

Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are from *The Uprooted: Refugees and the United States*, by David M. Donahue and Nancy Flowers with the Amnesty International Human Rights Education Steering Committee.

alien (noun): A person who is not a citizen of the country in which he or she lives. A **legal alien** is someone who lives in a foreign country with the legal approval of that country. An **illegal (or undocumented) alien** is someone who lives in a foreign country without the legal approval of that country.

detainee (noun): An alien in the custody of government authorities who is waiting for officials to decide if he or she may stay in the country or will be forced to leave. Also called **internee**.

displaced person (noun): A person who has been forced by dangerous circumstances to leave home for a place of safety within the home country. If that person flees to another country, he or she is called a **refugee**.

emigrate (verb): To go from one region or country to settle in another.

immigrate (verb): To come into a region or country where one is not a native. A **legal immigrant** is a person who comes to settle in a country with the legal permission of its government. An **illegal (or undocumented) immigrant** is a person who comes to settle in a country without the legal permission of its government. (A person who enters on a tourist or student visa and then overstays his or her visa also becomes an illegal immigrant.) Unlike the illegal alien, an illegal immigrant wishes to settle permanently in the new country.

I.N.S. (noun): Abbreviation for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service.

naturalization (noun): The process whereby an immigrant becomes a citizen. In the United States, naturalized citizens have all the rights of native-born citizens except they may not run for president.

political asylum (noun): legal permission to live in a country given by its government to people fleeing danger of persecution in their original homelands. A person who seeks safety in a foreign country from danger at home is an asylum seeker.

refugee (noun): A person who leaves his or her country of origin because of a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion." (Definition used by U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 and the United Nations.) When a government acknowledges that a person has left his or her home country because of such a "well-founded fear of persecution," it grants that person **political asylum** or **refugee status**.