

Global Refugee

Formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. New name, same mission.

Global Refuge

“God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.”

– Psalm 46



History

Welcoming new neighbors since 1939

- The National Lutheran Council (NLC) set up a Welfare Department with an office for the “rehabilitation and placement of Lutheran refugees” in the aftermath of World War II – serving 522 in the first year.
- In years since, LIRS welcomed more than 800,000 newcomers – responding to conflicts in Cuba, Uganda, Vietnam, The Balkans, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, Venezuela and more.



Why “Global Refuge?”

- Founded by Lutherans, to resettle Lutherans, in 1939 –LIRS was named to honor it's founders.
- Today, the majority of the immigrants in Global Refuge's care are not Christian, let alone Lutheran
- Changing the name moves from centering our identify around *those who founded the organization*, to **centering our identify around those we serve**.
- Ironically, a rather Lutheran move.

Refugee, Asylum Seeker, Immigrant

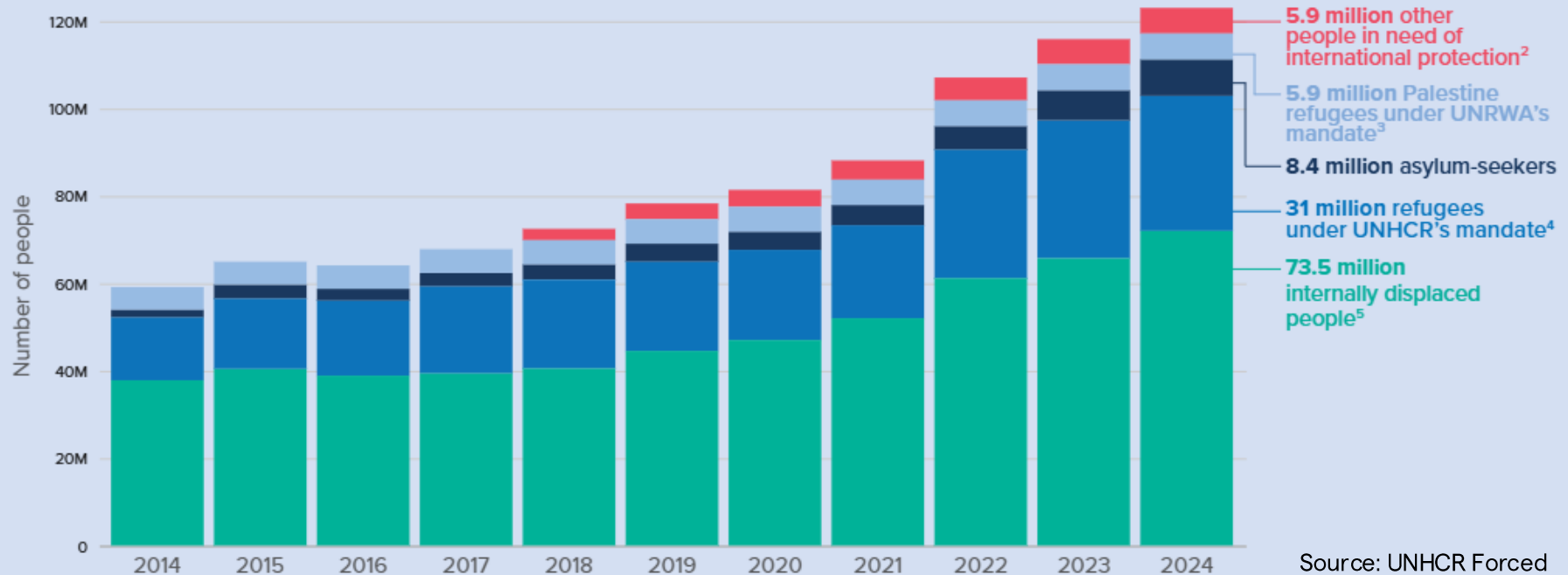
What do these words mean?

- **Immigrant:** Any person who leaves their home country and moves to another country permanently
- **Refugee:** Someone who is unable to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Refugee claimants apply for and receive the status before they arrive in their country of resettlement.
- **Asylee/ Asylum Seeker:** Someone who is unable to return to their country of origin owing to a well- founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Asylum seekers apply for their status at a US port of entry or after they are already admitted to the US.

123.2 MILLION

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE¹

at the end of 2024 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence,
human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.



Source: UNHCR Forced Displacement Report 2024

73% HOSTED IN LOW-AND MIDDLE- INCOME COUNTRIES

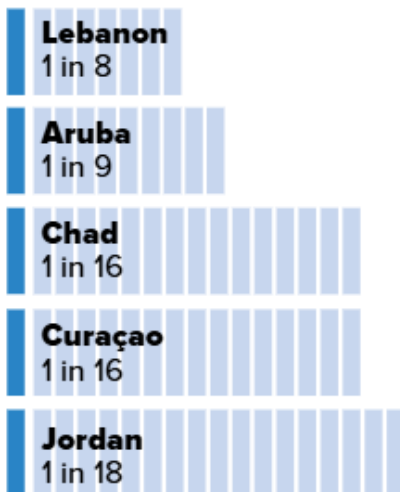
Low- and middle-income countries hosted 73 per cent of the world's refugees and other people in need of international protection.⁶ The Least Developed Countries provided asylum to 23 per cent of the total.

67% HOSTED IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

67 per cent of refugees and other people in need of international protection lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin.

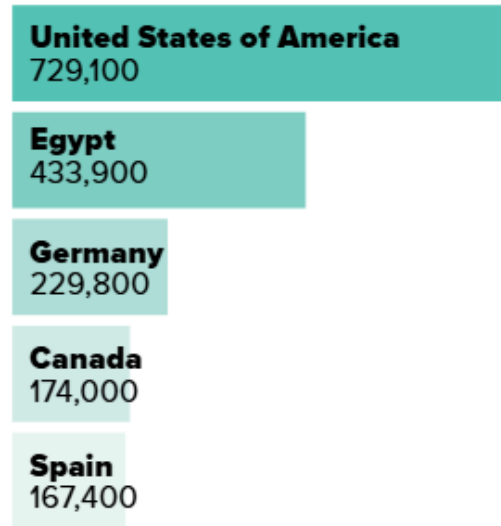
1 IN 8 ARE DISPLACED

Relative to their national populations,⁷ Lebanon (1 in 8) hosted the largest number of refugees and other people in need of international protection, followed by the island of Aruba (1 in 9), Chad (1 in 16), Curaçao (1 in 16) and Jordan (1 in 18).⁸



3.1 MILLION NEW CLAIMS

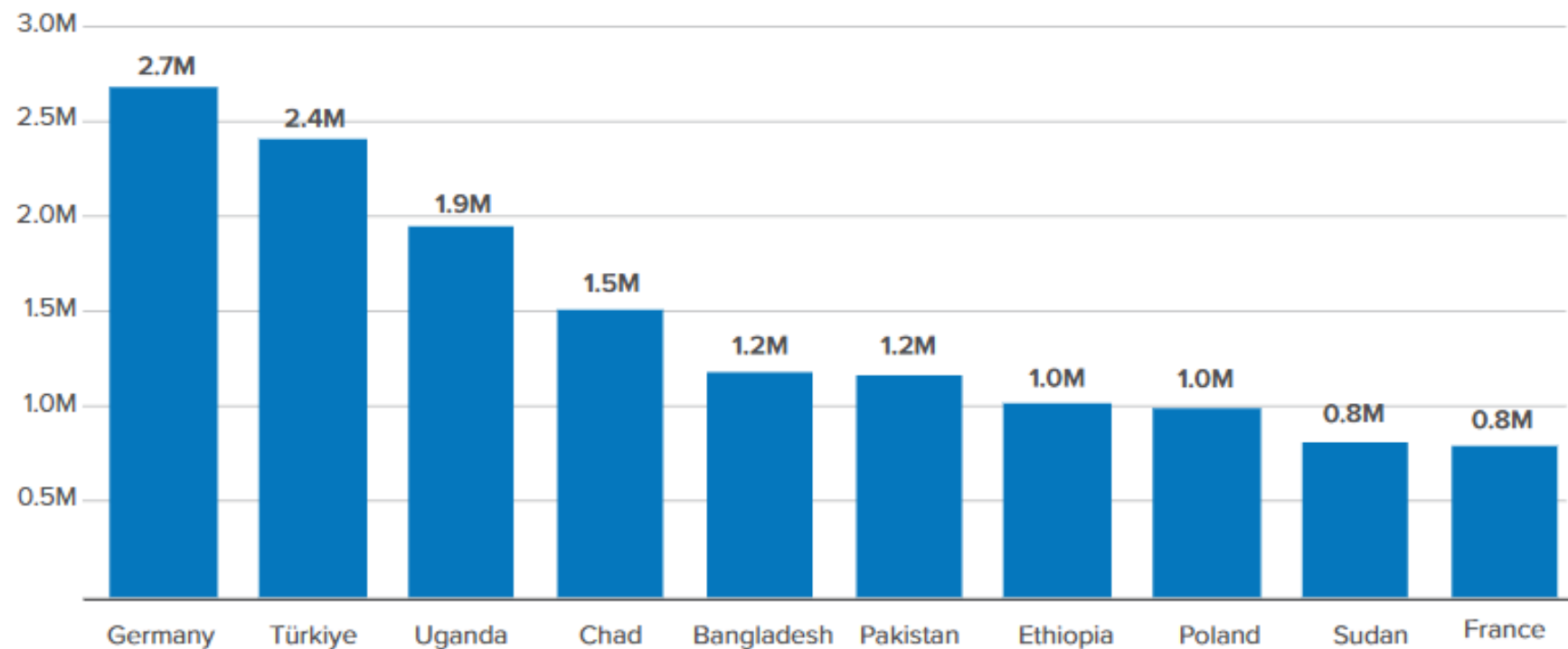
The United States of America⁹ was the world's largest recipient of new individual applications.



Source: UNHCR Forced Displacement Report 2024

Top 10 countries hosting refugees

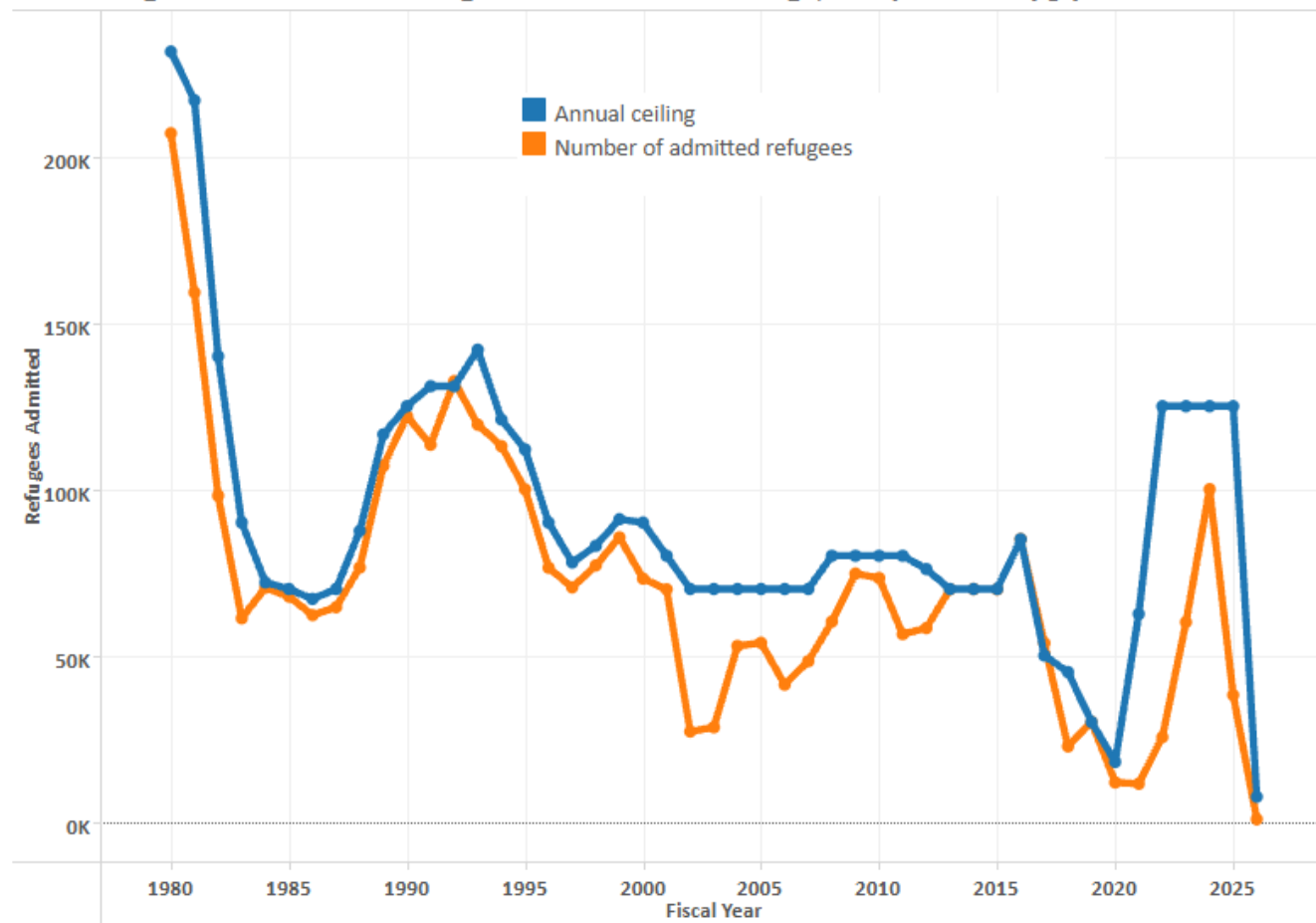
These countries hosted **51%** or 14.4 million of the **28.5 million** refugees worldwide.



The Refugee Ceiling

- Established by the Refugee Act of 1980, this limit determines how many refugees can be admitted into the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).
- The Refugee Ceiling is established by the President in consultation with Congress.
 - In 2025, the President set the refugee ceiling without consultation with Congress, meeting with Congress after the legal deadline had passed
- The **2026 Refugee Ceiling** was set at 7,500. This is the lowest level in the program's 45-year history. In May 2026, the ceiling was raised to 17,500.

U.S. Refugee Admissions & Refugee Resettlement Ceilings, FY 1980-2026(Q1)*



Source: Migration Policy Institute

Refugee Resettlement

- Refugees are individuals who have fled their home country due to a ***well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.***
- Refugees apply for protection through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or directly at U.S. embassies while still outside of the U.S.
- Refugees undergo rigorous vetting by several different US agencies, including background checks and medical screenings prior to being approved to travel to the United States.

*They are the most vetted
demographic of immigrants;
They can't come here any
"right"-er way!*

And yet the rules are changing
beneath their feet.



DISINFORMATION

Myth or Fact

Most immigrants come to the United States illegally.

- Each year, tens of thousands of people migrate to the U.S. via the **refugee resettlement program**, through **work visas**, to **reunite with family**, and more.
- Of those who come through the Southern border, approximately **92% turned themselves in to Border Control** to begin their asylum cases.

DISINFORMATION

Myth or Fact

Refugees and Immigrants take American Jobs.

- More than **55% of the country's billion-dollar startups** founded by immigrants
 - Immigrants create more jobs than they take
- **2.8 million** immigrants work in healthcare in the U.S.
- **75%** of immigrants work in IT, management, or finance



DISINFORMATION

Myth or Fact

Refugees and immigrants do not pay taxes and are a drain on our nation's resources.

- Refugees and asylees contribute significantly to U.S. communities at the federal, state, and local level through tax payments
 - **19.2%** of all taxes paid in the country
- Refugees and asylees contributed an estimated **\$581 billion in tax revenue** to the U.S. economy from 2005 to 2019.

DISINFORMATION

Myth or Fact

A majority of Americans support Immigration Reform.



- **81% of voters** in battleground states support a pathway to citizenship for immigrants
- **68% of Americans** believe immigration is a good thing for our country.

Global Refuge Today

- Camino a Casa
- Mental Health Services
- Preferred Refugee Employers
- New American Lending
- Legal Services
- Children & Family Services





2025 Year-End Impact Report:

Camino a Casa

As the U.S. escalates immigration enforcement and deportations, many young people are being returned to their home countries, facing a difficult transition with few resources to help them rebuild their lives.

In response to this growing crisis, our Camino a Casa teams in Guatemala and Mexico are ramping up support by expanding services, strengthening partnerships with local organizations and municipalities, and increasing resources to help young people build a stronger future for themselves and their families.

Our 2025 Impact:

3,099
participants
served

We served, trained, and connected individuals through case management, mental health services, and educational opportunities.

514
home
visits

Our social workers, psychologists, and other team members traveled upwards of six hours to check in on youths and their families in their homes.

537
clinical
sessions

We provided personalized sessions to help young people and their families address trauma, strengthen positive coping skills, and build a support system.

9
countries

Our Mexico team served individuals from Angola, the U.S., Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, and others who have received refugee status in Mexico.

[Luz's Story](#)



Global Refugee Faith Alliance

www.globalrefugefaithalliance.org

Faith Alliance

- A safe, welcome training for communities of faith
- Modeled after Reconciling in Christ
- 4 video modules
 - Immigration in the Bible
 - Immigration 101
 - Immigrant Voices
 - Indicators of Safe Welcome
- End of training culminates in a retreat where the church commits to certain action items for the next year to be a welcoming congregation
 - Receive logos/swag to show that you're a safe place for immigrants
 - Annual re-training and idea sharing



Ambassador Network

- The main way we work with volunteers right now
- Ambassadors engage the work of welcome in their communities as
 1. Advocates
 2. Organizers
 3. Philanthropists
 4. Representatives
- Ambassadors engage with Global Refuge staff virtually: for quarterly meetings and occasional trainings, and updates from leadership
- Who do you know who you can nominate to apply to become an Ambassador?

Advocate

- Call your representatives (or schedule in-person visits!) to advocate for immigrants and refugees
- Sign up for Global Refuge action alerts to get our latest policy updates



Get Involved

Global Refuge Action Hub



mobilization@globalrefuge.org

[**globalrefuge.org**](https://globalrefuge.org)



Global Refuge

Welcoming Newcomers Since 1939