

Refugees in San Diego

country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

Definition of a refugee:

A refugee is one who flees from invasion, persecution, or political danger

– Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary



The organization that has overall supervision of the treatment of refugees is the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Under international law, refugees are individuals who:

- are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence
- have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.
- are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that

Current Facts Relating to San Diego's Refugee Population

“In 1991-92, Bhutan expelled roughly 100,000 ethnic Nepalis, most of whom have been living in seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal ever since. Talks are ongoing to resettle them in third countries, most notably the U.S.”

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugees
(page 10; 8/15/2008)

“Some 2.5 million, roughly one-third the population of the Darfur area, have been forced to flee their homes after attacks by Janjaweed Arab militia backed by Sudanese troops during the ongoing Darfur conflict in western Sudan.” (Ibid page 11)

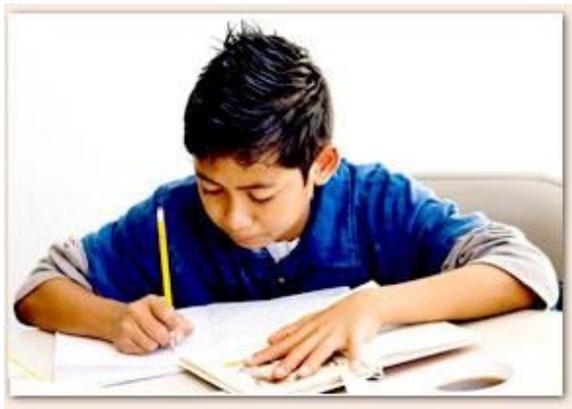
“Apart from physical wounds or starvation, a large percentage of refugees develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or depression. These long-term mental problems can severely impede the functionality of the person in everyday life. - - - Depression is also characteristic..” (Ibid page 130)

Local Impact

From the above, it can be seen that the settlement of thousands of refugees as determined by Government authorities within a specific location, can have a marked impact on the cultural and social characteristics of a region. San Diego is one such location and the City Heights section of the City has a particularly concentrated

population of refugees, based on the comparatively lower rents of this location. Earlier concentrations resulted from the Vietnam War and brought Vietnamese and Hmong refugees. A variety of Central American countries are represented in the Hispanic population. Large numbers of African refugees have settled in the area more recently, mostly from [Somalia](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Eritrea](#), [Southern Sudan](#) and [Darfur](#). The most recent arrivals are as well as thousands from the Iraqi War.

Refugee Children In Our Midst



The Episcopal Refugee Network provides tutoring programs because it believes that they are essential if teenage refugees are to play a constructive role in their new society. Public schools find it difficult to meet the needs of older children who lack reading skills in English. Students enter academic subject classes taught in English. ESL classes are usually developed for Hispanic students and have teachers with no familiarity with Arabic, Burmese, or Karen languages. The lack of success in 7th to 12th grades of youth with a grade 2 or 3 reading level is not only an educational issue, it creates social drop-outs, tensions and an underclass of youth for whom the American dream can never materialize.