

# U.S. bishop hails government's refugee plan for 2024

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



## YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN:

- 88 Afghan refugees find happiness in Arkansas
- Sister ministers on the Mexico border as Jesus would
- Pax Christi volunteers see Texas-Mexico border reality
- Scholarships lead to nurses and lawyers for Guatemala
- 'Ukrainians are fighting for the same freedom we have'

Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, commended the Biden administration's refugee admissions allocations for fiscal year 2024 as "an ambitious and meaningful goal as we reflect not only on the global need but also the challenges facing American communities, including labor shortages, a lack of affordable housing, and high inflation."

On Sept. 29, President Biden signed a presidential determination authorizing the admission of up to 125,000 refugees eligible to enter the U.S. during fiscal year 2024, in accordance with the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act.

Effective Oct. 1, which marked the start of the new fiscal year, the U.S. allocated refugee admissions for 30,000-50,000 from Africa; 10,000-20,000 from East Asia; 2,000-3,000 from Europe and Central Asia; 35,000-50,000 from Latin America and the Caribbean; and 30,000-45,000 from the Near East and South Asia.

The president also specified that persons from Cuba, Eurasia, the Baltics, Iraq, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras "may, if otherwise qualified, be considered refugees for the purposes of admission" to the U.S., along with persons identified by a U.S. embassy in any location, under certain circumstances.

The updated ranges "are intended to provide flexibility as needs arise," with the overall total capped at 125,000, said President Biden in his official determination.

The new numbers mark a decisive shift, substantially increasing the allocations for refugees from Latin American and the Caribbean, while decreasing totals for those from Europe and Central Asia.

"We welcome the Administration's efforts to increase resettlement from the Western Hemisphere, while reiterating that this should not come at the expense of other populations," said Bishop Seitz in a Sept. 30 statement.

He reaffirmed the bishops' "solidarity with persecuted Christians around the world, especially those in the Middle East and Asia, who face increased barriers to accessing permanent protection.

Over the past decade or so, the number of persons displaced globally has soared by almost 154 percent, from 42.75 million in 2012 to 108.4 million in 2022.