

HUMAN RIGHTS AT RISK

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

by Tammy Gagne



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AT A GLANCE

- Immigration has been central to US history. In the early 1800s, President Thomas Jefferson called for people from other countries to come to the new nation.
- Over the next 200 years, the United States created many laws that regulated immigration. Many of them favored white immigrants from Western Europe.
- The US Constitution gives noncitizen immigrants many of the same rights as US citizens.
- Many immigrants in the United States face discrimination. This can make it difficult for them to find jobs or housing.
- Immigrants also encounter problems in other parts of the world. Many of them experience human rights violations.

AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Immigration challenges are not limited to the United States. A lot of immigrants come to Mexico from Central or South America. Some continue north to the United States. Others want to stay in Mexico. In 2021, Mexico captured more than 300,000 people who entered the country illegally. About one-third of them asked Mexico for asylum. The country granted about 38,000 of these requests.

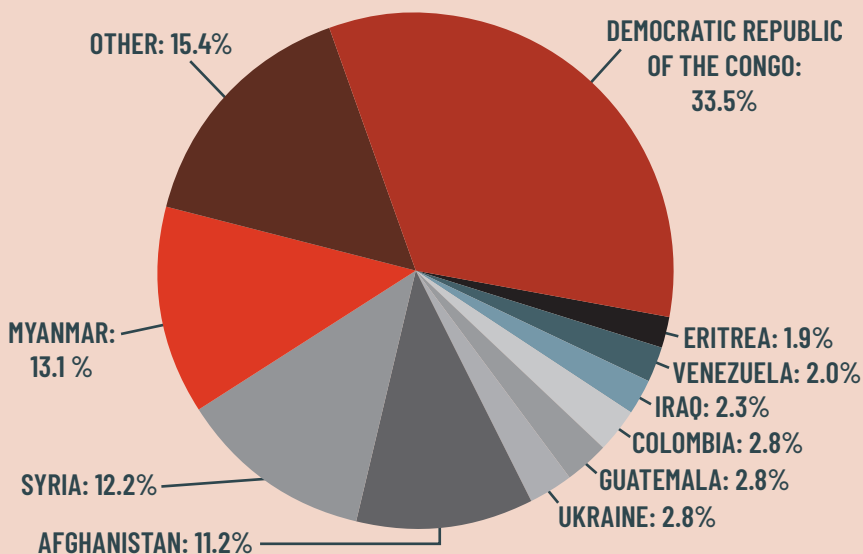
Immigrants and refugees from all over the world try to cross the border into the United States from Mexico. Many come from Central and South America.



One man made the trip to Mexico's southern border from Honduras. His home country has problems with gang violence. So do the nearby countries of El Salvador and Guatemala. The refugee feared for his life. He shares, "I never thought I would have to leave my country. Now, I know if I went back, I wouldn't last very long alive. If you don't obey the gangs there . . . they kill you."⁶

Refugees in Mexico must wait for an answer about asylum. While there, they may face discrimination. They often have trouble finding a job. Finding a place to live is hard, too. Some immigrants to Mexico come from Haiti. In 2010 Haiti had an earthquake. Since then, the country has faced severe

ORIGIN OF US REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN 2023



Source: Nicole Ward and Jeanne Batalova, "Refugees and Asylees in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, June 15, 2023. www.migrationpolicy.org.

Between October 2022 and May 2023, the most refugees arriving in the United States from one nation came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

poverty, hunger, and violence. But Mexico can't afford to support these refugees.

AFRICAN COAST

Africa's Mediterranean coast is a dangerous place for refugees. Many of those traveling

being held in Japan. When she became sick, she asked to see a doctor. But the government said no. Then she asked to be released to get care. The government accused her of faking her illness. Many people in Japan were outraged over her death. The nation's Constitutional Democratic Party has tried to change the country's immigration policies. But so far, laws have only gotten stricter.

International Concern

The UN Human Rights Council works to stop human rights violations. In April 2023, the council told Japan that laws it was about to pass did not meet human rights standards. It urged the government to reconsider them. But Japan passed the laws that June.

GLOSSARY

apprehended

captured by law enforcement

asylum

official protection granted to a refugee

attorney

a person who practices law

deported

sent back to one's original country by another nation

detention center

a place where immigrants stay while waiting for hearings or deportation

enslaved

held against one's will and forced to work without pay

human trafficking

to force or trick someone to work for free or perform a sex act

naturalized

having gone through the official process to become a US citizen

traumatic

emotionally disturbing

undocumented immigrants

people who have entered a foreign country without permission

SOURCE NOTES

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