



Help Your Favorite Area Non-Profit With GRANT

US lags behind goal to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees by Oct.

E-MAIL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE

LINKEDIN

35



BILAL HUSSEIN/AP

Women prepared food at a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon on Tuesday.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE STAFF MARCH 30, 2016

The head of the United Nations on Wednesday issued an impassioned plea for nations around the world to accept more Syrian refugees.

But so far the United States is struggling to meet its own, relatively modest goals.

The end of this month will mark the halfway point for the Obama administration's target of settling at least 10,000 Syrian refugees in the United States by Oct. 1. But only about 1,200 refugees have settled here during the past six months, including 10 in Massachusetts, according to data from the US State Department.

Still, the State Department says it "remains steadfastly committed to the President's plan."

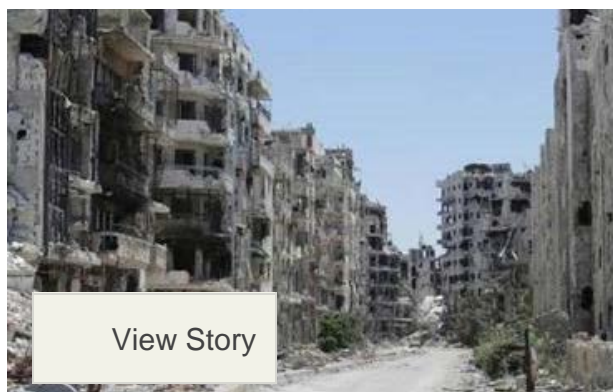
"The US has established several new initiatives to increase processing capacity, including new processing centers, increased staffing, and a new pathway for certain Syrians with relatives in the United States to apply for refugee resettlement," State Department spokeswoman Nicole Thompson said in an e-mail.



Creativity is
your calling.
Pursue it.

Lesley University. Where artists and
designers turn their passions into futures.

LEARN MORE >>> 



Alex Kingsbury: From suffering in Syria to safety in Conn.

Ahmad and his family fled the blasted-out city of Homs and did not stop running until they

reached New Haven.

UN chief urges nations to accept more Syrian refugees

She said officials from the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security have also expanded efforts to interview refugee applicants currently in the country of Jordan, where many Syrian refugees have fled.

The number of personnel conducting and supporting interviews in Jordan was increased in February and heightened staffing levels will continue through April, Thompson wrote.

“The operation is on-schedule to complete refugee interviews by the end of April,” she said.

From Oct. 1 through Monday, a total of 1,207 Syrian refugees had been settled in the US, according to records kept by the State Department’s Refugee Processing Center.

March will be the busiest month so far, but the pace has fluctuated in prior months. In October, 187 Syrian refugees were brought to the US; 250 were settled in November; 237 in December; 167 in January; 114 in February; and 252 this month through Monday.

Since the conflict in Syria began in 2011, millions of people have fled the country.

Globally, the largest settlement of Syrian refugees is in Turkey, where nearly 2.7 million have fled, followed by Lebanon, where there are more than 1 million, and Jordan, where there are about 640,000, according to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. About a million have flocked to countries in Europe.

But only about 3,100 Syrian refugees have been settled in the United States between 2011 and

Monday.

On Wednesday at a global conference in Geneva focused on the resettlement issue, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged countries around the world to take in more Syrian refugees.

“I ask that countries act with solidarity, in the name of our shared humanity, by pledging new and additional pathways for the admission of Syrian refugees,” he said. “These pathways can include resettlement or humanitarian admission, family reunions, as well as labor or study opportunities.”

Ban called the figures on the numbers of people fleeing Syria “numbing.”

“But these are all individuals with tragic stories: Children who have lost their parents; Teenagers who are suddenly in charge of their families; Men and women, old and young, who have experienced terrible atrocities Some carry shrapnel in their bodies. All bear the mental scars of displacement,” he said in a copy of his remarks posted on the UN website.

Amid worldwide concern over the plight of refugees flooding out of the Middle East, the White House announced in September that the United States would take in more Syrian refugees, vowing to settle at least 10,000 over the 12-month period that began Oct. 1, which is when the federal fiscal year starts.

The plan has been criticized by some, including elected leaders and Republican presidential candidates, who have worried that terrorists might enter the United States through the refugee process. GOP frontrunner Donald Trump has proposed at least a temporary ban on Muslims entering the country.

Thompson said in her e-mail that “refugees are the most thoroughly screened category of traveler to the United States,” and the plan to resettle at least 10,000 Syrian refugees “will not curtail any aspects of the process, including its robust screening.”

“All applicants will still be subject to the same stringent security requirements that apply to all applicants for US refugee resettlement,” she said.

Officials have also pointed out that the vast majority of Syrian refugees brought to the US have been children or women, and that only a small percentage were single men unattached to families.

Ban in his remarks Wednesday said that, “When managed properly, accepting refugees is a win for everyone.”

“Refugees are famously devoted to education, improvement and self-reliance. They bring new skills and experience to an ageing workforce,” he said. “Attempts to demonize them are not only offensive; they are factually incorrect. I call on leaders to counter fearmongering with reassurance, and to fight inaccurate information with the truth.”

Syrians represent about 4.3 percent of the 27,770 refugees settled in the United States since Oct. 1.

The Obama administration plans to settle 85,000 refugees overall in the United States in the current fiscal year, which would be an increase from the 70,000 refugees settled in the country in each of the past three fiscal years, officials said.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)

Get [Today's Headlines](#) from the Globe in your inbox:

[Privacy Policy](#)

SHOW 35 COMMENTS

Stay updated, right in your news feed.

Top 10 Trending Articles

Most Viewed

Most Commented

Most Shared

Patriots release Dominique Easley

Trump would be a disaster, but Cruz would be apocalyptic

Patriots 2016 schedule

‘The Sisterhood of the Traveling Prom Dress’

Governor Baker halts speech under onslaught of boos at LG...

Baker, Walsh to launch anti-marijuana campaign

Learn more

ClassPass raises prices and local fitness buffs fume

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS](#) [EPAPER EDITION](#) [NEWS IN EDUCATION](#)

Vermont immigrant investor program operated Ponzi-like s...

[MY ACCOUNT](#)

[LOGOUT](#)

A mother's frank depiction of daughter's overdose touches t...

[MANAGE MY ACCOUNT](#)

[DOWNLOAD CUSTOMER SERVICE APP](#)

Bad deals in 2014 continue to haunt Red Sox

SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[TWITTER](#)

[GOOGLE+](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[HELP](#)

[FAQS](#)

[GLOBE NEWSROOM](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

MORE

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

[TERMS OF PURCHASE](#)

[YOUR AD CHOICES](#)

[WORK AT BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA](#)