



Attachment 3

THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES (Handout)

In 1968 the United States signed the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, binding the U.S. government to adhere to articles 2 to 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the Convention).

The following list of rights is an unofficial summary of some of the articles included in the Convention. This list is intended to give those with refugee status an understanding of the rights to which they are entitled in the United States.

Those with refugee status have:

The right to practice their religion (article 4)

The right to own property (article 13)

The right to free access to courts of law (article 16)

The right to wage-earning employment (article 17)

The right to public education (article 22)

The right to public relief and assistance (article 23)

The right to social security (article 24)

The right to freedom of movement within the United States (article 26)

The right to travel documents for travel outside of the United States (article 28)

The right to remain outside of their country of origin (article 33)

The right to naturalization (article 34)

A refugee also has the right to apply for refugee status for his/her spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21. This status allows the refugee's spouse and children to settle in the U.S. (Immigration and Nationality Act section 207(c)2)

Refugees do not have:

The right to travel outside of the U.S. without a refugee travel document issued by the U.S. government

The right to vote, until they become citizens

Links:

How to file for a refugee travel document: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/travdoc.htm>

How to apply for citizenship: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/index.htm>

How to sponsor a family member: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/derref.htm>