

# Empowering Physicians: Approach to the Refugee Patient

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Edwin Hayes

June 26, 2024

# Objectives

- Discuss the modern state of refugees globally and their local effects
- Demystify refugee care for less familiar providers
- Review pearls concerning unique challenges around refugee care
- Empower local physicians on caring for refugees

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PM joins world leaders in last-ditch diplomatic blitz over Ukraine crisis

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## WORLD HOLDS ITS BREATH



# COUNTDOWN TO WAR

Russia bolsters invasion force

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**Who let the dogs out?**  
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## Tensions rise in Ukraine as West steps up efforts to stop invasion

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## Damning race report reveals vast inequalities across health service

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**Inequalities are evident at every stage from birth to death**

**Leave now - western diplomats flee Kyiv**



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## Leaders in final push to avert Ukraine invasion



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## 'Europe's darkest hour since WWII'

# RUSSIA STRIKES



Smoke billows over Kyiv after Russian strikes on the Ukrainian capital. Photo: The Associated Press

## Explosions rock Ukrainian cities in move condemned as 'full-scale war'

**E**xplosions rocked several Ukrainian cities yesterday, including the country's capital, Kyiv — moments after Russia launched a "full-scale war" on its neighbour.

Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, tweeted last night that hearts occurred on the eastern and northern borders of the country and urged residents to remain calm and stay indoors.

World leaders condemned the attacks as "unprovoked and unjustified" — with Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, calling it "full-scale war" — after Russian President Vladimir Putin

the nation — and urged Kiev to welcome refugees from the war zone with open arms.

"You cannot imagine and you cannot believe that in the 21st century this is possible. This is over 70 years after the bloody World War II, said the NZ group's northern region chairman, Yurko Gladus. "This also was a battle that suffered the most during WWII... and now again, and you just ask why."

There were 23 deaths reported on Feb 24 and no being in Ukraine — and at least 17 have already fled the country since Foreign Affairs Minister Marius Mahlova's February 12 warning to "leave immediately".

thousands of refugees, — including New Zealanders, who called Russia's actions a flagrant breach of fundamental international rules.

"We stand with the people of Ukraine impacted by this conflict. Our thoughts are with them," Mahlova said.

European Union Security Chief Josep Borrell's Tweeting called the strikes "the darkest hour for Europe since the end of World War II". "This is not only the greatest violation of international law, it's a violation of the basic principles of human conscience," he said.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivered a brief but impassioned speech yesterday, pleading "from

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# Russia blitzes Ukraine



Russia's army has a military airport in Chyhyriv near Kyiv in Ukraine yesterday. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine with explosives, based on what across the country and its foreign minister warning a "full-scale invasion" on Saturday.

- Explosions heard in Kyiv and several other cities
- Moscow accused of acting like 'Nazi Germany'
- Scores reportedly killed, hundreds flee onslaught

**M**oscow launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine yesterday, killing scores and forcing hundreds to flee for their lives in the pro-Russian region of eastern Ukraine as Russian forces had reached the capital, Kyiv.

An AFP reporter in the northern part of the city saw several low-flying jets appear overhead and reports that an aircraft was under attack.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said a "full-scale invasion" by the authorities, 10 people were killed as a military base near Ukraine's Black Sea port city of Odessa.

Ukraine's foreign minister said Russian forces had reached the capital, Kyiv.

An AFP reporter in the northern part of the city saw several low-flying jets appear overhead and reports that an aircraft was under attack.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said a "full-scale invasion" by the authorities, 10 people were killed as a military base near Ukraine's Black Sea port city of Odessa.

**M**oscow accused of acting like 'Nazi Germany' and several other cities

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared martial law and said Russia was attacking his country's "sovereign independence" but urged citizens to remain calm and avoid panic.

He accused Russia of acting like "Nazi Germany", saying it had taken a "consciously and calculated step" to "seize all Ukrainian citizens" while spreading its attack on a town on the border with Moscow-backed rebels, a toll that could not be immediately confirmed by AFP.

Kyiv's main international airport was hit in the first bombing of the city since World War 2 and an air strike rained over the capital in the first hours.

"I woke up because of the sound of bombing, I picked a bag and tried to escape," Maria Lashchenko said, as the shelling inside a Kyiv metro station.

**S**cores reportedly killed, hundreds flee onslaught

In the eastern Ukrainian town of Chyhyriv a runway near the body of the father among the wreckage of a missile strike in a residential district.

"I had been here," the man added, reportedly, next to the hotel room of a wife.

He didn't say the word count was rising as he spoke.

"This is a war of aggression, Ukraine will be hit and will win. The world can and should help. The time has come," he said.

At least a few hours of the World's speech, Russia's defence ministry said it had received Ukrainian military addresses to its defence systems.

Ukraine said Russian tanks and heavy equipment crossed the border to several northern regions, in the east as well as inside the Russian-occupied peninsula of Crimea in the south.

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said the operation would be long and necessary. "Ideally, Ukraine needs to be defended and liberated of Russia," he said yesterday.

In his broadcast address, he had pledged the assault by the day the government was restoring "freedom" to the rest of the country.

The Kremlin can be said the leaders of two important territories in eastern Ukraine had asked Moscow for military help against Kyiv after Mr Putin recognised their independence on Monday.

**Govt eyes evacuating Thais**

A charter flight is ready to be used to help evacuate Thais in Ukraine if that can be done, Thai officials said, but they are waiting for a decision from the Thai government.

"We should be able to evacuate Thais from Ukraine, she said.

"If Ukraine chooses to accept to continue ahead, I don't think we will be arranged to take Thais across the border in Ukraine by private boats because of the right to return to Thailand," she said.

The Thai embassy in Moscow, Thailand, has kept in touch with Thai in Ukraine to ensure that Thai citizens are safe and that they can be evacuated if necessary.

The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Thai government is preparing to help evacuate Thais on the government's command.

## COUNTDOWN TO CONFLICT



- Feb 20: Russian troops entered Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, and began to take control of the city.
- Feb 21: Russian troops entered Kyiv and began to take control of the city.
- Feb 22: Russian troops entered Kyiv and began to take control of the city.
- Feb 23: Russian troops entered Kyiv and began to take control of the city.
- Feb 24: Russian troops entered Kyiv and began to take control of the city.
- Feb 25: Russian troops entered Kyiv and began to take control of the city.





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**Desperate Afghans die clinging to jet**

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Soldiers at a blockaded road to Myanmar's parliament in Naypyidaw during the February 1, 2021 coup. © 2021 Reuters

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## A refugee crisis for the world

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● Britain may be asked to take thousands of displaced people

● Aid officials say population flight is becoming permanent





Africa

# Uganda's anti-gay bill is the latest and worst to target LGBTQ Africans

By Aditi Bhandari

PUBLISHED APRIL 7, 2023

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Newspaper of the year

## Israel declares 'siege' of Gaza as Hamas threatens captives

UN chief condemns the escalating violence amid soaring death toll

Oliver Holmes



Smoke rises above Gaza City after an Israeli airstrike. Israel launched assaults from air and sea on the Gaza Strip, home to 2.3 million people, after Saturday's devastating attack by Hamas militants

**'They are in my house'**  
Terror in the kibbutz

Bethan McKernan  
Arlene

**N**orah Orlan, a kibbutz in southern Israel that is home to about 400 people, is so close to the Gaza Strip that the kibbutz is just 400 meters away. Despite the 10-kilometer buffer zone that separates them, the kibbutz members can see each other hanging out washing. Until the late 1980s, older members of Kibbutz Orlan would regularly drive a few miles to the west to shop in Gaza City's souq, eat the famous falafel or go for a walk on the Mediterranean coast. Many still have friends in Gaza. Despite the Israeli blockade imposed in 2007, after the militant group Hamas seized control of the area, they kept in touch with family, the community began work on a visitor

**B**  
new era of devolution

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In the biggest expansion of devolution since Labour was last in power, he will give that control and conditioned authorities would get more control over housing and planning, skills, energy and transport

He will promise a "decade of national renewal", an indication he believes his party will be in power for the next 10 years, although he will acknowledge that some voters will need to be given a message about how the country goes to the polls, where the country goes to the polls, which Labour does say would give voters and cities the tools they need to develop their own

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## Hamas threat to execute hostages as Israel prepares ground invasion



- Armed wing of Hamas threatens public execution of Israeli hostage for every attack on Palestinian home launched 'without prior warning'
- Gaza under 'complete siege' with food, fuel, water and electricity cut off as Benjamin Netanyahu warns retaliation 'is only just beginning'
- Over 300,000 Israeli army reservists called up as PM reportedly tells US President he will launch ground invasion amid fears of high casualties
- Toll rises as 900 Israelis and 690 Palestinians are confirmed dead

OPINION POLICY







# FACTS

- **At least 117.3 million people were forcibly displaced** at the end of 2023
- 42% of refugees are less than 18 yo
- 86% are hosted by developing countries
- 20 years
- As of 2019, less than 1% of all refugees worldwide are resettled to a 3<sup>rd</sup> country

# SOME DEFINITIONS

- Refugee - a person who is **outside their country** and who is unwilling or **unable to return because of persecution, or well-founded fear of persecution**, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. After one year of refugee status in the United States, refugees are required to apply to adjust to lawful permanent resident status
- Asylum-seeker – someone **seeking international protection** from dangers in his/her home country, but **whose claim for refugee status has yet to be determined legally**. Every refugee begins as an asylum seeker, but not every asylum seeker will become a refugee.
- Internally Displaced Person – Someone who has been forced to flee their home but never crosses an international border





**1****REFUGEE STATUS**

UNHCR identifies refugees who will need resettlement based on their vulnerabilities and specific needs.

**2****REFERRAL TO THE U.S.**

UNHCR assesses each individual case, gathers all the background information and submits the case to be considered for resettlement.

**3****SECURITY CLEARANCE**

Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) and U.S. government intelligence agencies run background checks and security clearance processes.

**4****IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS**

The Department of Homeland Security conducts face-to-face interviews to determine whether the application qualifies for resettlement.

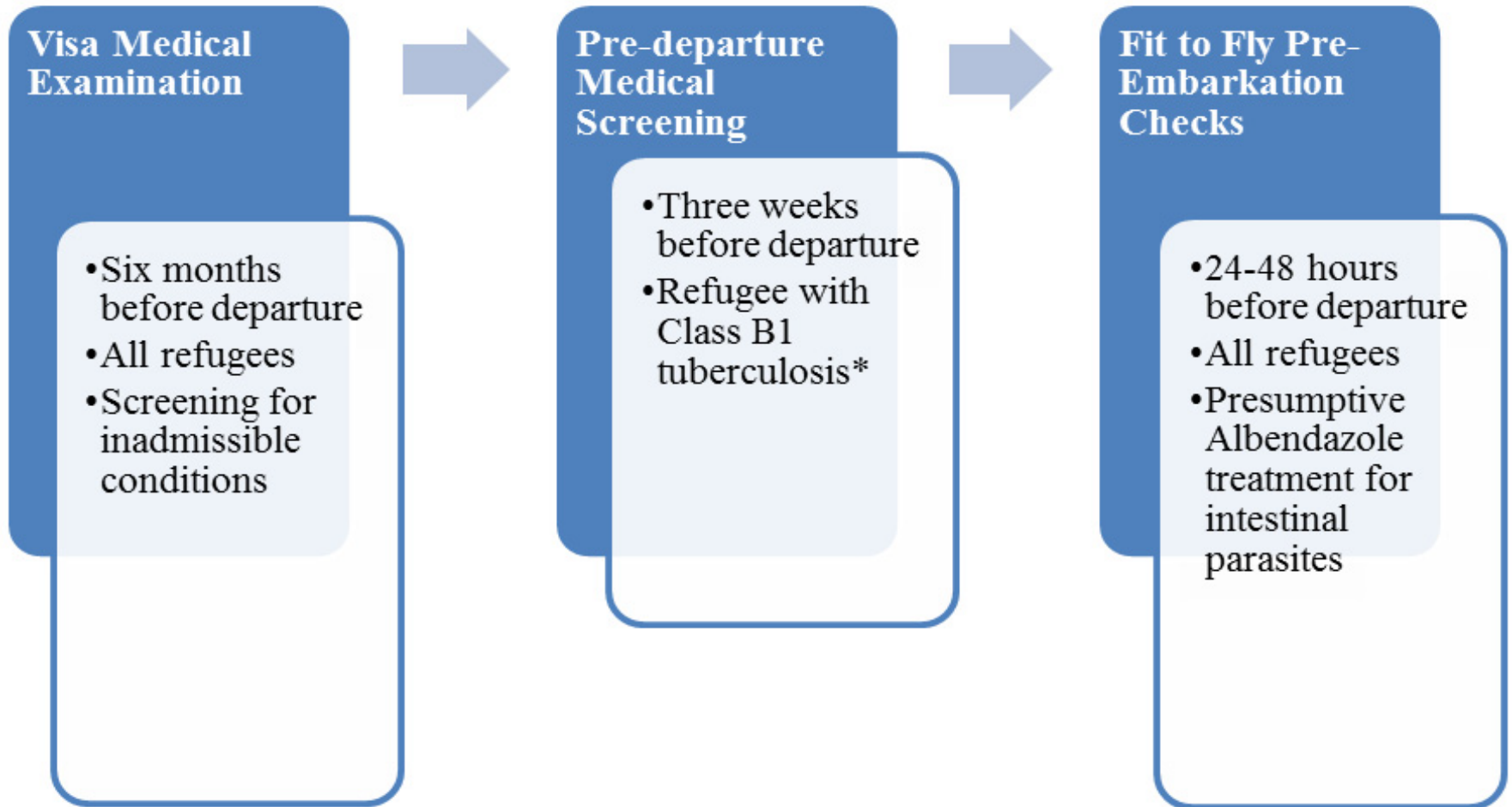
**5****MEDICAL SCREENING**

Pre-approved applicants go through a medical screening to ensure they do not have tuberculosis or communicable diseases.

**6****MATCHING WITH A SPONSOR AGENCY**

Approved applicants are assigned to local NGOs that assist them upon arrival. These NGOs help refugees integrate and become economically self-sufficient in their new U.S. community.

# Medical Assessments

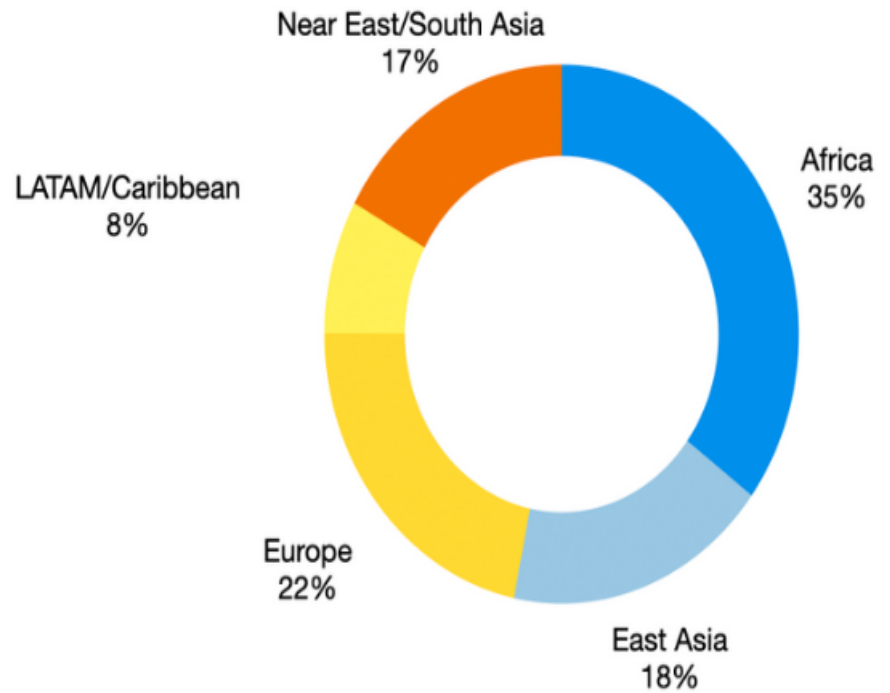
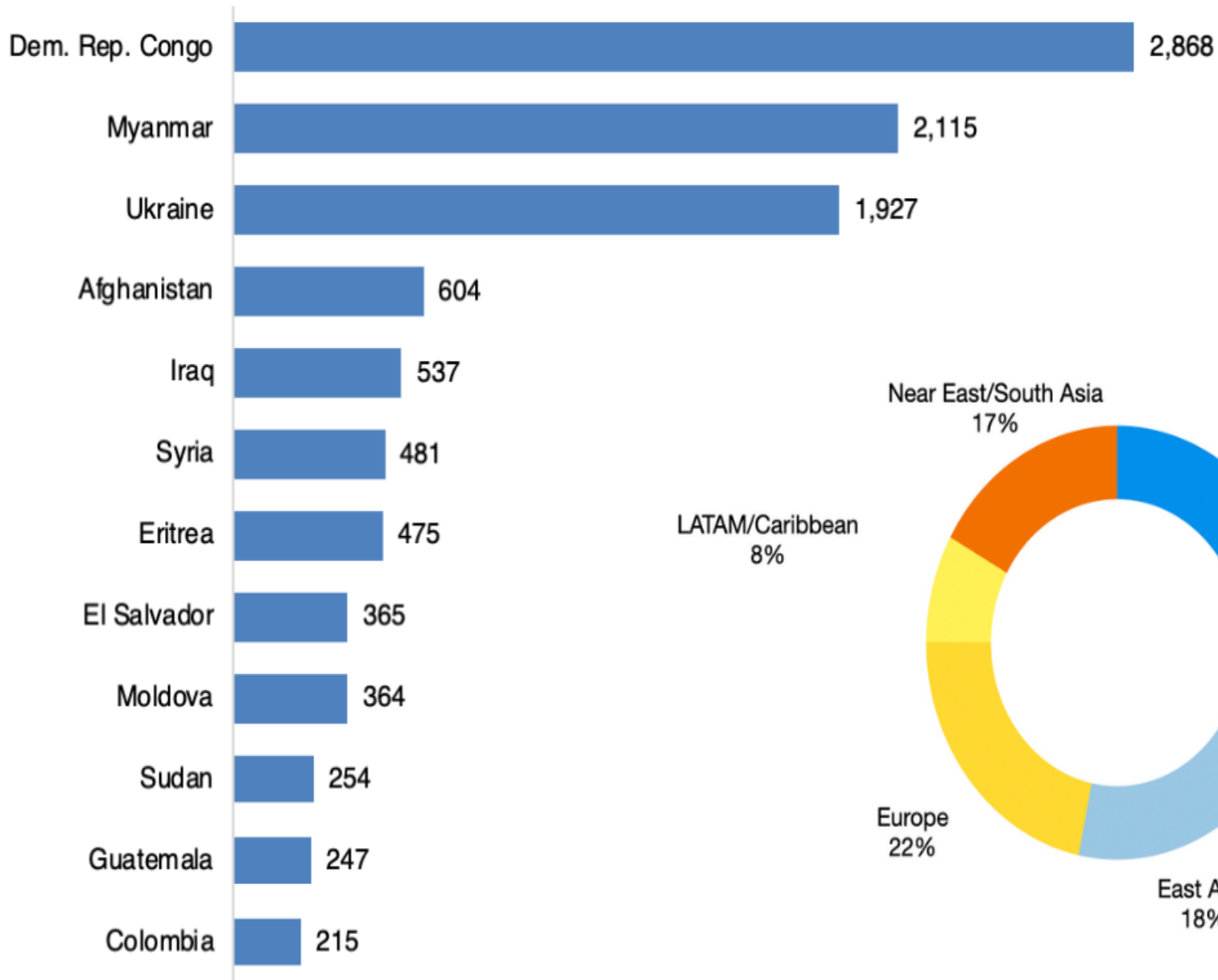




# US Refugees

- The **United States resettlement program is the largest in the world** and the U.S. **has been the global leader** in resettling refugees since the 1970s.
- Refugee resettlement to the U.S. is traditionally offered to the most vulnerable refugee cases
  - Women and children at risk
  - Women heads of household
  - Elderly
  - Survivors of torture
  - Those with acute medical needs

# REFUGEES BY COUNTRY AND REGION OF ORIGIN





# A brief word from/about the Karen

- Burma/Myanmar with long history of occupation and longest civil war
- US State Dept 2013 reported 400,000 internally displaced Karen people in Burma and over 128,000 refugees living in nine camps in Thailand, majority Karen (79%)
- One of seven ethnic minority groups that have been persecuted by the military government in Burma.
- Many refugees and their families may live in camps for decades before resettlement
- Issues with food, employment, schooling, safety, medical care in refugee camps

- “There are no words to describe the damage that has been done to the Karen people. **There is no happiness.**”
- “In Burma because of the war we had to run to escape. Many people died in the jungle because of lack of food and sickness. The **Burmese Army** made us do whatever they want: labor, etc. For **the ladies, they were caught, raped, and, if lucky, killed.**”
- “In the camp you eat what they provide you. There are no options. It is not healthy. For all of us we want to find jobs, but it is not allowed, so we had to do it in secret to leave the camp. If they capture you, you will go to jail. For the people who get work, they pay you markedly less. You can’t say anything you just accept it. **We live like chickens in a coop.**”
- “The first thing I remember was running from an airplane shooting at us, which led us to run into a hole. There was panic everywhere, chaos, everyone stepping on each other. **After that, there was never a day of peace, we were always running.**”

# Violence of uncertainty

- Search for employment, health, language, housing, food
- Targeting specific susceptible locations
- Health disparities
- Lack of human agency
- Undermining trust in US institutions
- Decreased seeking of healthcare
- Impact on mental and physical health



# Common Myths and Misconceptions

- Myth: Refugees take away jobs from locals
- Fact: Refugees often take jobs that locals do not want and create new businesses
  - International Labor Organization
- Myth: Refugees are a burden on the welfare system
- Fact: Refugees contribute more in taxes than they receive in benefits
  - Fiscal Policy Institute, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## CHANGES IN CRIME RATE:

Top 10 cities that received the most refugees relative to the size of their population, 2006—2015

	1 Clarkston, Georgia	2 Decatur, Georgia	3 El Cajon, California	4 W. Springfield, Massachusetts	5 Utica, New York
% Change in Violent Crime Rate	-4.8	-62.2	-31.7	87.9	-20.0
% Change in Property Crime Rate	-8.0	-8.9	-43.7	2.6	-23.6

	6 Southfield, Michigan	7 Syracuse, New York	8 New Bern, N. Carolina	9 Lancaster, Pennsylvania	10 Glendale, California
% Change in Violent Crime Rate	-77.1	-25.6	-37.5	-20.6	-47.1
% Change in Property Crime Rate	-46.0	-24.9	-36.5	-38.1	-10.9

■ -10% or less   
 ■ -10% to -30%   
 ■ -30% to -50%   
 ■ -50% or more   
 ■ Increase

# Refugee Arrival and Needs

- Basic needs of refugees (housing, healthcare, education)
- Resettlement services with Lutheran Services
- DSS monitoring of medical screenings



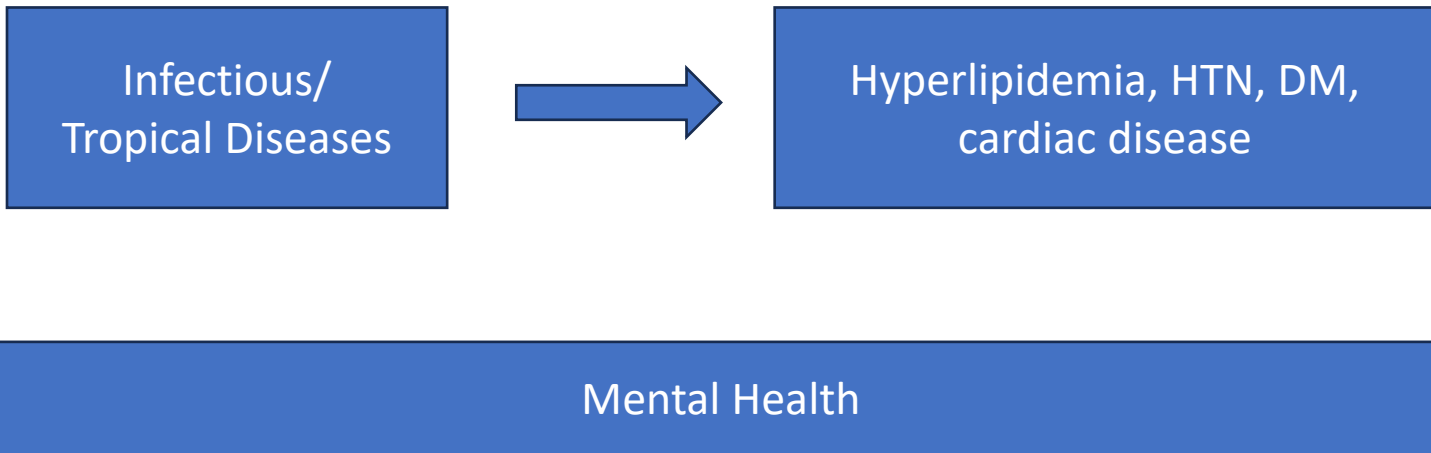
# Post-arrival screening

- CDC recommends that refugees receive a medical screening w/in 30 days of arrival in US conducted by licensed clinician in presence of interpreter, if necessary
- Focus on **communicable diseases, mental health problems, oral health, and nutrition status** in all refugees, as well as lead levels, gaps in immunizations, and growth status in children.
- These recommendations are **Level C evidence**.
- For **first 8 months** after arrival, refugees receive compulsory **Medicaid coverage**

# Initial Medical Needs of Refugees

- Common initial health concerns
  - Continuation of chronic medications
  - Birth control
  - Amenorrhea, hair loss, chronic pain, epigastric discomfort

# Initial Medical Needs of Refugees



# Initial Medical Needs of Refugees

- Common initial health concerns
  - Continuation of chronic medications
  - Birth control
  - Amenorrhea, hair loss, chronic pain, epigastric discomfort
- Screening and vaccination protocols
  - DSS requirements
  - USCIS requirements



# Vaccinations



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Background

Under the immigration laws of the United States, a noncitizen who applies for an immigrant visa abroad, or who seeks to adjust status to that of a lawful permanent resident while in the United States, is required to receive vaccinations to prevent the following diseases:

- Mumps;
- Measles;
- Rubella;
- Polio;
- Tetanus and Diphtheria Toxoids;
- Pertussis;
- Haemophilus influenzae type B;
- Hepatitis B;
- COVID-19; and
- Any other vaccine-preventable diseases recommended by the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP).

# The Carolina Survivor Clinic

- Our Model
  - ***Comprehensive*** Medical and Psychological Care to Survivors of Torture
    - Medical
    - Psychological
    - Social
    - Legal

# Community-Based Programs

- Torture
- Resettlement Stress
  - Acculturation
  - **Communication**
  - **Transportation**
  - **Child-care**
  - Food Security
  - **Community**
  - Discrimination
  - Family Separation
  - **Education**



# Community-Based Programs

- English Conversation
- Scholastic Leadership Program
- The Guidance Clinic
- The Carolina Survivor Garden















**S O C C E R**



**SOUTHE**

**USA**





# Making a Safe Clinic



# Safe Clinic Pearls

- Importance of a positive first impression and open communication
- Name pronunciation and preference
- Encourage to ask questions and allow to stop interview or exam at any time
- Avoid long wait times
- Avoid white coats
- Have rooms with multiple windows
- Avoid reminders of torture, such as certain medical devices and pictures
- Gender-matched care providers and the presence of a chaperone for sensitive exams

# Effective Clinic Pearls

- Ask about use of traditional, folk, or alternative treatments
- Insurance, rx, making appointments, transportation
- Case mgmt. community health workers, or health navigators
- Common chronic noncommunicable disease
- Routine health maintenance
- Cancer screening
- Immunizations

# Language Barriers and Solutions

- Impact of language barriers
  - Perpetuated by trauma, PTSD
- Use of interpreters and translation services
  - Prisma has a hotline
  - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Training staff on working with interpreters

# Interpreters

- Importance of professional interpreters over family members for accurate medical communication
- Ensuring comfort with the interpreter's community background.

# Prior Records

- Collection of all prior medical documentation, including overseas health screening exams and medication lists.



# Mental Health Challenges

- Common mental health issues in refugee populations
  - PTSD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, psychosomatic
- Barriers to mental health care
  - Long wait times for specialists
  - Transportation
  - Language barriers
- Culturally sensitive approaches to mental health
  - Stigma
  - Psychosomatic education
- Longitudinal relationship is vital
  - May be years before trauma disclosed

# Take Home Points

- Refugees are a heterogeneous group dealing with heterogeneous problems
- The state of displaced people remains a serious concern for the world
- Care of refugee patients requires a trauma informed approach
- Care of refugees is possible for all medical providers





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# Thank You

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FUGEES  
WELCOME

REFUGEES  
WELCOME!

REFUGEES  
WELCOME