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Question Do you think that Developed Countries in Europe and North America are protecting the rights of refugees

Firstly, who is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country ... "  
- The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

Protecting refugees is the core mandate of UNHCR. This booklet answers some of the most commonly asked questions about refugees themselves and how the agency attempts to help them. Who, for instance, can qualify as a refugee and on what grounds? Can people be excluded and why? - a particularly sensitive issue given the international preoccupation with terrorism. What rights does a refugee enjoy and what obligations? What is the role of governments and of UNHCR itself? It also explores related issues including the development of ‘temporary protection’, the future of millions of so-called internally displaced persons and statelessness.

The question centres on the developed countries of Europe and North America therefore for the sake of this assignment; I will use America and Britain as case studies with America representing North America and Britain representing Europe.

Starting with America, The United States has long accepted migrants who would be identified under current international law as refugees. In the wake of World War II, the United States [passed its first refugee legislation](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/history) to manage the resettlement of some 650,000 displaced Europeans. Throughout the Cold War, the United States accepted refugees fleeing from Communist regimes, such as those in Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba But the country’s official federal effort to resettle refugees, the U.S. Refugee Admission Program (USRAP), was not created until passage of the [Refugee Act of 1980](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/the-refugee-act). Prior to 1980, legislation that authorized acceptance of refugees was passed primarily on an ad hoc basis, responding to ongoing mass migrations. After the fall of South Vietnam to Communist forces in 1975, when the United States began taking in hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees, Congress saw the need for a more standardized system. The 1980 legislation, signed by President Jimmy Carter, established permanent procedures for vetting, admitting, and resettling refugees into the country, incorporated the official definition of the term “refugee,” increased the number of refugees to be admitted annually to fifty thousand, and granted the president authority to admit additional refugees in emergencies. The size of the U.S. refugee program has often fluctuated. But the war in Syria and the resulting migration crisis in Europe have increased policymakers’ scrutiny of arrivals from the Middle East, beginning with the administration of President Barack Obama. President Donald J. Trump ratcheted up that scrutiny with a ban on refugees from certain countries and sharp cuts to overall refugee admissions, renewing debate over the national security implications of refugee policy. Britain’s refugee policy leaves much to be desired when compared with most of Europe. Toxic attitudes to refugees and migrants across our country have steadily been on the rise since the Brexit referendum, while its European neighbours are putting us to shame in welcoming refugees in large numbers.

This, however, hasn’t stopped Britain making policy announcements that give the impression that they are being active in addressing the refugee crisis. More recently, the government declared it would increase the number of Syrian refugees admitted into the UK from 10,000 to 15,000.

Nonetheless, when taken away from a global total of 6 million Syrian refugees - as well as 14 million from other countries - this is a pitifully small number of people for the world’s fifth largest economy to help. By contrast, Germany, with only a slightly larger population and economy than the UK, hosts 1.4 million refugees. One of the main differences between Britain and its European neighbours is not only its attitude to welcoming refugees, but its culpability in creating them. The UK’s ugly history of colonialism and its present foreign policy and arms trade have all been contributing factors as to why so many are fleeing their homelands in search of a better life.