

ADRIAN WALKER

New Trump administration refugee limits will strike close to home for some in Massachusetts

By [Adrian Walker](#) Globe Columnist , October 1, 2019, 6:13 p.m.



Senator Edward Markey spoke with reporters after participating in a roundtable discussion Tuesday in Boston on the impact of a cap on refugee admissions to the US for fiscal 2020. Markey said he has co-sponsored legislation calling for a big increase in the number of refugees accepted into the country. STEVEN SENNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

At 24, Tresor Alin Nahimana has spent an alarming amount of his life in flight from oppression.

Ethnic violence drove him from his home in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He lived

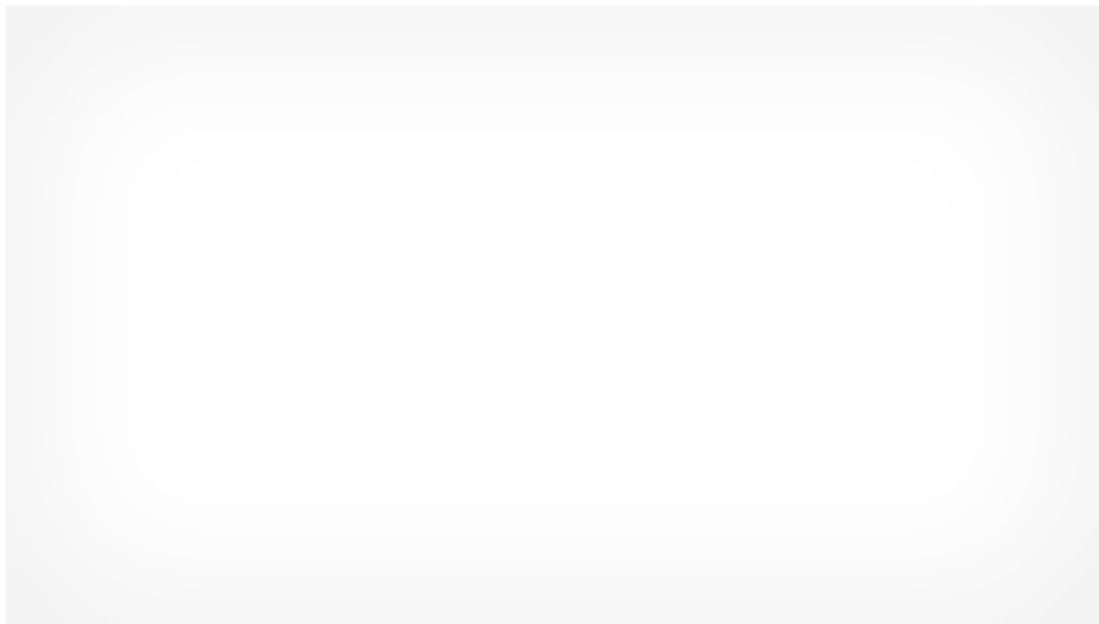
through the murders of his parents and the rape of his sister, while being assaulted himself, before he fled, seeking safety.

He moved to Uganda, then Turkey, where he married and now has two children. Seven months ago, he left his young family behind — temporarily, he thought — while making his way to Massachusetts, a job as a barista at a Starbucks at Logan International Airport, and the dream of a better life.

Now he wonders when he will see his family again.

“I hope I will see my family,” he said Tuesday. “I need them around.”

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His family’s planned reunion is on hold for now. That’s thanks to a draconian policy change by the Trump administration. For the third consecutive year, it has slashed the number of refugees that will be allowed to enter the country to 18,000 — the lowest level in 40 years, and less than a quarter of those admitted in the last year of the Obama Administration. The change went into effect on Tuesday.

The new limit sharply tightens America’s borders to people fleeing military and

humanitarian crises, people this country once welcomed with open arms and hearts.

At a roundtable discussion Tuesday co-hosted by the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and Oxfam America, advocates for immigrants assailed the new limits as deeply un-American.

“We are sitting at a crossroads,” said Fatema Sumar, vice president of global programs for Oxfam America. “What kind of country do we want to be?”

US Senator Ed Markey said he has co-sponsored legislation calling for a big increase in the number of refugees accepted into the country, to 125,000 a year. That number, Markey stressed, is intended as a goal rather than a limit. Though it would have little chance of being signed into law under this president, Markey said he believes passing the bill would elevate the issue of refugees in the minds of voters, in advance of the 2020 election.

As it stands now, America is joining the ranks of countries that seek to close their borders, just as the problem of displacement gets even worse around the globe. That’s a retreat from this country’s historic — and bipartisan — support for people fleeing violence and oppression back home.

“For decades, the United States has resettled more refugees than any other country,” said Eva Millona, executive director of MIRA. No more.

The question of how many immigrants the country should allow may seem remote to many Americans who have never had to ponder it deeply.

But it’s anything but an abstraction to Nahimana.

After an attack on his family in Congo that took the lives of his mother, father and a brother, he was urged to flee the country, and did. He was in Turkey for a little over two years, he said, when his wife urged him to go to America. They had one infant, and another child on the way. But work in Turkey had become scarce, and the United States

loomed as a land of opportunity.

Nahimana settled in Lynn last winter, found a job, and began learning English. An advocacy group — the International Institute of New England — helped him get settled, and he hopes to get a green card, and bring his family to his new home. He’s never seen his younger child, born after he left Turkey.

Nahimana said he speaks to his family every chance he gets. And he hopes their path to joining him won’t be cut off for long.

“I call them every day,” he said. “Every single day. I have to call them so they can feel that I am with them, even though they can’t see me. To give them hope that some day we’ll be together.”

Adrian Walker is a Globe columnist. E-mail him at adrian.walker@globe.com. Or follow him on Twitter [@adrian_walker](https://twitter.com/adrian_walker).

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Mr Merkin

10/01/19 - 6:21PM

Let's make sure we meet the needs of our citizens first please.



postemotional

10/01/19 - 8:54PM

Is he illegal?

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Tom_N

10/02/19 - 4:39AM

The implication is that he filed for and obtained refugee status before coming to the U.S. That would make his presence legal. The next step is for him to apply for and get a green card, to extend his stay.

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moveruk

10/02/19 - 3:58AM

Lefty sob stories, this country was founded on legal immigration, not everyone that showed up was admitted back at the height of the inflow and should not be admitted now.

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Tom_N

10/02/19 - 4:47AM

This story is about the refugee program. To obtain refugee status, you don't just "show up". You must apply from OUTSIDE the U.S., and undergo screening while waiting outside. Only when the U.S. decides that you pass the screening AND that there is an open refugee status slot do you get approval to come to the U.S.

At that time, barring undetected fraud, you are by definition a legal immigrant.

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Going to have to build affordable housing for these people...

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penciltoaster

10/02/19 - 5:04AM

Make America White Again



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user_3212293

10/02/19 - 5:15AM



Markey is a clown is he going to pay for all of them. Talk about impeaching a President they should look into impeaching Markey Pelosi and the entire Hit Squad-and many other ultra liberal clowns in Congress

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TB28

10/02/19 - 5:40AM



Yet another Globe article from a "reporter" who doesn't know what he's talking about. The person profiled in this story is not a refugee. For that reason alone, he is not affected by the Administration's announced refugee cap. If, as is possibly the case, he applied for and received asylum, he shouldn't have anything to worry about and can apply to adjust status (ie, obtain his green card) in a year, after which he can file a derivative petition for his wife and children to follow him. So what's the problem?

As usual, the Glove motto comes into play: don't let the facts get in the way of a good story.

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[hangdog32](#)

10/02/19 - 8:57AM



"For decades, the United States has resettled more refugees than any other country ..." Yep, we have. But apparently not enough. We better get used to this because as climate change spreads, with drought, floods, crop failures, we're going to see a lot more refugees. Of course, we'll be having problems of our own, like lack of water in Phoenix, Miami going underwater, coastal flooding in Eastern cities, another Dust Bowl in the heartland, etc., so where would we accommodate a few more million? Better have a plan.

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[wolfnotsheep](#)

10/02/19 - 9:06AM



Well...for one, the white, Trump supporting demographic we all know and love so well is, for a lack of a better term, dying out faster than Miami or Houston is sinking....their rapidly aging population combined with a negative birth rate means they're going extinct....so we need immigrants and refugees in ever increasing amounts in order to keep the work force from shrinking...and with it the economy and tax paying base.

So...now that we know that we desperately need immigrants and migrants and refugees...one often asks where should they go....Well, they're already making huge impacts in those areas of America that have seen their populations, and their fortunes, dry up...middle American states like Nebraska, Kansas and such have seen their small towns decimated by population outflows...these refugees and immigrants are good replacement...and funny enough, seem to take quit well to farming work and business start ups...

so there ya go

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