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Fact Sheet

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
Washington, DC
April 4, 2005

Refugee Admissions Program for Europe and Central Asia

Background

Since 1975, the U.S. refugee admissions program has resettled over 890,000 refugees from Europe and Central Asia in the United States. Approximately two-thirds of this number came from the countries of the former Soviet Union, and the remainder were from other parts of Europe.

Since 1989, the U.S. program has processed nearly 430,000 qualifying refugees under the Lautenberg Amendment, which applies to individuals from specified religious groups (Jews, Evangelicals, and certain members of the Ukrainian Catholic or Ukrainian Orthodox Churches). In addition to those eligible under the Lautenberg Amendment, all nationalities are eligible for referral to the program by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or by a U.S. Embassy.

In FY 2004, the U.S. refugee admissions program admitted a total of 9,254 refugees from Europe and Central Asia, with the majority adjudicated under the Lautenberg Amendment in-country processing program. This represents a significant reduction from the 30,000 refugees admitted from the region during FY 2001, as the number of applicants to the program from this region has sharply declined.

Between 1993 and 2003, the United States resettled over 143,000 Bosnian refugees. This program has now largely come to a close and the number of Bosnian refugees resettled in the United States has decreased to a negligible level.

In February 2004, we opened a new resettlement program for Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar Kray, Russia. This group had most recently fled ethnic violence in Central Asia in 1989. Although they were citizens of the former Soviet Union, about 11,000 Meskhetian Turks in this region have been denied legal status in Russia by local authorities. Some 10,000 Meskhetian Turks have applied to the program.

FY 2005 Admissions Program

The FY 2005 ceiling for this region is 9,500. In addition to ongoing processing of Lautenberg Amendment cases and Meskhetian Turks, we will continue circuit rides to the Caucasus and Central Asia to interview applicants throughout the region.



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