

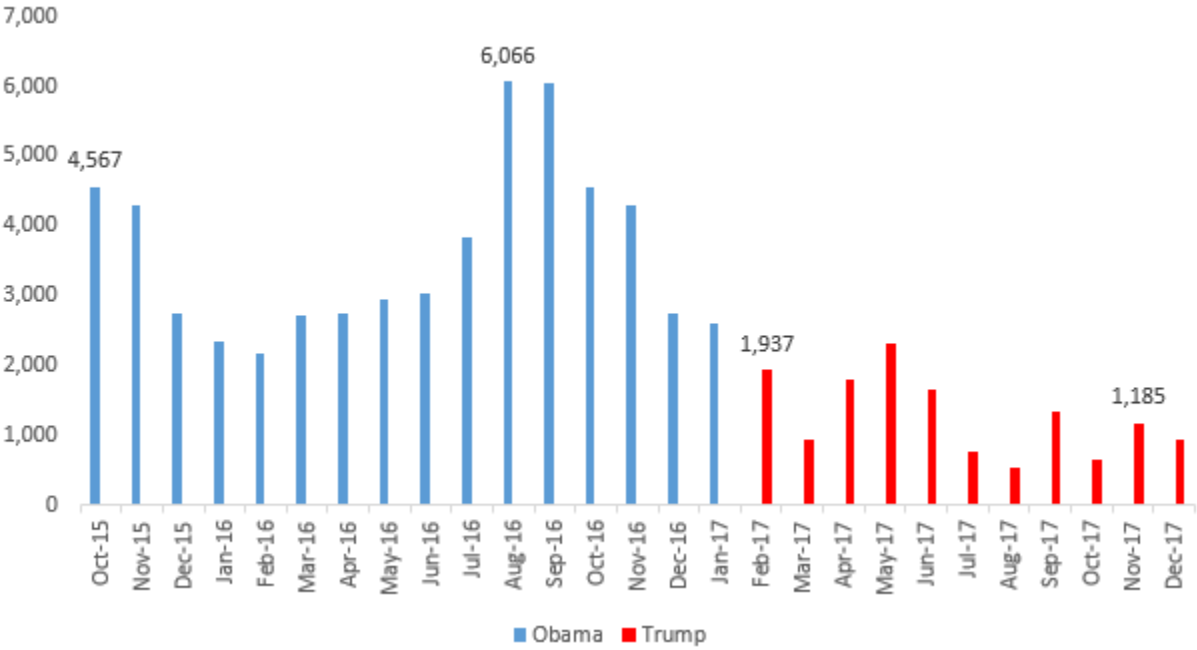
CATO Institute Says President Trump Is Not Keeping His Promise on Christian Refugees

December 18, 2017

During his campaign, President Trump promised to prioritize Christian refugees facing persecution, even implying that the Obama administration was actively disfavoring Christians. Many Christian refugee communities in the United States supported him based on this promise. One of his very first executive orders promised to prioritize Christian refugees. Despite these statements, however, President Trump has failed to deliver: his administration has accepted far fewer Christian refugees than in prior years.

According to figures from the U.S. Department of State, the United States accepted 3,671 Christian refugees per month from October 2015 to December 2016. President Trump assumed office on January 20, 2017 and issued his refugee executive order on January 27. The country accepted 1,280 Christian refugees per month from February to September 2017. In other words, the Obama administration was taking in almost three times as many refugees as the Trump administration has.

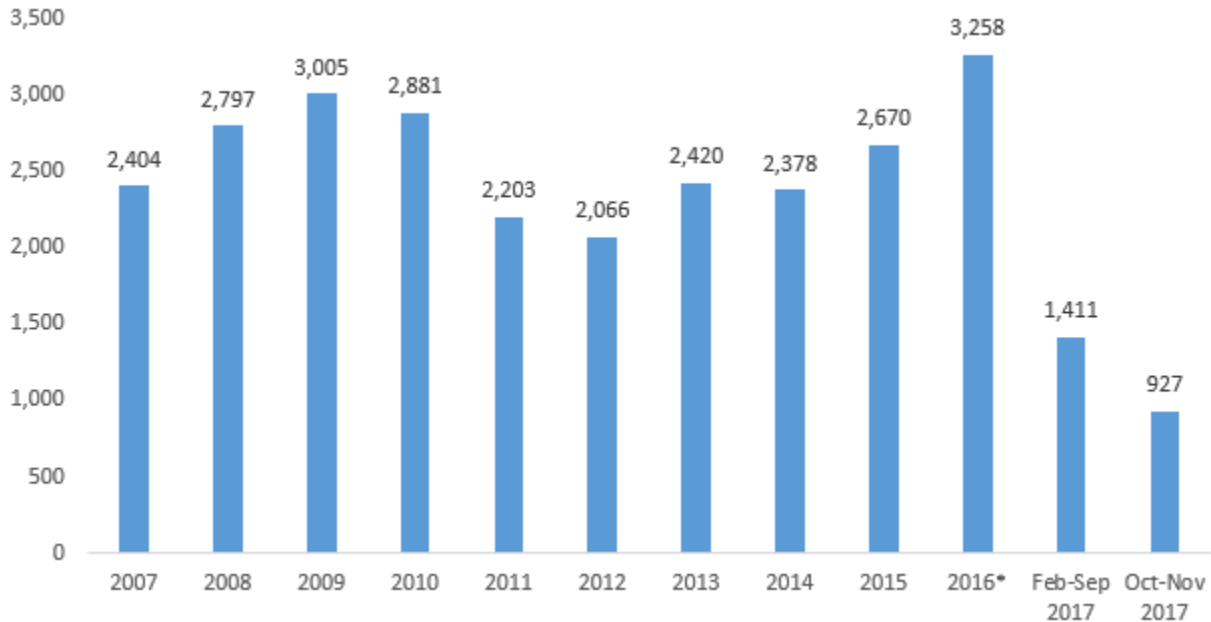
Figure 1
Monthly Christian Refugee Admissions, Monthly Average of 2016 and Each Month of 2017



Sources: *U.S. Department of State (through December 15, 2017)*

Over the last decade, the United States has averaged roughly twice as many Christian refugees per month as it is now accepting under the Trump administration. In other words, rather than rescuing more Christian refugees than prior presidents President Trump has *halved* their numbers. The numbers so far for Fiscal Year 2018, which started in October, are now below 1,000.

Figure 2
Monthly Christian Refugee Admissions, FY 2007 to FY 2018



Source: *U.S. Department of State* *2016 carries through January 2017

President Trump’s “prioritization” of Christian refugees parallels his prioritization of skilled immigrants in his chosen vehicle for legal immigration reform—the RAISE Act. RAISE simply ends most family-based categories without increasing the number of visas for skilled immigrants, so skilled immigrants are “prioritized” over others, but not in any way that actually eases immigration for them.

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