

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO IS AN UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINOR?

Unaccompanied refugee minors (URM) are youth living in refugee camps outside of the United States who are identified as having no parents or caregiver. URM often live indefinitely in refugee camps or child-led households in heavily impoverished areas and are susceptible to human trafficking—both sex and labor trafficking—and exploitation. These children come from countries such as Sudan, Myanmar, and Eritrea—where many were persecuted for their faith or witnessed the genocide of their families and communities.

WHAT IS THE URM PROGRAM?

The URM program helps refugee children adjust to life in the United States through critical services, including living skills training, English language training, and mental health services. Though thousands of children have found renewed hope through the URM program, over 130,000 children became unaccompanied or were separated from their families in 2017, and over 13 million children remain refugees.

HOW MANY KIDS HAVE BEEN HELPED BY THE URM PROGRAM?

Since the start of the URM program in 1980, approximately 13,000 URM children have resettled in the United States.

In FY 2018 the United States resettled only 116 unaccompanied refugee children, less than .0009% of refugee children in need of safety.

WHAT IS BETHANY'S HISTORY WITH THE URM PROGRAM?

Bethany supports children and families with world-class social services, all designed to help families thrive. Since 1975, Bethany has resettled unaccompanied refugee children from refugee camps in loving, stable families or small group homes that are best able to meet their unique needs. In fact, Bethany finds homes for more unaccompanied refugee minors than any other organization in the United States, with the state of Michigan welcoming more refugee minors than any other state.

WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES DO TO SUPPORT UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS?

URM should be prioritized for resettlement, as part of the United States' commitment to protecting these vulnerable youth. The U.S. should also invest in child protection programming that is essential for child well-being and survival during and after emergencies and in refugee contexts.

