

Migration and Refugee Assistance

COMMUNITY REQUEST FY 2020

\$3.6 B

FY 2020 President's Request: \$365 Million
FY 2019 Enacted: \$3.43 Billion

DESCRIPTION

The Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account mitigates and resolves conflict-related displacement and supports humanitarian action and diplomacy for displaced populations. It helps stabilize volatile situations and strengthen bilateral relationships with key refugee-hosting countries. **Funding helps to meet the basic human needs of displaced people, supports sustainable and dignified solutions to their displacement, and assists the countries hosting them.** Durable solutions include returning to place of origin if the conditions permit, remaining in the status quo with greater integration into host communities, or resettlement to a third country.

WHAT DOES THIS BUY?

Through the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and other partners, MRA investments provide life-sustaining assistance to refugees including funds related to the admission, reception, and placement of refugees to the U.S.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST

- **Conflict or persecution forcibly displaces nearly one person every two seconds** (both internally displaced and refugee), amounting to over 68.5 million people worldwide.
- Crises that force people to leave their homes occur more frequently and last longer. UNHCR estimates that the **average length of major protracted refugee situations is now 26 years**. Twenty-three of the 32 protracted refugee situations at the end of 2015 have lasted for more than 20 years.¹
- Access to livelihoods and educational opportunities is crucial to preventing a generation of children from missing out on the chance for a better future and ensuring that communities can recover from disaster and build stronger, more prosperous countries.
- Over 727,000 Rohingya from Myanmar have been displaced. Natural disasters worsen their flight, making this funding vital to secure a safe future.²
- In 2017, the crisis in South Sudan produced 1 million refugees in just one year. Only 34% of the funds needed to respond to humanitarian crisis have been raised.
- As of November 2018, the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela worldwide reached 3 million,³ the vast majority – 2.4 million – are being hosted by Latin American and Caribbean countries.

U.S. INTEREST

The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings. Humanitarian actors must remain neutral, not taking sides in hostilities or engaging in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature. Humanitarian action must be based on need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class, or political affiliations. Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold regarding areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.⁴



Looking to the Future

Migration and Refugee Assistance – TITLE III

BOLD VISION

- **Developing countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia host 84% of refugees, with least developed countries hosting 28% of the global total.** These countries are ill-equipped to handle large in-flows of people. Additional investment could allow the U.S. to financially buttress political and humanitarian responses to mitigate refugee outflows and support developing host-country nations.
- The U.S. should increase the number of refugees resettled in line with historic norms of 95,000 annually. Given that security vetting and other operational updates are in place to resume good faith operations of the resettlement program, the U.S. should not turn its back on the worst refugee crisis in global history.

IMPACT OF CUTS

- Cuts would deny millions of children, more than half of refugees globally, access to education, health, child protection, and other crucial services and greatly increase their risk for child labor, marriage, trafficking, and abuse.
- Female-headed households (FHH) fare worse on nearly every indicator of vulnerability, are still among the most vulnerable, and cuts would harm them the most. Among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 50% of FHH had severe and moderate food insecurity compared with 35% of male headed-households (MHH). 68% of FHH live below extreme poverty, compared to 56% of MHH.⁵

1 <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/protracted/>.

2 <https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis>.

3 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/11/5be4192b4/number-refugees-migrants-venezuela-reaches-3-million.html>.

4 “OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles, June 2012,” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf.

5 “Gender in the 2017 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

5 YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

