

Despite the widespread anxiety about **Syrian refugees**, a relatively small number have come to Texas—215 in 2015, all of whom settled in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston.

The large number of **Iraqi refugees** is, of course, a result of our military involvement there. In 2002, just prior to the Iraq War, Texas took in 53 Iraqi refugees. Since 2008, that number has, with the exception of 2011, exceeded 1,000 each year.

The **final destination** of refugees depends on a number of factors, but more than 70 percent of them are committed to a specific locale even before they arrive in the U.S., because they will be joining family members who are already here. The rest are distributed based on a number of considerations, such as which areas have the infrastructure to take them in, which have preexisting communities of the same nationality, and which are in need of low-cost labor. This leads to some odd results. El Paso, the sixth-largest city in Texas, took in 11 refugees in 2015; Corpus Christi, our eighth-largest city, took in none; Abilene (twenty-seventh) took in 364. The city of Houston, which is the home of not quite 10 percent of Texas's population, resettled nearly 30 percent of our refugees.

Burmese nationals, the vast majority of them coming from squalid resettlement camps in Thailand and Malaysia, have been the largest group of refugees in Texas for years. And though the number of arrivals is still quite large, Aaron Rippenkroeger, the CEO of the nonprofit Refugee Services of Texas, says we may soon see “a gradual winding down of Burmese refugees coming here; it’s on the back end of its life cycle.”

Number of refugees settled in Texas in 2015, by nationality

- Burma 2,715
- Iraq 1,472
- Democratic Republic of Congo 770
- Somalia 445
- Bhutan 349
- Iran 311
- Syria 215
- Eritrea 175
- Burundi 100
- Cuba 93
- Sudan 83
- Afghanistan 64
- Ethiopia 17
- Rwanda 12
- Pakistan 9
- South Sudan 7
- Nepal 3
- Senegal, Vietnam 2 each
- Belarus, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, El Salvador, Jordan, Liberia, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Palestine, Russia, South Africa 1 each