



A young Somali refugee in Dadaab, Kenya, waits with her ration card to receive food. UNHCR Photo © E. Hockstein

Real People, Real Needs

June 20 is World Refugee Day, a day to remember the millions in our world who have been forcibly uprooted by persecution and violence. Many will never be able to return home. Many will never be able to live in safety – unless a U.S. community takes them in. These are real people with real needs for protection:

- *“Government authorities kept coming, saying, ‘Are you still here? Go! Otherwise we’ll put fire on your house.’ They were trying to kill us. We ran away in the nighttime.”*
 - Dambar, a husband and father from Bhutan, now living in Colorado
- *“I was a respected high school teacher back home. Here, I have been turned into a fugitive. At any moment I can get arrested for not having valid residency papers and be detained or deported.”*
 - Hala, a mother of four from Iraq, now living in a refugee camp in Lebanon
- *“I was raped by Burmese soldiers, by the traffickers who brought me to Malaysia, and by the Malaysian police. I want to die. I’m just staying alive for my family.”*
 - Mother of two from Burma, now living in a makeshift jungle camp

Even as we care for “our own,” let us continue to welcome refugees to our nation. Their very lives are at stake.

Who is a Refugee?

A refugee is a person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

Defined at the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees

Refugee Facts

- 14 million: Number of refugees & asylum seekers worldwide
- 8.5 million: Refugees who have spent 10+ years in camps
- 26 million: People forcibly displaced within their own countries
- 60,192: Refugees resettled to the U.S. in Fiscal Year 2008
- Middle East: Region with the largest number of refugees
- 475,000+: Refugees CWS has resettled to the U.S. since 1946

Sources: Church World Service, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants.

Church World Service

Church World Service and participating communions work together to protect and assist uprooted people worldwide. CWS provides help and homes to refugees, resettling about 8,000 refugees and entrants in the United States every year. Congregations and affiliate agencies provide services locally. Around the world, CWS helps meet the needs of people in protracted refugee situations through its Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons program. CWS also promotes policies and practices that support fairness, support, and welcome for the uprooted. For more information, contact:



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