

BRIEFING ROOM

Statement by President Joe Biden on Refugee Admissions

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Today, I am revising the United States' annual refugee admissions cap to 62,500 for this fiscal year. This erases the historically low number set by the previous administration of 15,000, which did not reflect America's values as a nation that welcomes and supports refugees. The new admissions cap will also reinforce efforts that are already underway to expand the United States' capacity to admit refugees, so that we can reach the goal of 125,000 refugee admissions that I intend to set for the coming fiscal year.

It is important to take this action today to remove any lingering doubt in the minds of refugees around the world who have suffered so much, and who are anxiously waiting for their new lives to begin.

The United States Refugee Admissions Program embodies America's commitment to protect the most vulnerable, and to stand as a beacon of liberty and refuge to the world. It's a statement about who we are, and who we want to be. So we are going to rebuild what has been broken and push hard to complete the rigorous screening process for those refugees already in the pipeline for admission.

The sad truth is that we will not achieve 62,500 admissions this year. We are working quickly to undo the damage of the last four years. It will take some time, but that work is already underway. We have reopened the program to new refugees. And by changing the regional allocations last month, we have already increased the number of refugees ready for departure to the United States.

The budget that I have submitted to Congress also reflects my commitment to the goal of 125,000 refugee admissions in the first fiscal year of my presidency. That goal will still be hard to hit. We might not make it the first year. But we are going to use every tool available to help these fully-vetted refugees fleeing horrific conditions in their home countries. This will reassert American leadership and American values when it comes to refugee admissions.

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