

# Refugees and Asylees: 2013

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The United States provides refuge to persons who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution through two programs: a refugee program for persons outside the U.S. and their immediate relatives and an asylum program for persons in the U.S. and their immediate relatives. This Office of Immigration Statistics Annual Flow Report provides information on the number of persons admitted to the United States as refugees or granted asylum in the United States in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

A total of 69,909 persons<sup>2</sup> were admitted to the United States as refugees during 2013 (see Figure 1). The leading countries of nationality for refugees were Iraq, Burma, and Bhutan. During 2013, 25,199 individuals were granted asylum,<sup>3</sup> including 15,266 who were granted asylum affirmatively by the Department of Homeland Security<sup>4</sup> (DHS) and 9,933 who were granted asylum defensively by the Department of Justice (see Figure 2). The leading countries of nationality for persons granted either affirmative or defensive asylum were China, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Documents for travel to the United States were issued to 13,026 individuals who were approved for derivative asylum status while located abroad. The leading countries of nationality for the recipients of follow-to-join travel documents were China, Haiti, and Ethiopia. In addition to those approved overseas, 2,240 individuals were approved for derivative asylum status while residing in the United States.

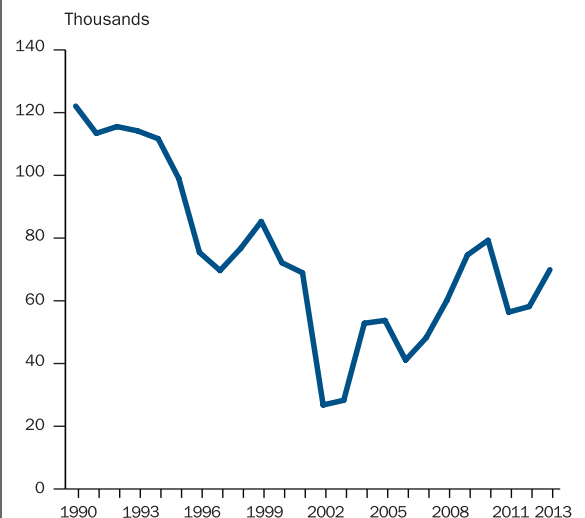
## DEFINING “REFUGEE” AND “ASYLUM” STATUS

To be eligible for refugee or asylum status, an applicant must meet the definition of a refugee set forth in 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA): a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality<sup>5</sup> because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular

social group, or political opinion.<sup>6</sup> An applicant for refugee status is outside the United States, while an applicant seeking asylum status is in the United States or at a U.S. port of entry. Although the INA definition of refugee indicates that the individual is outside his or her country of nationality, the INA also provides the President with the authority to designate countries whose nationals may be processed for refugee status within their respective countries (i.e., in-country

<sup>6</sup> Congress expanded this definition in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, providing that persons who have been forced to abort a pregnancy or undergo involuntary sterilization or who have been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion. The definition, as established in 1980, excludes those who have ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in the persecution of others.

Figure 1.  
Refugee Admissions to the United States:  
1990 to 2013



Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

<sup>1</sup> In this report, years refer to fiscal years (October 1 to September 30). Data presented refer to individuals not cases.

<sup>2</sup> Refugee data in this report differ slightly from numbers reported by the Department of State (DOS). DOS refugee numbers include Amerasians, whereas DHS reports Amerasians as lawful permanent residents.

<sup>3</sup> These asylum grants were based upon a principal asylum beneficiary's application, which may also include an accompanying spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Affirmative asylum data are current as of January 2014 and differ slightly from fiscal year-end 2013 numbers reported by the Asylum Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), of the Department of Homeland Security.

<sup>5</sup> Or, if an applicant is considered “stateless,” his or her country of last habitual residence.



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processing). In 2013, certain nationals of Cuba, the republics of the former Soviet Union, and Iraq were designated for in-country processing. In-country processing is also authorized for extraordinary individual protection cases for which resettlement consideration was requested by a U.S. ambassador.

## REFUGEES

### History of Refugee Legislation

The first refugee legislation in the United States was the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, which brought 400,000 Eastern Europeans to the United States. Other refugee-related legislation included the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 and the Fair Share Refugee Act of 1960. The United States used the Attorney General's parole authority to bring large groups of persons into the country for humanitarian reasons, beginning in 1956 with Hungarian nationals and culminating with hundreds of thousands of Indochinese parolees in the 1970s.

The 1967 United Nations Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (which the United States ratified in 1968) prohibits any nation from returning a refugee to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened. Congress enacted the Refugee Act of 1980 to comply with the requirements and principles of the Protocol, which established a geographically and politically neutral refugee definition. The Refugee Act of 1980 also made a distinction between refugee and asylum status and allowed certain refugee applicants to be processed while in their countries of nationality.

### Admission Ceilings

Before the beginning of each fiscal year, the President, in consultation with Congress, establishes an overall refugee admissions ceiling as well as regional allocations.<sup>7</sup> The total number of refugees authorized for admission in 2013 was 70,000. The largest regional allocation was to the Near East/South Asia region, which accounted for 46 percent of the authorized admissions number to continue accommodating refugee arrivals from Iraq, Iran, and Bhutan (see Table 1).

<sup>7</sup> In many cases, an unallocated reserve is also designated which can be used in any region if the need arises and only after notification to Congress.

**Table 1.**  
**Refugee Admissions Ceilings: 2011 to 2013\***

| Region                            | Ceiling |        |        |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|
|                                   | 2013    | 2012   | 2011   |
| Total . . . . .                   | 70,000  | 76,000 | 80,000 |
| Africa . . . . .                  | 15,950  | 12,000 | 15,000 |
| East Asia . . . . .               | 16,600  | 18,000 | 19,000 |
| Europe/Central Asia . . . . .     | 650     | 2,000  | 2,000  |
| Latin America/Caribbean . . . . . | 4,400   | 5,500  | 5,500  |
| Near East/South Asia . . . . .    | 32,400  | 35,500 | 35,500 |
| Unallocated Reserve . . . . .     | 0       | 3,000  | 3,000  |

\* Ceiling numbers reflect revisions made each fiscal year.

Source: U.S. Department of State, Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY 2014—Report to Congress.

### Eligibility Requirements

In order to qualify for refugee status, a principal applicant must (1) be of special humanitarian concern to the United States; (2) meet the refugee definition as set forth in section 101(a)(42) of the INA; (3) be admissible under the INA; and (4) not be firmly resettled in any foreign country. A derivative refugee relative who is following-to-join need not meet all of these eligibility requirements but must demonstrate a relationship as the spouse or child of an admitted refugee and be admissible to the United States. A person whom U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has determined meets the refugee definition may nonetheless be inadmissible to the United States due to criminal, security, or other grounds, and therefore be ineligible for refugee resettlement unless the Attorney General grants a discretionary waiver under section 207(c)(3) of the INA.

### Application Process

The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) establishes processing priorities to identify individuals and groups who are of special humanitarian concern to the United States and who are eligible for refugee resettlement consideration. Priority categories are Priority One (P-1)—individuals referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a U.S. Embassy, or certain non-governmental organizations; Priority Two (P-2)—groups of special humanitarian concern; and Priority Three (P-3)—family reunification cases.<sup>8</sup> Once a principal refugee applicant has been referred or granted access to USRAP under any of these three Priorities, he or she still must meet all other eligibility criteria. Upon referral, a Resettlement Support Center, working under cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State, conducts a pre-screening interview with the applicant and helps complete the application for submission to USCIS. A USCIS officer interviews the applicant to determine eligibility for resettlement in the United States. Security checks must be completed before an application is approved. Upon approval, the refugee applicant must also submit to a medical exam.

Individuals who successfully complete this process are assigned a sponsor, a resettlement agency that assists the refugee applicant with housing, employment, and other services upon arrival. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) then makes arrangements for the refugee's travel to the United States. After arrival, refugees are authorized to work and may request documentation for travel outside the United States.

A principal refugee's spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21<sup>9</sup> may obtain derivative refugee status. An accompanying derivative is a spouse or child who enters the United States with the principal refugee or within four months after the principal refugee's admission, whereas a following-to-join derivative is a spouse or child who joins the principal refugee more than four months after his or her admission to the United States. A principal refugee may apply for accompanying or following-to-join benefits for his or her qualifying derivatives up to two years after the principal was granted refugee

<sup>8</sup> Priority Three processing was suspended in October 2008 but resumed in October 2012 with the introduction of the new form DS-7656, Affidavit of Relationship (AOR).

<sup>9</sup> Children may include those age 21 or over who are covered by provisions in the Child Status Protection Act, P.L. 107-208 (Aug. 6, 2002).

status; the relationship between the principal and the derivative relative must have existed prior to the principal's admission into the United States. The principal refugee must file a Form I-730, *Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition*, for each qualifying family member. Unlike P-3 applicants, beneficiaries of I-730s are not required to demonstrate an independent refugee claim, as they derive their status from the refugee relative in the United States who filed the petition. Once an individual's I-730 has been approved, there are no time constraints placed upon that derivative relative's travel to the United States, provided that the principal's status has not been revoked, the relationship of the derivative to the principal is unchanged, and in the case of a child, the child remains unmarried.

### Lawful Permanent Residence and Citizenship

One year after being admitted to the United States, refugees are required by statute to apply for legal permanent resident (LPR) status. Refugees granted LPR status may apply for citizenship five years after their date of admission as a refugee.

### DATA

The refugee data presented in this report were obtained from the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) of the U.S. Department of State. Individuals granted follow-to-join refugee status are included in refugee admissions data.

## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF REFUGEES

In 2013, 69,909 refugees were admitted to the United States—a 20 percent increase from 58,179 in 2012 (See Figure 1). The large increase in the number of refugees admitted to the United States in 2013 reflected better synchronization of security and medical checks for refugee families as well as staffing increases. The annual number of refugee arrivals declined during the 1990s, reflecting a shift in the refugee program's focus to more diverse populations in dispersed areas. Admissions decreased further, reaching a low point in 2002, due in part to changes in security procedures and admission requirements after September 11, 2001. The number of refugee arrivals subsequently increased and reached a post-2001 peak in 2009. After decreasing from 2009 to 2011, refugee admissions increased sharply from 2012 to 2013.

### Category of Admission

Principal refugees accounted for 31,698 (45 percent) of the 69,909 refugees admitted to the United States in 2013 (see Table 2).<sup>10</sup> Dependent children and spouses represented 39 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of refugee admissions. There were 1,641 follow-to-join beneficiaries, constituting 2.3 percent of the 69,909 total.

<sup>10</sup> As of January 2014.

## Country of Nationality

In 2013, the leading countries of nationality for refugee admissions were Iraq (28 percent), Burma (23 percent), Bhutan (13 percent), and Somalia (11 percent) (see Table 3). Seventy-five percent of refugee admissions in 2013 were from these four countries. Other leading countries included Cuba (6.0 percent), Iran (3.7 percent), Democratic Republic of Congo (3.7 percent), and Sudan (3.1 percent).

## Age, Sex, and Marital Status

Thirty-four percent of refugees admitted to the United States in 2013 were under 18 years of age (see Table 4). Refugees are, on average, younger than the U.S. native-born population. In 2013, the median age of refugees arriving in the United States was 25 years; in contrast, the median age of the native-born population in 2013 was 35 years.<sup>11</sup> A slight majority of refugees were male (54 percent), and 38 percent were married.

<sup>11</sup> Calculated from the March 2013 Current Population Survey public use microdata file from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 2.

Refugee Arrivals by Category of Admission: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013

| Category of admission         | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                               | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total . . . . .               | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| Principal Applicant . . . . . | 31,698 | 45.3    | 27,355 | 47.0    | 25,075 | 44.5    |
| Dependents . . . . .          | 38,211 | 54.7    | 30,824 | 53.0    | 31,309 | 55.5    |
| Spouse . . . . .              | 11,278 | 16.1    | 9,532  | 16.4    | 9,751  | 17.3    |
| Child . . . . .               | 26,933 | 38.5    | 21,292 | 36.6    | 21,558 | 38.2    |

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

Table 3.

Refugee Arrivals by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013

(Ranked by 2013 country of nationality)

| Country of nationality                           | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total . . . . .                                  | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| Iraq . . . . .                                   | 19,487 | 27.9    | 12,163 | 20.9    | 9,388  | 16.7    |
| Burma . . . . .                                  | 16,299 | 23.3    | 14,160 | 24.3    | 16,972 | 30.1    |
| Bhutan . . . . .                                 | 9,134  | 13.1    | 15,070 | 25.9    | 14,999 | 26.6    |
| Somalia . . . . .                                | 7,608  | 10.9    | 4,911  | 8.4     | 3,161  | 5.6     |
| Cuba . . . . .                                   | 4,205  | 6.0     | 1,948  | 3.3     | 2,920  | 5.2     |
| Iran . . . . .                                   | 2,579  | 3.7     | 1,758  | 3.0     | 2,032  | 3.6     |
| Congo, Democratic Republic . .                   | 2,563  | 3.7     | 1,863  | 3.2     | 977    | 1.7     |
| Sudan . . . . .                                  | 2,160  | 3.1     | 1,077  | 1.9     | 334    | 0.6     |
| Eritrea . . . . .                                | 1,824  | 2.6     | 1,346  | 2.3     | 2,032  | 3.6     |
| Ethiopia . . . . .                               | 765    | 1.1     | 620    | 1.1     | 560    | 1.0     |
| All other countries, including unknown . . . . . | 3,285  | 4.7     | 3,263  | 5.6     | 3,009  | 5.3     |

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

**Table 4.****Refugee Arrivals by Age, Sex, and Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

| Characteristic              | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                             | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <b>AGE</b>                  |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total . . . . .             | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| 0 to 17 years . . . . .     | 23,647 | 33.8    | 18,876 | 32.4    | 19,232 | 34.1    |
| 18 to 24 years . . . . .    | 10,399 | 14.9    | 9,700  | 16.7    | 9,588  | 17.0    |
| 25 to 34 years . . . . .    | 15,328 | 21.9    | 13,491 | 23.2    | 11,802 | 20.9    |
| 35 to 44 years . . . . .    | 9,543  | 13.7    | 7,446  | 12.8    | 7,124  | 12.6    |
| 45 to 54 years . . . . .    | 5,504  | 7.9     | 4,409  | 7.6     | 4,230  | 7.5     |
| 55 to 64 years . . . . .    | 3,098  | 4.4     | 2,441  | 4.2     | 2,438  | 4.3     |
| 65 years and over . . . . . | 2,390  | 3.4     | 1,816  | 3.1     | 1,970  | 3.5     |
| <b>SEX</b>                  |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total . . . . .             | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| Male . . . . .              | 37,792 | 54.1    | 31,380 | 53.9    | 29,436 | 52.2    |
| Female . . . . .            | 32,117 | 45.9    | 26,799 | 46.1    | 26,948 | 47.8    |
| <b>MARITAL STATUS</b>       |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total . . . . .             | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| Married . . . . .           | 26,789 | 38.3    | 22,322 | 38.4    | 22,095 | 39.2    |
| Single . . . . .            | 39,392 | 56.3    | 32,608 | 56.0    | 31,324 | 55.6    |
| Other* . . . . .            | 3,728  | 5.3     | 3,249  | 5.6     | 2,965  | 5.3     |

\*Includes persons who were divorced, separated, widowed, or of unknown marital status.

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

**Table 5.****Refugee Arrivals by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

(Ranked by 2013 state of residence)

| State of residence     | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                        | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total . . . . .        | 69,909 | 100.0   | 58,179 | 100.0   | 56,384 | 100.0   |
| Texas . . . . .        | 7,466  | 10.7    | 5,905  | 10.1    | 5,627  | 10.0    |
| California . . . . .   | 6,379  | 9.1     | 5,167  | 8.9     | 4,987  | 8.8     |
| Michigan . . . . .     | 4,651  | 6.7     | 3,594  | 6.2     | 2,588  | 4.6     |
| New York . . . . .     | 3,965  | 5.7     | 3,525  | 6.1     | 3,529  | 6.3     |
| Florida . . . . .      | 3,613  | 5.2     | 2,244  | 3.9     | 2,906  | 5.2     |
| Arizona . . . . .      | 3,052  | 4.4     | 2,234  | 3.8     | 2,168  | 3.8     |
| Ohio . . . . .         | 2,788  | 4.0     | 2,245  | 3.9     | 1,691  | 3.0     |
| Georgia . . . . .      | 2,710  | 3.9     | 2,516  | 4.3     | 2,636  | 4.7     |
| Pennsylvania . . . . . | 2,507  | 3.6     | 2,809  | 4.8     | 2,972  | 5.3     |
| Illinois . . . . .     | 2,452  | 3.5     | 2,082  | 3.6     | 1,937  | 3.4     |
| Other . . . . .        | 30,326 | 43.4    | 25,858 | 44.4    | 25,343 | 44.9    |

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

**State of Residence**

The leading states of residence of refugees admitted to the United States in 2013 were Texas (11 percent), California (9.1 percent), and Michigan (6.7 percent) (see Table 5). Texas remained the most common destination of refugees, with arrivals increasing 26 percent from 5,905 in 2012 to 7,466 in 2013. Pennsylvania was the only state among the 10 most common destinations for refugees that experienced a decline from 2012 to 2013.

**ASYLEES****Filing of Claims**

Generally, any alien present in the United States or arriving at a port of entry may seek asylum regardless of his or her

immigration status. Asylum may be obtained in one of three ways: affirmatively through a USCIS asylum officer, defensively in removal proceedings before an immigration judge of the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) of the Department of Justice, or an individual may derive asylum status as the spouse or child of an asylee. To obtain asylum, an alien must apply within one year from the date of last arrival or establish that an exception applies based on changed or extraordinary circumstances. An alien applies for asylum in the United States by filing Form I-589, *Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal*.

Spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21<sup>12</sup> who were listed on the principal's asylum application but not included in the principal's grant of asylum may obtain derivative asylum status from the principal asylee. A principal asylee may apply for accompanying or following-to-join benefits<sup>13</sup> for his or her qualifying derivatives up to two years after he or she was granted asylum status, as long as the relationship between the principal and the spouse and/or child existed prior to the date the principal was granted asylum. The principal asylee must file a Form I-730 for each qualifying family member. Following-to-join beneficiaries may be located abroad or in the United States. Once an I-730 is approved for an individual located abroad, there are no time constraints placed upon the derivative relative's travel to the United States, as long as the principal's status has not been revoked, the relationship of the derivative to the principal is unchanged, and, in the case of a child, the child remains unmarried.

**Adjudication of Claims**

The Asylum Division within USCIS adjudicates asylum claims filed with the agency through the affirmative asylum process. During an asylum interview, an asylum officer determines if the applicant meets the definition of a refugee, is credible, and is not barred from obtaining asylum. Individuals may be barred from committing certain crimes, posing a national security threat, engaging in the persecution of others, or firmly resettling in another country before coming to the United States.

Individuals granted asylum are authorized to work in the United States. In addition, an asylee is eligible for certain public benefits including employment assistance, a social security card, and social services.

If an applicant in a valid immigration status (e.g., foreign student) fails to establish eligibility for asylum before USCIS, the

<sup>12</sup> See reference to Child Status Protection Act.

<sup>13</sup> In practice, the vast majority of derivative asylum status beneficiaries receive following-to-join benefits.

application will be denied by USCIS, and the applicant will remain in his or her valid status. If the applicant is not in a valid status and USCIS finds the applicant ineligible for asylum, USCIS places the applicant in removal proceedings before an immigration judge with EOIR, where the application is considered anew.

Aliens who have not previously filed for asylum may be placed in removal proceedings by immigration enforcement officials because they are undocumented, are in violation of their status when apprehended, or were caught attempting entry into the United States without proper documentation. Such individuals may file for asylum directly with EOIR. During the proceedings, an immigration judge may grant asylum or deny the asylum application and issue an order of removal. The applicant may appeal the denial to the Board of Immigration Appeals and seek further review by a U.S. Court of Appeals.

Asylum follow-to-join beneficiaries are not required to demonstrate a persecution claim, as they derive their status from the asylee relative in the United States who filed the I-730 petition. Those beneficiaries who are in the United States at the time of application are granted derivative asylum status immediately upon the approval of their I-730 petitions. Those beneficiaries who were abroad at the time of application are granted derivative asylum when admitted into the United States at a port of entry.

## DATA

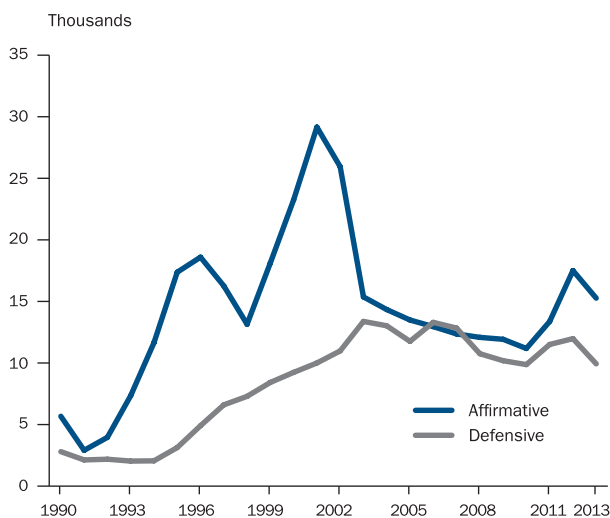
The affirmative asylee data presented in this report were obtained from the Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS) of USCIS. Defensive asylee data were obtained from EOIR. In 2011, the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) began receiving data on

individuals who were issued travel documents to enter the United States as follow-to-join asylum derivatives; previously these data were not included in OIS reports. Most follow-to-join derivative data were obtained from the Case and Activity Management for International Operations (CAMINO) system of USCIS and the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) of the Department of State. These follow-to-join data represent only those I-730 beneficiaries who were outside of the United States at the time of application and reflect travel documents issued, not admissions. In 2012, OIS began receiving data on the number of individuals approved for follow-to-join status who were residing in the United States at the time of the approval of their I-730 petition. These data were obtained from the Computer-Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) of USCIS.

## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ASYLEES

The total number of persons granted either affirmative or defensive asylum in the United States decreased from 29,367 in 2012 to 25,199 in 2013. The number of persons who were granted asylum affirmatively through USCIS decreased from 17,389 in 2012 to 15,266 in 2013 (see Figure 2), a 12 percent decrease. The number of persons granted asylum defensively by an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals of EOIR also decreased, from 11,978 in 2012 to 9,933 in 2013. The number of persons authorized for travel from abroad to the United States as follow-to-join derivatives increased from 12,145 in 2012 to 13,026 in 2013. The number of individuals who received follow-to-join asylum status while residing in the United States increased from 1,028 in 2012 to 2,240 in 2013 (see Figure 3).

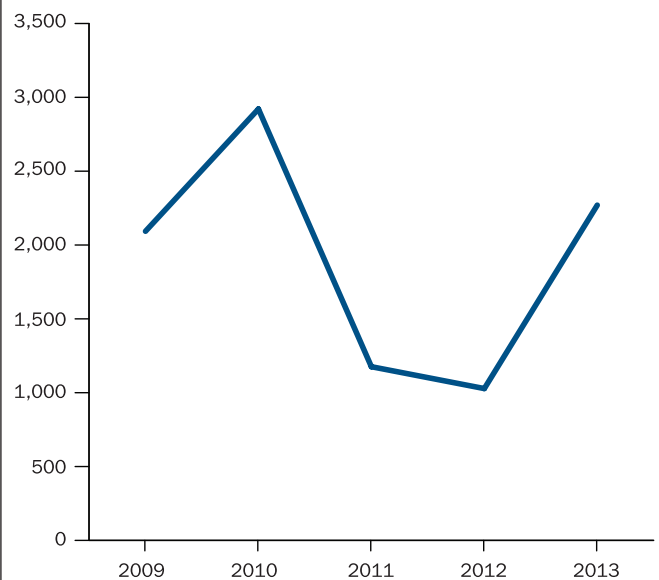
Figure 2.  
**Annual Flow of Affirmative and Defensive Asylees:  
1990 to 2013**



Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS), and Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

Figure 3.  
**I-730 Follow-to-Join Asylum Beneficiaries Approved  
while Residing in the United States: 2009 to 2013**



Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Computer-Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS).

## Country of Nationality

In 2013, the leading countries of nationality of persons granted either affirmative or defensive asylum were China (34 percent), Egypt (14 percent), Ethiopia (3.5 percent), Nepal (3.4 percent), and Syria (3.2 percent) (see Table 6). Nationals of these five countries accounted for over half of all persons granted asylum.

In 2013, the top three countries of nationality for affirmative asylees were China (27 percent), Egypt (20 percent), and Syria (5.0 percent) (see Table 7). Nationals of these three countries accounted for 52 percent of all persons granted affirmative asylum. The leading countries of nationality for persons granted defensive asylum were China (46 percent), Ethiopia (4.0 percent), and Nepal (3.8 percent) (see Table 8). More than one-half of defensive asylees in 2013 were nationals of these three countries.

The leading countries of nationality for following-to-join asylees authorized for travel to the United States in 2013 were China (37 percent), Haiti (8.5 percent) and Ethiopia (5.9 percent) (see Table 9). Nationals of these three countries accounted for more than half of all following-to-join derivative relatives issued travel documents prior to their admission into the United States. Country of nationality data are not available for following-to-join asylees who were approved while residing in the United States.

## Age, Sex, and Marital Status

In 2013, 69 percent of persons granted affirmative asylum were between the ages of 18 and 44, inclusive (see Table 10). Like refugees, affirmative asylees are, on average, younger than the native-born U.S. population: the median age of persons granted affirmative asylum in 2013 was 30 years. Fifty-one percent were male, and 48 percent were married.

**Table 6.**

### All Asylees by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013

(Ranked by 2013 country of nationality)

| Country of nationality                 | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total                                  | 25,199 | 100.0   | 29,367 | 100.0   | 24,904 | 100.0   |
| China, People's Republic               | 8,604  | 34.1    | 10,121 | 34.5    | 8,592  | 34.5    |
| Egypt                                  | 3,407  | 13.5    | 2,876  | 9.8     | 1,027  | 4.1     |
| Ethiopia                               | 893    | 3.5     | 1,121  | 3.8     | 1,071  | 4.3     |
| Nepal                                  | 854    | 3.4     | 975    | 3.3     | 740    | 3.0     |
| Syria                                  | 811    | 3.2     | 364    | 1.2     | 60     | 0.2     |
| Venezuela                              | 687    | 2.7     | 1,090  | 3.7     | 1,104  | 4.4     |
| Iran                                   | 675    | 2.7     | 716    | 2.4     | 474    | 1.9     |
| Russia                                 | 534    | 2.1     | 718    | 2.4     | 661    | 2.7     |
| Haiti                                  | 496    | 2.0     | 681    | 2.3     | 872    | 3.5     |
| Iraq                                   | 462    | 1.8     | 425    | 1.4     | 379    | 1.5     |
| All other countries, including unknown | 7,776  | 30.9    | 10,280 | 35.0    | 9,924  | 39.8    |

Note: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS) and Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

**Table 7.**

### Affirmative Asylees by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013

(Ranked by 2013 country of nationality)

| Country of nationality                 | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total                                  | 15,266 | 100.0   | 17,389 | 100.0   | 13,376 | 100.0   |
| China, People's Republic               | 4,072  | 26.7    | 4,738  | 27.2    | 3,887  | 29.1    |
| Egypt                                  | 3,102  | 20.3    | 2,570  | 14.8    | 752    | 5.6     |
| Syria                                  | 763    | 5.0     | 327    | 1.9     | 46     | 0.3     |
| Iran                                   | 612    | 4.0     | 607    | 3.5     | 366    | 2.7     |
| Venezuela                              | 608    | 4.0     | 960    | 5.5     | 898    | 6.7     |
| Ethiopia                               | 494    | 3.2     | 663    | 3.8     | 564    | 4.2     |
| Nepal                                  | 473    | 3.1     | 572    | 3.3     | 417    | 3.1     |
| Haiti                                  | 443    | 2.9     | 632    | 3.6     | 816    | 6.1     |
| Iraq                                   | 408    | 2.7     | 314    | 1.8     | 262    | 2.0     |
| Russia                                 | 347    | 2.3     | 542    | 3.1     | 466    | 3.5     |
| All other countries, including unknown | 3,944  | 25.8    | 5,464  | 31.4    | 4,902  | 36.6    |

Note: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS).

**Table 8.**

### Defensive Asylees by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013

(Ranked by 2013 country of nationality)

| Country of nationality                 | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total                                  | 9,933  | 100.0   | 11,978 | 100.0   | 11,528 | 100.0   |
| China, People's Republic               | 4,532  | 45.6    | 5,383  | 44.9    | 4,705  | 40.8    |
| Ethiopia                               | 399    | 4.0     | 458    | 3.8     | 507    | 4.4     |
| Nepal                                  | 381    | 3.8     | 403    | 3.4     | 323    | 2.8     |
| India                                  | 322    | 3.2     | 282    | 2.4     | 262    | 2.3     |
| Egypt                                  | 305    | 3.1     | 306    | 2.6     | 275    | 2.4     |
| Soviet Union, former                   | 252    | 2.5     | 281    | 2.3     | 248    | 2.2     |
| Eritrea                                | 240    | 2.4     | 351    | 2.9     | 483    | 4.2     |
| Russia                                 | 187    | 1.9     | 176    | 1.5     | 195    | 1.7     |
| El Salvador                            | 181    | 1.8     | 191    | 1.6     | 164    | 1.4     |
| Mexico                                 | 155    | 1.6     | 126    | 1.1     | 107    | 0.9     |
| All other countries, including unknown | 2,979  | 30.0    | 4,021  | 33.6    | 4,259  | 36.9    |

Note: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

**Table 9.****Follow-to-join Asylee Travel Documents Issued by Country of Nationality:  
Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

| Country                                | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total                                  | 13,026 | 100.0   | 12,145 | 100.0   | 11,149 | 100.0   |
| China, People's Republic               | 4,785  | 36.7    | 4,957  | 40.8    | 3,783  | 33.9    |
| Haiti                                  | 1,108  | 8.5     | 906    | 7.5     | 1,045  | 9.4     |
| Ethiopia                               | 774    | 5.9     | 492    | 4.1     | 629    | 5.6     |
| Nepal                                  | 705    | 5.4     | 826    | 6.8     | 1,082  | 9.7     |
| India                                  | 675    | 5.2     | 116    | 1.0     | 175    | 1.6     |
| Unknown                                | 522    | 4.0     | 481    | 4.0     | 317    | 2.8     |
| Egypt                                  | 501    | 3.8     | 322    | 2.7     | 175    | 1.6     |
| Eritrea                                | 485    | 3.7     | 228    | 1.9     | 221    | 2.0     |
| Burma                                  | 460    | 3.5     | 452    | 3.7     | 524    | 4.7     |
| Guatemala                              | 314    | 2.4     | 230    | 1.9     | 124    | 1.1     |
| All other countries, including unknown | 2,697  | 20.7    | 3,135  | 25.8    | 3,074  | 27.6    |

Source: U.S. Department of State, Consular Consolidated Database (CCD), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Case and Activity Management for International Operations (CAMINO).

**Table 10.****Affirmative Asylees by Age, Sex, and Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

| Characteristic | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|----------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| AGE            |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total          | 15,266 | 100.0   | 17,389 | 100.0   | 13,376 | 100.0   |
| 0 to 17 years  | 2,509  | 16.4    | 2,446  | 14.1    | 1,664  | 12.4    |
| 18 to 24 years | 2,369  | 15.5    | 3,534  | 20.3    | 3,251  | 24.3    |
| 25 to 34 years | 5,038  | 33.0    | 5,815  | 33.4    | 4,380  | 32.7    |
| 35 to 44 years | 3,168  | 20.8    | 3,412  | 19.6    | 2,498  | 18.7    |
| 45 to 54 years | 1,514  | 9.9     | 1,589  | 9.1     | 1,194  | 8.9     |
| 55 to 64 years | 437    | 2.9     | 448    | 2.6     | 294    | 2.2     |
| 65 and over    | 231    | 1.5     | 145    | 0.8     | 95     | 0.7     |
| SEX            |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total          | 15,266 | 100.0   | 17,389 | 100.0   | 13,376 | 100.0   |
| Male           | 7,748  | 50.8    | 8,839  | 50.8    | 6,876  | 51.4    |
| Female         | 7,518  | 49.2    | 8,550  | 49.2    | 6,500  | 48.6    |
| MARITAL STATUS |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total          | 15,266 | 100.0   | 17,389 | 100.0   | 13,376 | 100.0   |
| Single         | 7,178  | 47.0    | 8,589  | 49.4    | 6,947  | 51.9    |
| Married        | 7,277  | 47.7    | 7,924  | 45.6    | 5,722  | 42.8    |
| Other*         | 806    | 5.3     | 873    | 5.0     | 699    | 5.2     |
| Unknown        | 5      | 0.0     | 3      | 0.0     | 8      | 0.1     |

\*Includes persons who were divorced, separated, or widowed.

Note: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS).

Because it consists of spouses and children under 21,<sup>14</sup> the follow-to-join population is younger, on average, than the other refugee and asylee populations. In 2013, the median age of follow-to-join beneficiaries was 18 years. Forty-one percent of follow-to-join beneficiaries were identified as female (see Table 11). Data on marital status are not available for all following-to-join beneficiaries and are not included in this report. Data on age, sex, and marital status are unavailable for following-to-join asylees approved while residing in the United States.

**State of Residence**

In 2013, the leading states of residence for individuals granted asylum affirmatively were California (42 percent), New York (13 percent), and Florida (12 percent) (see Table 12). Approximately two-thirds of individuals granted affirmative asylum resided in these three states.

State of residence data were not available for either defensive or follow-to-join asylees.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics Web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.

<sup>14</sup> Includes those individuals 21 and older who are protected by provisions of the Child Status Protection Act.

**Table 11.****Follow-to-join Asylee Travel Documents Issued by Age and Sex: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

| Characteristic           | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                          | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| AGE                      |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total . . . . .          | 13,026 | 100.0   | 12,145 | 100.0   | 11,149 | 100.0   |
| 0 to 17 years . . . . .  | 6,388  | 49.0    | 5,770  | 47.5    | 5,361  | 48.1    |
| 18 to 24 years . . . . . | 2,311  | 17.7    | 2,347  | 19.3    | 2,283  | 20.5    |
| 25 to 34 years . . . . . | 1,621  | 12.4    | 1,419  | 11.7    | 1,245  | 11.2    |
| 35 to 44 years . . . . . | 1,645  | 12.6    | 1,549  | 12.8    | 1,353  | 12.1    |
| 45 to 54 years . . . . . | 822    | 6.3     | 793    | 6.5     | 692    | 6.2     |
| 55 to 64 years . . . . . | 215    | 1.7     | 241    | 2.0     | 188    | 1.7     |
| 65 and over . . . . .    | 24     | 0.2     | 26     | 0.2     | 27     | 0.2     |
| SEX                      |        |         |        |         |        |         |
| Total . . . . .          | 13,026 | 100.0   | 12,145 | 100.0   | 11,149 | 100.0   |
| Male . . . . .           | 4,410  | 33.9    | 4,818  | 39.7    | 4,540  | 40.7    |
| Female . . . . .         | 5,321  | 40.8    | 5,860  | 48.3    | 5,726  | 51.4    |
| Unknown . . . . .        | 3,295  | 25.3    | 1,467  | 12.1    | 883    | 7.9     |

Source: U.S. Department of State, Consular Consolidated Database (CCD), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Case and Activity Management for International Operations (CAMINO).

**Table 12.****Affirmative Asylees by State or Territory of Residence: Fiscal Years 2011 to 2013**

(Ranked by 2013 state or territory of residence)

| State or territory of residence | 2013   |         | 2012   |         | 2011   |         |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                 | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total . . . . .                 | 15,266 | 100.0   | 17,389 | 100.0   | 13,376 | 100.0   |
| California . . . . .            | 6,464  | 42.3    | 6,691  | 38.5    | 5,038  | 37.7    |
| New York . . . . .              | 1,988  | 13.0    | 2,407  | 13.8    | 2,020  | 15.1    |
| Florida . . . . .               | 1,886  | 12.4    | 2,600  | 15.0    | 2,225  | 16.6    |
| Virginia . . . . .              | 758    | 5.0     | 848    | 4.9     | 639    | 4.8     |
| Maryland . . . . .              | 544    | 3.6     | 707    | 4.1     | 522    | 3.9     |
| Illinois . . . . .              | 541    | 3.5     | 478    | 2.7     | 291    | 2.2     |
| New Jersey . . . . .            | 500    | 3.3     | 468    | 2.7     | 180    | 1.3     |
| Texas . . . . .                 | 451    | 3.0     | 371    | 2.1     | 272    | 2.0     |
| Michigan . . . . .              | 189    | 1.2     | 160    | 0.9     | 123    | 0.9     |
| Washington . . . . .            | 185    | 1.2     | 317    | 1.8     | 330    | 2.5     |
| Other . . . . .                 | 1,760  | 11.5    | 2,342  | 13.5    | 1,736  | 13.0    |

Note: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Refugee, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS).