



Refugees & Asylees in Maryland

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS



When we hear the word **refugee**, what comes to mind?



Interlude # 1: Think-Pair-Share

Take one minute and write a brief definition for the word ***refugee***. Please use the index card you received. Then turn to your elbow partner and share your definition.



Let's Look at a few Definitions for this word. According to the U.N. ...

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

-- retrieved at <http://www.unrefugees.org/what-is-a-refugee/> on 10/22/17

And, according to the Department of Homeland Security (USCIS) ...

Under United States law, a refugee is someone who:

- ✓ is located outside of the United States.
- ✓ is of special humanitarian concern to the United States.
- ✓ demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group not firmly resettled in another country.
- ✓ is admissible to the United States.

Please note: A refugee does **not** include anyone who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

-- retrieved at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees> on 10/22/17

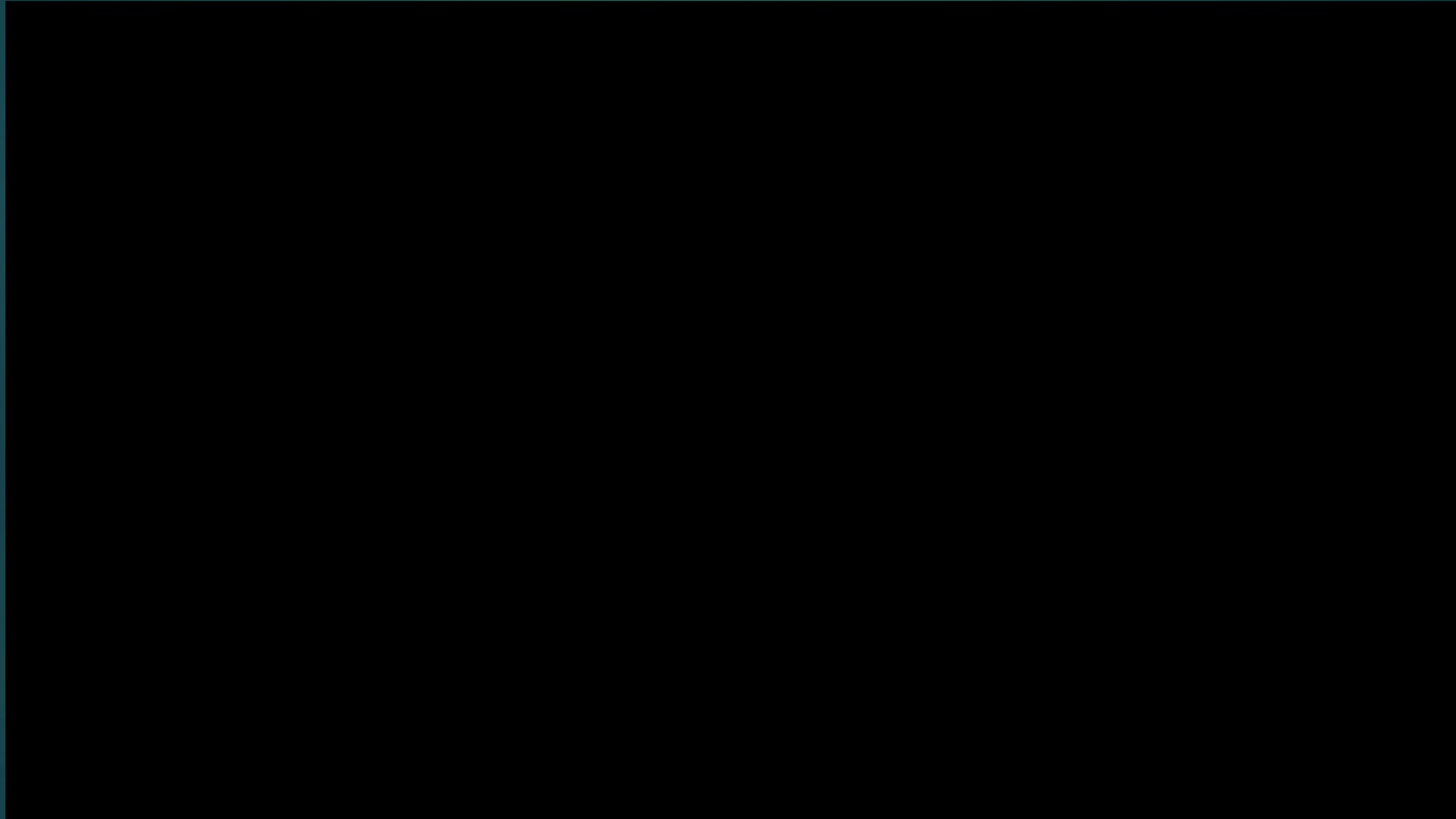
And finally, this from Amnesty USA ...

The global refugee crisis

Refugees are people forced to flee their homes because their lives are in danger. Right now, we're in the middle of the largest global refugee crisis in generations. Tens of millions of people – many of them children – have been forced from their homes in Syria, Central America, Africa, and other parts of the world. Many refugees face violence and human rights abuses while trying to find safety, and then face discrimination and hostility when they finally begin to rebuild their lives in another country.

-- retrieved at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/campaigns/refugee-and-migrant-rights/> on 10/22/17

Now, a more human definition ...



We've defined *refugee*, but are there other special groups that we need to consider?



Other At-risk Populations to Consider

- ▶ Asylees
- ▶ Victims of Trafficking
- ▶ Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Holders

Interlude # 2: Think-Pair-Share

Think about this question for 10 seconds and then share your answer with your elbow partner. Discuss for one minute.

- ▶ What is the difference between a **refugee** and an **asylee**?



Well, according to the USCIS, an **asylee** is ...

An alien in the United States or at a port of entry who is found to be unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.

-- retrieved at <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary/asylee> on 10/22/17

And according to MORA ...

*The Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees administers services that help refugees and political asylees make new lives in the United States. Refugees are persons granted protective status while abroad. Typically, they have been forced to flee their homeland and are unable to return. **Asylees are persons granted protective status after entering the United States. Protection is granted only those who have a “credible fear” of being persecuted on any of five grounds – race, religion, nationality, social group or political stand.** After protection has been granted and the individual resides in Maryland, MORA and its partners provide English language training, employment services, medical assistance and more.*

-- retrieved from <http://dhr.maryland.gov/maryland-office-for-refugees-and-asylees/> on 10/16/17

Victims of Trafficking

What Is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers lure individuals with false promises of employment and a better life. Traffickers often take advantage of poor, unemployed individuals who lack access to social safety nets. The T nonimmigrant visa allows victims to remain in the United States to assist federal authorities in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases.

- retrieved from <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes/victims-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status/questions-and-answers-victims-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status-0> on 10/20/17

Victims of Trafficking

- ▶ In the RTP, those clients who present a letter from the federal government indicating that they have applied for a T visa and are awaiting a decision are eligible to receive our services.
- ▶ If the T visa is denied, their status reverts to whatever it was before – most likely, undocumented
- ▶ If that should happen, the individual could still apply for asylum.

- from interview with Ms. Amanda Olmstead of MORA, 10/20/17

More on Victims of Trafficking

According to a September 2017 report from the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation:

An estimated 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016. This includes both forced labor (24.9 million) and forced marriage (15.4 million).

- ✓ Among cases where the type of work was known, the largest share of adults who were in forced labor were domestic workers (24 per cent). This was followed by the construction (18 per cent), manufacturing (15 per cent), and agriculture and fishing (11 per cent) sectors.
- ✓ While men and boys can also be victims of forced marriage, most victims (88 per cent) were women and girls, with more than a third (37 per cent) of victims under 18 years of age at the time of the marriage.

- Retrieved at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/--dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf on 10/22/17

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Holders

- ▶ *For their service to the U.S. government in Iraq and Afghanistan, certain Iraqis and Afghans are granted Special Immigrant (SIV) status overseas by the U.S. Department of State and are admitted to the U.S. by the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of State, in conjunction with the Voluntary agencies and ORR, assist with the resettlement and integration of SIVs into the U.S. An SIV is eligible for the same ORR benefits and services and for the same time period as a refugee, from the first day the SIV arrives in the U.S. – The Office of Refugee Resettlement*

- retrieved at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/special-immigrant-visa-siv-holders-from-iraq-and-afghanistan> on 10/20/17

Special Immigrant Visas

Recipients of these special visas served as interpreters or translators or performed other key jobs in Afghanistan or Iraq for the U.S. government and in doing so put themselves and their families in danger.

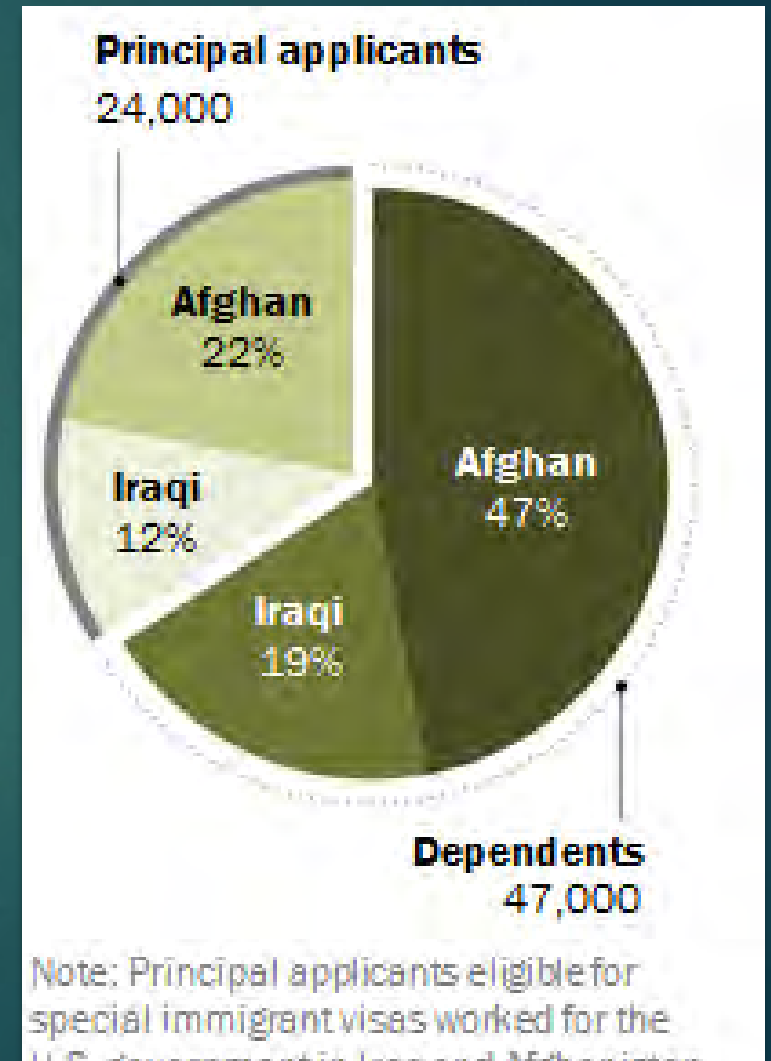
Retrieved at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/11/afghans-who-worked-for-u-s-government-make-up-growing-share-of-special-immigrant-visa-recipients/> on 12/12/18



Special Immigrant Visas: Mostly Afghans

More than two-thirds of special immigrant visas have gone to Afghans (48,601) since fiscal 2007 – the first year visas were awarded under the programs – while Iraqis have received 21,961 such visas. Totals include visas issued to the principal applicants who worked for the U.S. government, as well as their spouses and unmarried children younger than 21. (These special visas make up a small slice – about 1% – of the overall number of U.S. immigrant visas awarded from fiscal years 2007 to 2017.)

Retrieved at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/11/afghans-who-worked-for-u-s-government-make-up-growing-share-of-special-immigrant-visa-recipients/> on 12/12/18



Where in the U.S. are refugees resettling?



Interlude # 3: So, where are the refugees who come to the United States resettling?

- ▶ Take 30 seconds and jot which three states you think are accepting the most refugees. Then turn to your partner and share your answer.
- ▶ Then discuss with your partner where you think Maryland ranks in the line-up.

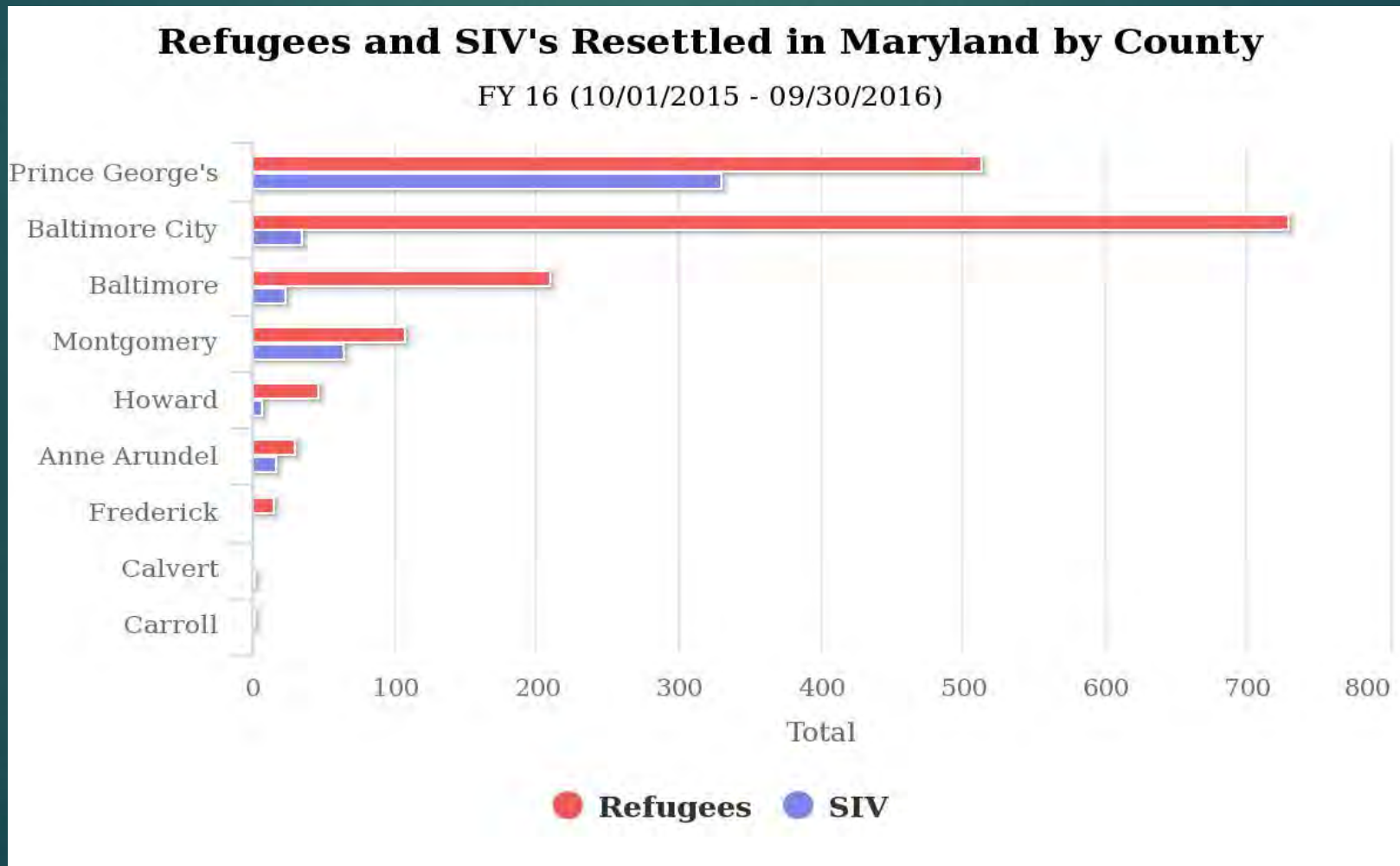


And now, the results ...

- ▶ **For FY2016**, the three states at the top of the list are: California (7,909), Texas (7,803), and New York (5,026) - retrieved at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/06/just-10-states-resettled-more-than-half-of-recent-refugees-to-u-s/> on 10/22/17
- ▶ **For October, 2016 through April, 2017...**
 - ✓ Maryland comes in at # 20
 - ✓ Rounding out the bottom three slots are: District of Columbia (2), Hawaii (3), and Wyoming (0)- retrieved at http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/05/24163317/USRefugees_By_State_Oct16-Apr17.pdf on 10/22/17

Refugee and SIV Numbers Maryland

- retrieved at <http://dhr.maryland.gov/maryland-office-for-refugees-and-asylees/statistics/> on 10/22/17



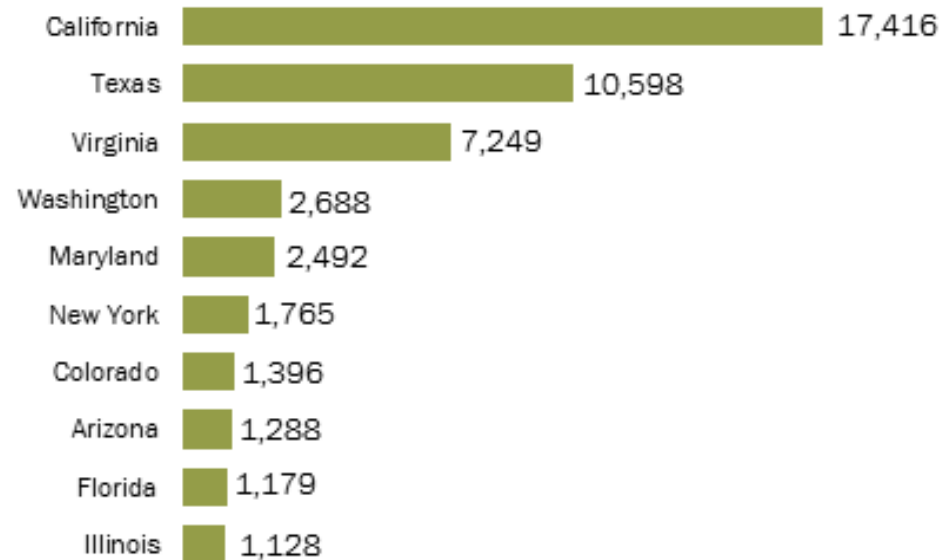
Where are SIV Holders Living?

- Since FY 2008, the state with the largest number SIVs is California.
- Between FY 2008 and 2017, nearly 2,500 SIVs have resettled in Maryland.

Retrieved at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/11/afghans-who-worked-for-u-s-government-make-up-growing-share-of-special-immigrant-visa-recipients/> on 12/12/18

California and Texas are top states for resettlement among special immigrant visa holders

Number of Iraqi and Afghan citizens resettled in the U.S. under special immigrant visa programs, fiscal years 2008 to 2017



Note: Those eligible for special immigrant visas worked for the U.S. government in Iraq and Afghanistan. Recipients only include those who have elected to receive refugee benefits through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Fiscal years begin Oct. 1; fiscal 2017 is through Sept. 30. Only the 10 states with highest number of resettlements are shown. Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center, accessed Oct. 20, 2017.

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We know where they are going. So, where are they from?



From which countries are most refugees in the U.S. coming?

Interlude # 4: We know where they are going. So, where are they from?

From which countries has the U.S. received the largest numbers of refugees in recent years?

Work with your elbow partner for one minute to decide.



We know where they are going. So, where are they from?

- ▶ According to KQED, nearly half of all refugees in FY 2016 came from just three countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria and Burma (Myanmar). The largest number of refugees over the last decade have come from Burma (159,692) and Iraq (135,643).

– retrieved at <https://ww2.kqed.org/lowdown/2017/02/04/who-are-the-refugees-living-in-america-today/> on 10/22/17

Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA)

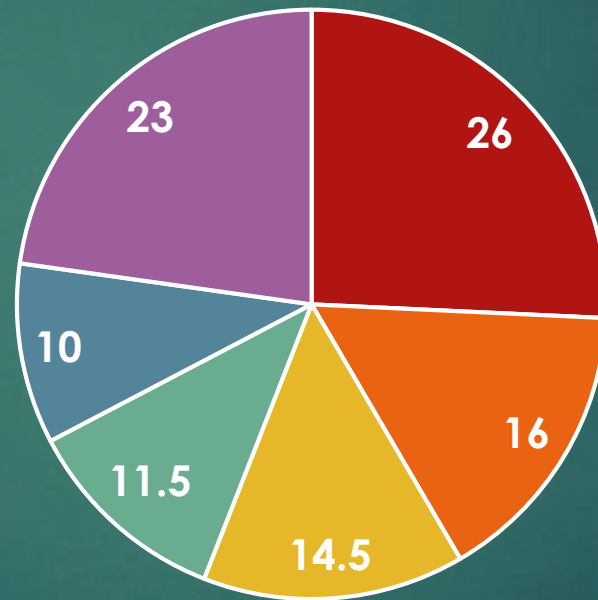
Refugees and SIV's Resettled in Maryland by Nationality

FY 2012 - FY 2016 (10/01/2011 - 9/30/2016)

Nationality	Refugee	SIV	Total
Burma	1,946		1,946
Afghanistan	77	1,141	1,218
Iraq	908	197	1,105
Bhutan	875		875
Democratic Republic of the Congo	740		740
Eritrea	596		596
Syria	404		404
Sudan	337		337
Iran	218		218
Ethiopia	190		190

The same information presented graphically ...

% of Refugees



■ Burma ■ Afghanistan ■ Iraq ■ Bhutan ■ D.R. of Congo ■ Other Top 5

And now, the numbers for Maryland for FY2018

- ▶ Total Numbers for Maryland for Federal Fiscal Year 2018
- ▶ Refugees: 465
- ▶ SIVs: 513
- ▶ The Three Largest Contributing Countries
- ▶ Afghanistan: 539
- ▶ Democratic Republic of Congo: 141
- ▶ El Salvador: 82

A Look at Recent National Numbers

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.

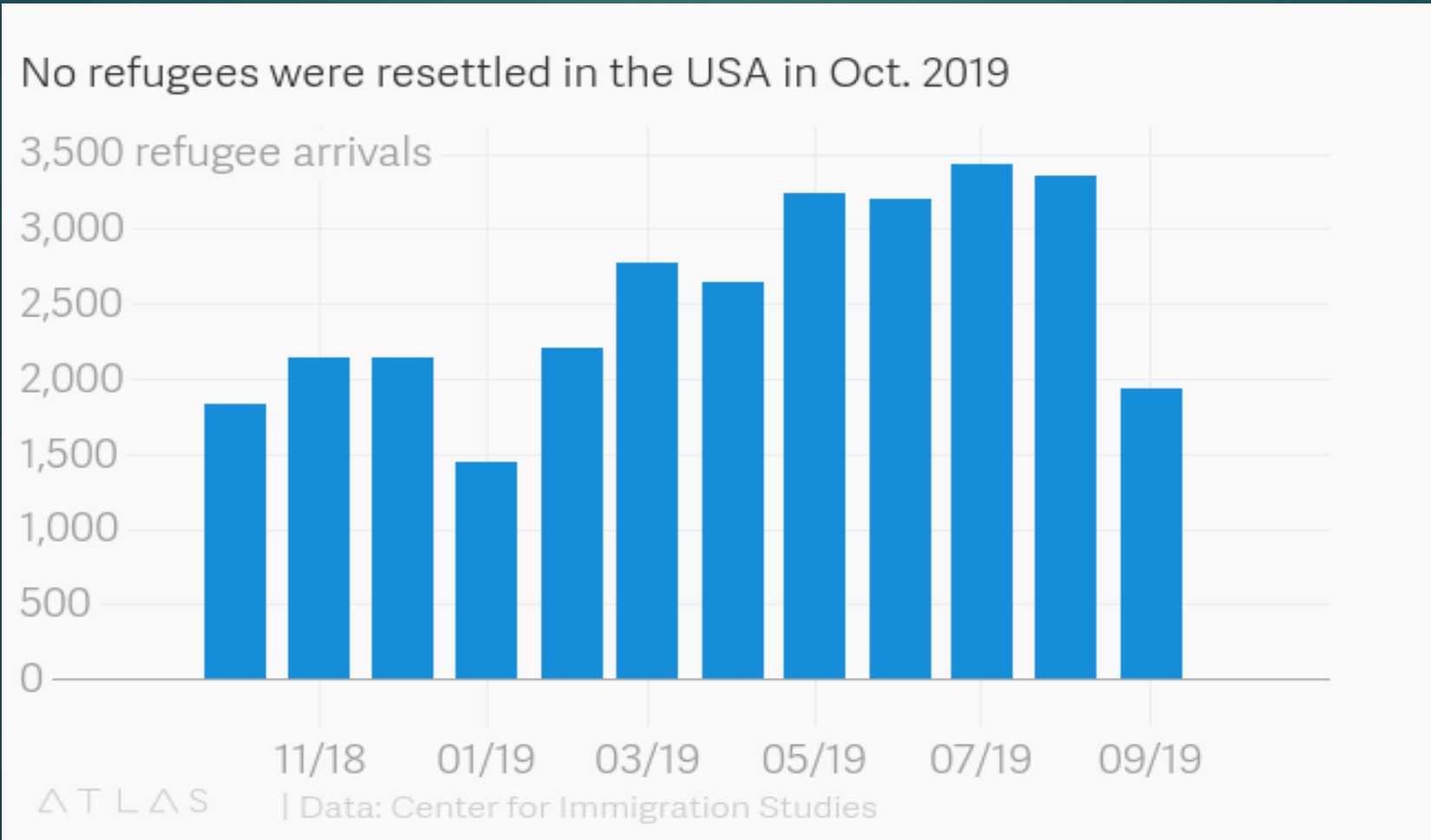
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data, accessed June 12, 2019.

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retrieved at https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FT_19.10.07_Refugees_US-trailed-world-refugee-resettlement-2017-2018.png?w=640

A Look at Recent National Numbers

retrieved from <https://www.theatlas.com/charts/goxk3fzVp> on November 7, 2019



An Unprecedented Month

- ▶ Last month, for the first time since records began, the number of refugees resettled in the US hit zero.
- ▶ The nosedive is the result of a State Department freeze on admissions, according to [a World Relief press release](#), resulting in hundreds of canceled flights and yet more uncertainty for the thousands of refugees hoping to resettle in the US.
- ▶ The department has issued [an admissions ceiling](#) of 18,000 for the financial year 2020—the lowest in almost 30 years, and well below the number of displaced people already in the pipeline to be resettled in the US. (Ceilings for 2018 and 2019 were 45,000 and 30,000, respectively.)



And now, A Look at FY2020 ...

“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.”

-- Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/07/key-facts-about-refugees-to-the-u-s/> on November 7, 2019

So, what do we do at the Refugee Training Program (RTP) at Montgomery College?

Well, the Program ...

- ❖ provides basic ESOL classes. These classes have a work-oriented theme since most of our clients are looking for jobs.
- ❖ awards scholarships to some of our clients to take vocational classes in other WD&CE units.
- ❖ partners with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a resettlement agency which provides employment services and other forms of support.
- ❖ refers clients to other partner agencies and organizations as needed and raise awareness as to the services available to them.

So, how can I help?

Primarily through
Donations and
Advocacy



Refugee Resettlement Agencies

- ▶ **International Rescue Committee (IRC)**
<https://help.rescue.org/donate> or 1-855-9RESCUE
- ▶ **Lutheran Social Services (LSS)**
<http://lssnca.org/> or 202-723-3000
- ▶ **Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)**
<http://www.ecdcus.org/> or 703-685-0510
- ▶ **HIAS** (founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)
<https://www.hias.org/> or 301-844-7300

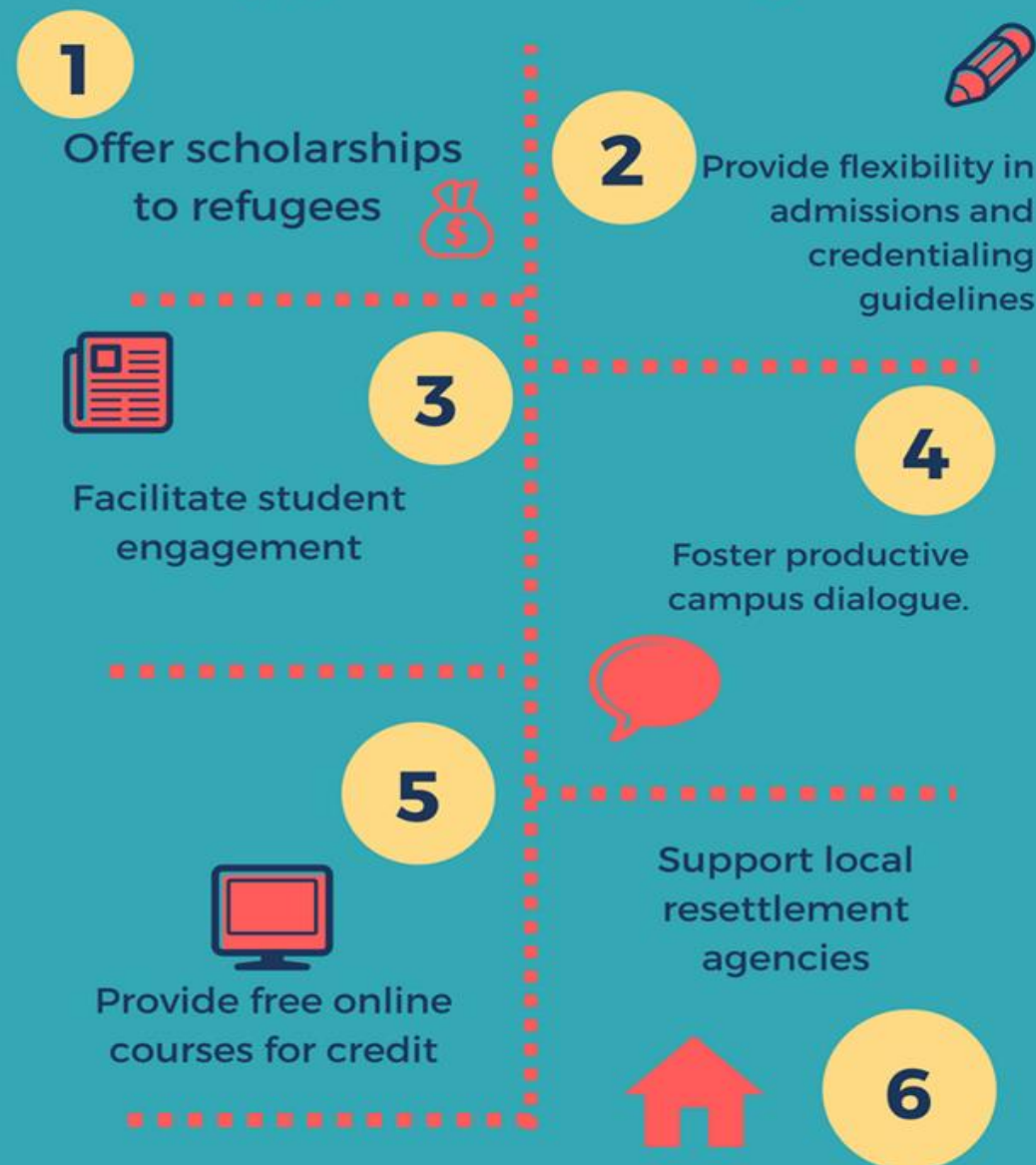
More Ideas on How to Help Refugees Globally and Locally

- ▶ Visit the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees at <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/about-us.html>
- ▶ Visit the IRC at <https://www.rescue.org/article/how-help-refugees-united-states-12-ways-stand-welcome>
- ▶ Visit the Refugee Council USA at <http://www.rcusa.org/>

What are some ways we might help refugees and other at-risk student populations as an institution?

From http://genun.unausa.org/higher_education_support_for_refugees

6 Ways Universities Support Refugees



#NoLostGen

Interlude # 5

One last time with your elbow partner – Take one minute to discuss ideas on how Montgomery College might better serve refugees and other at-risk populations.



World Refugee Day: June 20

- ▶ On December 4, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly decided that June 20 would be celebrated as World Refugee Day.
- ▶ The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) commemorates this day along with many civic groups in order to draw attention to the millions of refugees worldwide.

A Final Thought

“We drift from the safe places of our childhood. There is no going back. Like stories, villages and cities are always growing or fading or melding into each other. We are all immigrants from the past, and home lives inside the memory, where we lock it up and pretend it is unchanged.”

-- from *The Ungrateful Refugee* by Dina Nayeri (Catapult, 2019), pg. 346

References

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- Quartz at <https://qz.com/1741113/no-refugees-were-resettled-in-the-us-in-october-2019/>
- UNHCR at <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/>
- United Nations Association of the United States of America at http://genun.unausa.org/higher_education_support_for_refugees
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, at <https://www.uscis.gov/>