

# REFUGEE TERMINOLOGY

**ACCULTURATION** – the process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviors of another group; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact

**AOR (Affidavit of Relationship)** – an immigration document testifying to the nature of a relationship; AORs are part of the process to apply for parents, spouses, and children to be reunited with the applicant in the United States; this program is currently suspended indefinitely

**ADJUSTMENT OF IMMIGRATION STATUS** – the process of changing from temporary (refugee or parolee, for example) status to permanent resident status; this process is managed through USCIS and is available to those in the United States who meet all of the requirements; if approved, the applicant is given a Permanent Resident Alien card (or “green card”)

**AFFILIATE** – the local branch or funded agency of a national VOLAG (voluntary agency)

**ALIEN** – a person in the United States who is not a citizen of the United States

**ALIEN NUMBER** – a unique eight or nine digit identifying number that USCIS assigns to refugees and immigrants upon arrival in the United States

**AMERASIAN** – an individual who was born in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea , Cambodia, or Thailand after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, and was fathered by a U.S. citizen

**ANCHOR** – also referred to as a “U.S. Tie”, a family member or friend in the United States who can provide assistance to a refugee during the resettlement process

**ANCHORED CASE** – a refugee case that has family or friends to assist in their resettlement upon arrival

**ASSURANCE** – the agreement of a voluntary resettlement agency to sponsor a refugee; this agreement is signed by a designated voluntary agency official and submitted to the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) for forwarding overseas; a copy of the agreement is included in the refugee's travel documents for presentation at the United States port of entry (POE)

**ASYLEE** – a person meeting the definition of a refugee who is physically present in the United States or is at a U.S. port of entry (POE) when s/he is granted asylum

**ASYLUM** – a form of protective status available to people who meet the definition of refugee, and are already in the United States or are seeking admission at a port of entry; an individual may apply for asylum in the United States regardless of country of origin or current immigration status

**ASYLUM-SEEKER** – an individual who is seeking international protection

**BEST PRACTICE** – a program, method, or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and therefore is used as a benchmark

**BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services)** –ORR's technical assistance provider for child welfare

**CAL (Center for Applied Linguistics)** – ORR's technical assistance provider for cultural orientation

**CAMP LONGSTAYERS** – generally refers to refugees who have lived in protracted situations in refugee camps while waiting for a durable solution to their status

**CASE NUMBER** – generally a two letter, six digit number assigned to and serving as an identifier for a refugee case; each member of the case shares a case number; the two letters usually indicate the country of first asylum

**CASTE SYSTEM** – a closed form of social stratification in which membership is determined by birth and remains fixed for life

**CDC (Center for Disease Control)** – a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services which works to protect public health and safety by providing information to enhance health decisions; the CDC promotes health through partnerships with state health departments and other organizations

**CHILD SOLDIER** – children under the age of 15 conscripted for a country's military use; considered a war crime under international law

**CITIZEN** - a person who owes allegiance to a nation state and is entitled to its protection and to exercise rights of membership, such as voting. Under U.S. law, citizens include persons born in the United States or its territories, certain persons born abroad to a U.S. citizen, and non-citizens who become citizens through naturalization

**CITIZENSHIP** – generally synonymous with nationality; a person without citizenship in any country is considered "stateless"

**CIRCUIT RIDE** – a visit by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers or staff of an overseas processing entity (OPE) to prepare refugee cases and interview refugee applicants

**CLASS A MEDICAL CONDITION** – a communicable disease of public health significance, a physical or mental disorder associated with harmful behavior, or drug abuse/addiction

**CLASS B MEDICAL CONDITION** – physical or mental defect, disease, or disability serious in degree or permanent in nature that is a substantial departure from normal physical or mental well-being

**CMA (Cash and Medical Administration)** - funding allocated by TOR to partner agencies to administer their cash and medical assistance programs. It includes eligibility caseworker(s) and RCA caseworker(s)

**CO (Cultural Orientation)** – a training process conducted overseas to prepare the refugee with an understanding and managed expectations of the resettlement process; topics typically include resettlement agency role, housing, employment, transportation, education, health, money management, rights and responsibilities, cultural adjustment, and travel; cultural orientation often varies between different refugee camps and populations

**CFR (Code of Federal Regulations)** – a resource manual that contains all of the guidelines that must be followed when managing or conducting programs using federal funds

**COUNTRY OF FIRST ASYLUM** – a country in which an asylum-seeker has been granted international protection as an asylum-seeker or a refugee; with refugees, this usually differs from the country in which they resettle permanently

**CUBAN/HAITIAN ENTRANTS** – certain immigrants from Cuba and Haiti who are admitted into the United States and have been granted this special status; eligible to receive the same benefits as refugees

**CULTURAL SENSITIVITY** – being aware and accepting of other cultures

**CWS (Church World Service)** – an organization working both nationally as a VOLAG (voluntary agency) and internationally as an NGO (non-governmental organization); one of two VOLAGs that comprise Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville

**DERIVATIVE** – a spouse or child that is granted refugee status if accompanying or following-to-join the PA (principal applicant)

**DHS** - the Department of Homeland Security, the federal department of which USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) is a part; also used to

refer to the Department of Human Services, the local offices that administer food stamp, TennCare, and Families First programs in the state

**DIASPORA** – the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland, usually involuntary in nature

**DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS (Medecins Sans Frontieres, or MSF)** – a secular humanitarian aid non-governmental organization best known for its projects in war-torn regions and developing countries facing diseases

**DOS/PRM (Department of State/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration)** – oversees the flow of refugees into the United States; funds the R&P (Reception and Placement) Program

**DURABLE SOLUTION** – UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) defines three options available to refugees: 1) voluntary repatriation, 2) local integration, or 3) resettlement to a third country; the best possible solution is repatriation and third country resettlement is used only when neither other option is possible

**EAD (Employment Authorization Document)** – a card issued by USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Service) that proves that the holder is authorized to work in the United States

**ECBO (Ethnic Community-Based Organization)** – a non-profit organization that derives its ethnic identity from the composition of its board, senior management, staff members, and the clients they serve

**ECDC (Ethiopian Community Development Council)** – the VOLAG (voluntary agency) whose Nashville affiliate is the Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE)

**ELL (English Language Learner)** – a person who is learning the English language in addition to their native language; can refer to any learners of English as a foreign or second language, but more often the term is used to refer to learners of English as a second language in mainstream schools where English is the language of instruction

**ELT (English Language Training)** – a synonym for ESL (English as a Second Language)

**EMM (Episcopal Migration Ministries)** – the VOLAG (voluntary agency) whose Chattanooga affiliate is Bridge Refugee Services; one of two VOLAGs that comprise Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville

**ESL (English as a Second Language)** – a synonym for ELT (English Language Training)

**FAMILIES FIRST** – welfare; Tennessee's version of the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program

**FAMILY REUNIFICATION** – a type of refugee “case” characterized by a family member(s) arriving to join a family member(s) who is already in the country

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)** – a term used to describe the procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons; FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women

**FREE CASE** – a refugee case designated for resettlement that has no family ties or anchors already in the U.S.

**FSP (Family Self-Sufficiency Plan)** – a written plan of action, established between a refugee and his/her caseworker, that details the goals for that client and the steps that need to be taken in order for the client to reach those goals; this is a required document (under the federal regulations) for federally-funded refugee programs

**GREEN CARD** – an informal name for the Permanent Resident card

**HAIS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)** – the oldest international migration and refugee resettlement agency in the U.S.; one of the VOLAGs

**HCC (Houston Casualty Corporation)** – medical insurance underwriter for Refugee Medical Assistance in Tennessee

**HOST COUNTRY** – countries that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or directly integrated into households

**HUMANITARIAN PAROLE** – an immigration status, awarded to someone who is otherwise inadmissible into the United States, that permits residency for a temporary period of time due to a compelling emergency

**I-94** – a document (also called the *Arrival-Departure Record*), issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, that is completed at the time of entry into the U.S. by foreign citizens

**IDP (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON)** – those persons forced or obliged to flee from their homes – in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of

armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters – and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border

**ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT** – a slang term used to describe an individual who has migrated into a country and is in violation of the immigration laws and sovereignty of that country; see undocumented immigrant

**IMMIGRANT** – a foreigner who comes into a country for the purpose of permanent residence because of the voluntary desire to live in another country, or other reasons that may include economics, politics, family re-unification, or natural disaster

**INTEREST ONLY** – a non-binding document that states a connection between a refugee or other qualified person in the United States and a family member or friend outside of the U.S.; this document is completed at and maintained in the office of one of the VOLAGs

**INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION** – actions by the international community on the basis of international law, aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons outside their countries of origin who lack the national protection of their own countries

**IOM (International Organization on Migration)** – this organization works with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants; on a practical level, all refugee travel to the U.S. is coordinated through this organization

**IRC (International Rescue Committee)** – one of the national VOLAGs and an NGO

**JVA (Joint Voluntary Agency)** – former overseas processing entity (OPE) in Nairobi, Kenya; see Resettlement Support Center

**LAUTENBERG AMENDMENT** – United States legislation that specifically protects individuals fleeing religious persecution in the FSU (former Soviet Union), southeast Asia, and Iran

**LEP (Limited English Proficiency)** – difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English, particularly if English is not an individual's primary language

**MAA (Mutual Assistance Association)** – a non-profit, refugee-assisting agency that is created and run by refugees

**MEDICAID** – a U.S. healthcare program for those who are low income and have few resources; Tennessee's version of this program is called TennCare

**MG (Match Grant)** – a job placement and financial assistance program, offered by resettlement agencies, that is funded by ORR

**NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)** – an organized entity that is functionally independent of, and does not represent, a government or state; this term is normally applied to organizations devoted to humanitarian and human rights causes, many of which implement their refugee-related programs in partnership with UNHCR and other agencies

**OME (Overseas Medical Exam)** – a medical examination that is required for all refugees accepted to resettle in the United States and provided to them before their departure to the U.S.

**ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement)** – federal office that oversees and distributes most refugee funding; part of the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services

**OVERSEAS REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTERS** – centers where refugees, once selected for resettlement, are gathered in order to receive the orientation and language training which will help them to prepare for their resettlement

**OPE (Overseas Processing Entity)** – now known as RSC (or Refugee Support Center), a voluntary agency, U.S. mission contractor, or international organization that helps process refugees for U.S. resettlement

**P1 (Priority One Refugee Cases)** – individual case referrals for resettlement in the U.S. from UNHCR, U.S. Embassy, or an NGO because of their compelling persecution or because no other durable solution exists

**P2 (Priority Two Refugee Cases)** – groups of refugees of special concern to the U.S. because of their circumstances and need for resettlement

**P3 (Priority Three Refugee Cases)** – refugee relatives (parents, spouses, and unmarried children under 21) of refugees who are already settled in the U.S.; the anchor relative in the U.S. must file an AOR to be processed by DHS; as of March 2008, the P3 program is suspended for persons of certain nationalities

**PA (Principal Applicant)** – primary person in a refugee case who must substantiate a claim for refugee status in an interview with an immigration officer

**PAROLEE** – an alien allowed into the U.S. for urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit; this is a temporary status only, requiring parolees to either leave when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist or adjust their status to Legal Permanent Resident, if eligible

**PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD** – identification indicating a person is authorized to live and work in the United States of America on a permanent basis; slang term is “green card”

**PORT OF ENTRY** – the place where a refugee lawfully enters a country

**PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS** – long term refugee crises that have no foreseeable durable solution

**PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome)** – a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to any event which results in psychological trauma

**R&P (Reception and Placement Program)** – funded by DOS/PRM through the VOLAG, this program assists newly arrived refugees with financial and case management assistance for a period of up to 90 days

**RCA (Refugee Cash Assistance)** – federally-funded cash assistance program administered by the Tennessee Office for Refugees (TOR); available for up to eight months post-arrival for eligible clients

**RECEIVING COUNTRY, COUNTRY OF DESTINATION, OR THIRD COUNTRY** – a country that has agreed to accept a defined number of refugees and migrants on a yearly basis by presidential, ministerial or parliamentary decision; in the case of return or repatriation, also the country of origin

**REEDUCATION CAMP** – the name given to the prison camps operated by the Vietnamese government at the end of the Vietnam War

**REFUGEE** – a person who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality or being outside the country of his/her former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it

**RAVU (Refugee Access Verification Unit)** – the body that reviews immigration records of AOR applicants as the last step before applications are sent and processed overseas

**REFUGEE CAMP** – temporary settlement built to receive refugees, usually built and run by a government, the United Nations, or international organizations; although intended to be a temporary means of meeting basic human needs, many refugee camps have existed for decades

**RPC (Refugee Processing Center)** – the central data repository for all overseas and domestic resettlement operations; the RPC manages WRAPS, the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System

**REPATRIATION** – the process of returning a person back to one's place of origin or citizenship; forced repatriation is called refoulement

**RESETTLEMENT** – the movement of individuals or groups from one location to another, usually with the intention that this move be permanent; in regard to refugees, this involves the selection and transfer of individuals from the country in which they have sought protection to a country that has agreed to admit them as refugees

**RESETTLEMENT AGENCY** – a non-profit organization that provides sponsorship and initial resettlement services for refugees entering the United States

**RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY** – the country in which the refugee ultimately resettles; this country provides the refugee with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by citizens; the resettlement country should allow for refugees to become naturalized citizens

**RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES** – the top ten countries that accept refugees for permanent resettlement (in order of the ratio resettled to host country population) are Australia, Canada, the United States, Norway, New Zealand, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Ireland

**RD (Resettlement Director)** – the local administrator of a resettlement agency or program

**RFP (Request for Proposal)** – a public notice of grant availability, requesting potential partners to submit applications for funding

**RMA (Refugee Medical Assistance)** – federally-funded medical coverage program administered by the Tennessee Office for Refugees (TOR) through HCC

(Houston Casualty Corporation); available for up to eight months post-arrival for eligible clients

**RSC (Resettlement Support Center)** – formerly known as OPE (Overseas Processing Entity), a voluntary agency, U.S. mission contractor, or international organization that helps process refugees for U.S. resettlement

**RSS (Refugee Social Services Program)** – funded by ORR through TOR, this program assists refugee clients with job placement, social adjustment, and English language training

**RSIG/RSIP (Refugee School Impact Grant/Program)** – funded by ORR through TOR, this discretionary grant program seeks to ease the burden on public school systems that have large numbers of refugee students

**SECONDARY MIGRANT** – a refugee who moves from his/her original resettlement site to another state

**SELF-SUFFICIENCY** – the goal of every refugee program funded by ORR; self-sufficiency is defined as a client earning income at a level which renders him or her ineligible for cash assistance programs

**SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence)** – rape, attempted rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, forced early marriage, domestic violence, marital rape, trafficking, female genital mutilation, and other acts committed against an individual; the number of instances of these acts typically increase during times of war or emergency

**SIV (Special Immigrant Visa)** – a special status given to Iraqis and Afghanis who worked as interpreters with American armed services; they qualify for the same benefits as refugees for up to eight months after arrival

**SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT** – adaptation of the refugee to their new environment

**SOMATIZATION** – process by which an unconscious psychological distress is expressed as a physical symptom

**SSI (Supplemental Security Income)** – refugees who are 65 and older or disabled qualify for this form of financial assistance for up to seven years; they must attain US citizenship to retain benefits after that time

**SRC (State Refugee Coordinator)** – the administrator who oversees the federally-funded refugee programs in a state

**SRHC (State Refugee Health Coordinator)** – the administrator who oversees all health-related issues for refugees in a state

**STATELESS PERSON** – a person who, under national law, does not have the legal bond of nationality with any country

**TA (Technical Assistance)** – the delivery of specific support regarding the development, implementation, improvement, and promotion of a program(s) within an agency

**TAG/TAP (Targeted Assistance Grant/Program)** – funded by ORR through TOR, this program provides assistance to newly arrived refugees and specific hard-to-serve refugee groups who for various reasons have been unable to make the transition to economic self-sufficiency; the goal of the program is job placement

**TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)** – welfare; in Tennessee, this program is called Families First

**TENNCARE** – Tennessee's version of Medicaid, the U.S. healthcare program for those who are low income and have few resources

**TOR (Tennessee Office for Refugees)** – a department of Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc. designated by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to administer the state refugee resettlement program; funded by ORR, the Tennessee Refugee Program helps refugees statewide access cash and medical assistance, initial medical screenings, employment, social adjustment services, English language training, and other related services in an effort to achieve self-sufficiency

**TRAFFICKING VICTIM** – a person who is forced into the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of reproductive slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, or a modern-day form of slavery

**TRAVEL LOAN** – a loan issued to refugees by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to pay for the costs of their transportation from overseas to the U.S. resettlement site; refugees typically begin paying back this interest-free loan after their first six months in the U.S.; the repayment of these loans enables the U.S. government to continue to assist refugees

**UN (United Nations)** – an international organization founded in 1945 whose stated aims are facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and achievement of world peace.

**UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT** – an individual who has migrated into a country and is in violation of the immigration laws and sovereignty of that country; see illegal immigrant

**UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)** – also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is a United Nations agency mandated to protect and support refugees at the request of a government or the UN itself, and assists in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country

**URM (Unaccompanied Refugee Minor)** – a refugee child under 18 years old who arrives in the U.S., is separated from both parents, and is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for him or her

**U.S. TIE** – formerly known as “anchor”, a family member or friend in the United States who can provide assistance to a refugee during the resettlement process

**USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development)** – an independent agency that provides economic, development, and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States

**USC** – United States citizen, either by birth or naturalization

**USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)** – the VOLAG (voluntary agency) whose Nashville and Memphis affiliates are Catholic Charities

**USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services)** – a component of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It performs many administrative functions formerly carried out by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)

**VISA 92/93** – the procedure that an asylee/refugee completes in order to apply for asylee/refugee status for a spouse or unmarried children under the age of 21; this process occurs within two years of the asylee's/refugee's date of arrival/eligibility; the procedures are generally referred to as Visa 92 for asylees (the petitioner was granted asylum in the U.S.) and Visa 93 for refugees (the petitioner was resettled to the U.S. as a refugee); beneficiaries of Visa 92 and 93 are eligible for all regular refugee benefits with the exception of an IOM travel loan

**VOLAG (Voluntary Agency)** – national organization that assists in resettling refugees in the United States; all local resettlement programs are affiliated with one or more of these national agencies

- Church World Service (CWS)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)

- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Inc. (KHRW)
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- World Relief Corporation (WR)
- State of Iowa, Bureau of Refugee Services

**WILSON-FISH** – an alternative to the traditional state-administered refugee resettlement program when a state has chosen to withdraw from the administration of that program; Wilson-Fish programs provide cash and medical assistance as well as social services grants for agencies working with refugees

**WORLD RELIEF** – one of the VOLAGs (voluntary agencies) with an affiliate in Nashville

**WRAPS (Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System)** – a centralized database that tracks refugee case processing