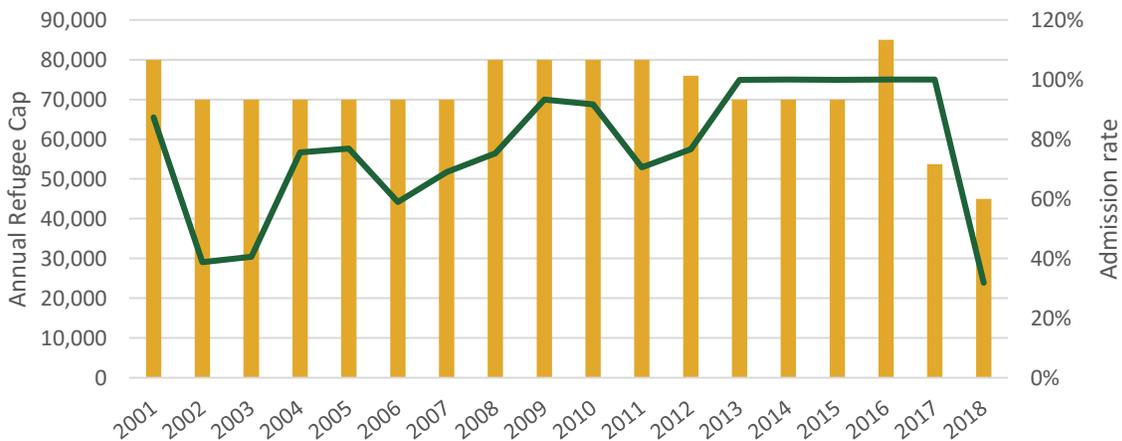


## Fiscal Year 2018 Refugee Admissions in Historical Perspective

Each year, under the provisions of the Refugee Act of 1980, the president, in consultation with Congress, determines the number of refugees to be resettled in the United States. That overall refugee cap is further divided into five caps for five regions of the world. The overall and regional caps have varied over time depending on international conditions and U.S. foreign policy priorities, among other factors. And the actual number of refugees admitted has varied as well.

The Trump administration drastically cut the refugee admissions ceilings for FY 2018 to 45,000, the lowest cap set by a President since the Refugee Act went into effect. Furthermore, eight months into the fiscal year, refugee admissions are far below the caps. It seems unlikely that the U.S. will reach 45,000 admissions in FY2018.

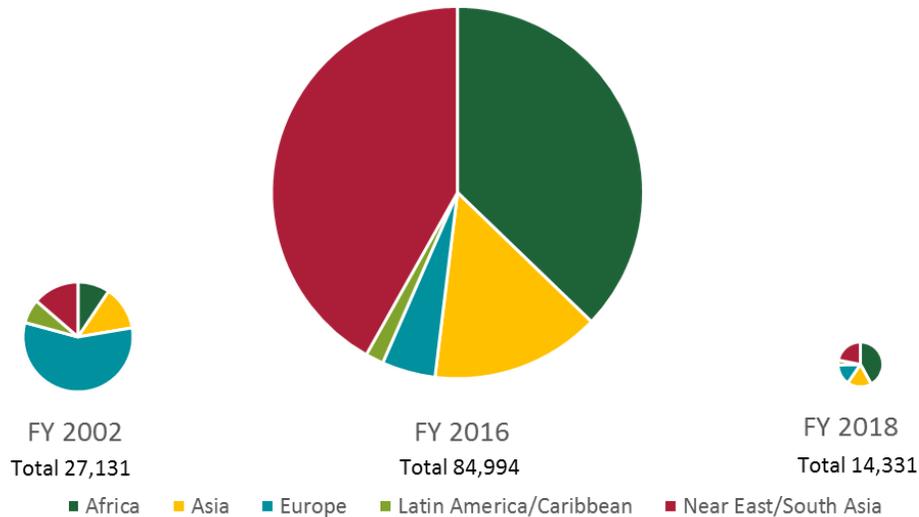
Refugee Admissions Cap Fiscal Years 2001-2008



Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Office of Admissions - Refugee Processing Center Summary of Refugee Admissions

Figure 2 compares refugee admissions cap by regions for three different administrations (Bush 2002; Obama 2016; Trump 2018). The size of each chart reflects the total number of refugee admission caps. Clearly, the refugee admission cap declined in Trump administration and the total cap is smaller than 2002 when the U.S. decreased the refugee cap to 70,000 following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Figure 2. Refugee Admissions Cap by Year and Region

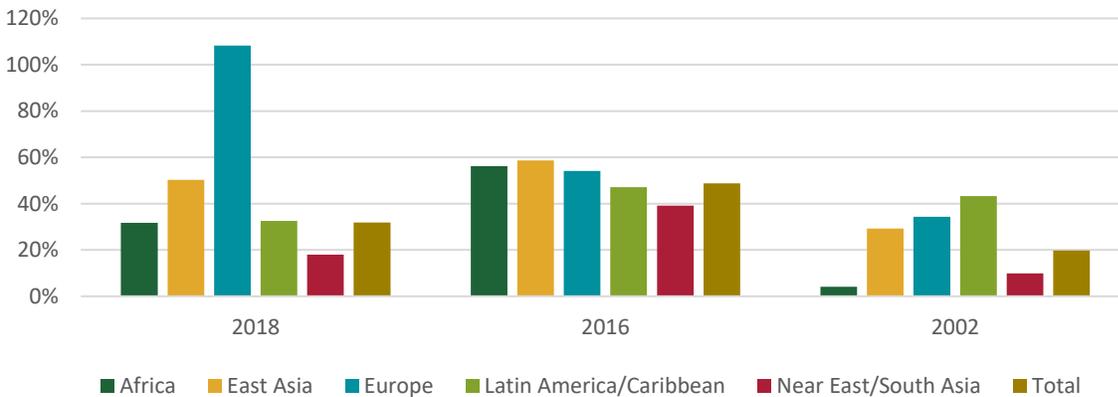


Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
Office of Admissions - Refugee Processing Center Summary of Refugee Admissions

Figure 3 compares refugee admissions as a percentage of the total and regional caps across the same three fiscal years through the first eight months of each fiscal year for a direct comparison between the current fiscal year and the others. It illustrates that the U.S. rarely admits the full allowable number of refugees. In most fiscal years shown, the U.S. admitted between 75% and 100% of the total cap. In Fiscal year 2002, refugee admissions fell significantly in all regions, and only 39 percent of the cap was admitted. In FY 2018 still falls below other years except 2002, but the differences are less pronounced. No more than 60 percent of the total cap was admitted in the first 8 months of any fiscal year depicted. As of May 31, 2018, only 32 percent of allowable refugees had been resettled.

The analysis also shows that fiscal year 2018 is already the only year in which European refugees exceeded the regional cap. The majority of these admissions have been from the Ukraine. Furthermore, two-thirds of the way into the fiscal year, admissions from Africa (32%), Latin America/Caribbean (33%), and the Near East/South Asia (18%) are far below 67 percent of their total allowable caps, and East Asia is not much higher at just 50 percent of its regional cap.

Figure 4. Refugee Admissions as a Percentage of the Annual Cap, First Eight Months of the Fiscal Year



Note: Each fiscal year has only first 8 months for a fair comparison to FY 2018.  
 Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration  
 Office of Admissions - Refugee Processing Center Summary of Refugee Admissions

The decline in refugee admissions in 2018 is largely associated with large decreases in admissions from a few countries. Table 1 shows the top 15 countries of origin of refugees admitted in fiscal year 2016 compared to admissions in Fiscal year 2018. Admissions from these countries declined about 70% on average. Admissions from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, and Sudan are down more than 90% this year; these countries are subject to additional vetting under a Trump administration policy. Refugee admissions from Pakistan, Russia, and El Salvador are slightly up compared to fiscal year 2016.

Even if the Trump administration were to increase admissions in the final four months of fiscal year 2018 and reach the 45,000 cap, the total number of refugees admitted would be the lowest since 1980, with the exception of fiscal years 2002 and 2003.

**Table 1: Top 20 Countries of Refugee Origin  
Fiscal Years 2016 and 2018**

Top 20 refugee origin countries 2016	Rank in 2016	Rank in 2018	Total Admitted in FY2016 (first 8 months)	Total Admitted in FY2018 (first 8 months)	% change (first 8 months)
Dem. Rep. Congo	1	1	6,350	4,187	-34%
Syria	2	19	2,805	46	-98%
Burma	3	2	8,112	2,466	-70%
Iraq	4	14	5,380	113	-98%
Somalia	5	10	5,780	250	-96%
Bhutan	6	3	2,924	2,109	-28%
Iran	7	24	2,049	32	-98%
Afghanistan	8	6	1,395	504	-64%
Ukraine	9	4	1,458	1,447	-1%
Eritrea	10	5	1,273	984	-23%
Sudan	11	17	634	56	-91%
Ethiopia	12	11	625	229	-63%
Burundi	13	15	372	109	-71%
Pakistan	14	9	223	280	26%

Source: Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Office of Admissions - Refugee Processing Center Summary of Refugee Admissions