

US to Cap the Number of Refugee Asylum Seekers to 30,000 in 2019, down by 33% from 2018

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US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the US will cap the number of refugees allowed into the country at 30,000 for fiscal-year 2019, down from the cap of 45,000 last year. Former president, Barack Obama, set a cap of 110,000 refugees to be admitted for fiscal year 2017. Pompeo says the US now is processing applications of more than 280,000 asylum seekers, adding to another 800,000 already processed but awaiting adjudication. Most of these are from Central America classified by the Administration as 'economic migrants' who should not be permitted to stay. -GEG

Washington (AFP) – The Trump administration slashed its annual cap on refugee acceptances Monday for the second year in a row, saying it would take a maximum of just 30,000 in the fiscal year to come.

That was down from a 45,000 limit in the year that ends on September 30 – but higher than the actual number of refugees resettled in the past year, around 21,000.

It was the lowest number for the State Department's refugee program since it was instituted in 1980.

"The improved refugee policy of this administration serves the national interest of the

United States, and expands our ability to help those in need all around the world,” said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

“We are and continue to be the most generous nation in the world.”

The new level was barely over one-quarter of the 110,000 cap set by former president Barack Obama for fiscal year 2017.

The sharp fall is part of President Donald Trump’s overall crackdown on immigration.

“We will continue to assist the world’s most vulnerable while never losing sight of our first duty: serving the American people,” Pompeo said.

Pompeo said the burden of hundreds of thousands of asylum requests, most of them from Mexicans and Central Americans, had taxed the bureaucracy assessing applications.

He also said that the government had to be more careful not to admit potential criminal and terror threats.

“Already this year we have seen evidence that the system previously in place was defective,” he said.

“It allowed a foreign national to slip through who was later discovered to be a member of ISIS, as well as other individuals with criminal backgrounds.”

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