 43% said it does not. Around three-quarters of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (74%) said the U.S. has this responsibility, compared with 26% of Republicans and Republican leaners. For much of the 20th century, U.S. public opinion polls showed fairly consistent disapproval of admitting large numbers of foreigners fleeing war and oppression, regardless of official government policy.

Top states for U.S. refugee resettlement in fiscal 2019

Number of refugees resettled by state



Note: Fiscal year ended on Sept. 30, 2019. Numbers rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center, accessed Oct. 1, 2019.

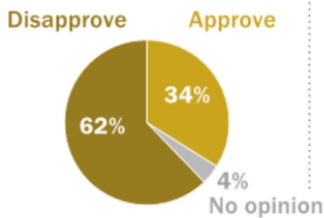
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Over the decades, American public has had mixed views on accepting refugees

% who say ...

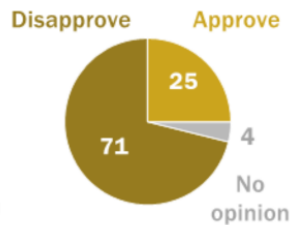
Indochinese, 1979

Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. govt's plan to double the number of refugees from Indochina admitted, to **14,000 a month?**



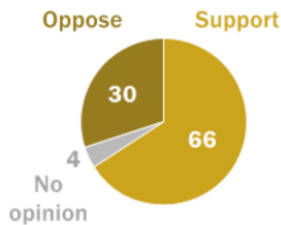
Cubans, 1980

Many refugees from Cuba have come to the U.S. recently. Do you approve or disapprove of allowing most of these Cuban refugees to settle in the U.S.?



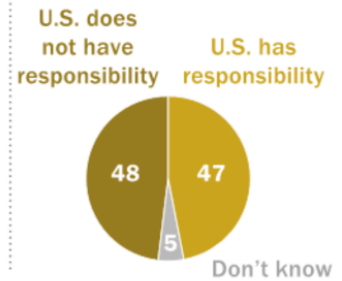
Ethnic Albanians, 1999

Several hundred ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo have been brought to the U.S. Do you support or oppose the decision to bring them here?



Syrians, 2017

Do you think the U.S. has a responsibility to accept refugees from Syria into the country?



Source: CBS/New York Times (Indochinese, July 1979; Cubans, June 1980); Gallup (Albanians, May 1999); Pew Research Center (Syrians, April 2017).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/07/key-facts-about-refugees-to-the-u-s/>

[Disclaimer]