



Baltimore group resettling Syrian refugees responds to Trump Jr.'s 'Skittles' tweet

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Colorful language is not new to the Trump campaign, but the latest comment involving skittles has left a taste in many mouths that's anything but sweet.

“It was very disturbing. Skittles are candy, refugees are people,” said Ruben Chandrasekar, the executive director for the Baltimore branch of the International Rescue Committee. Chandrasekar oversees the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Baltimore and Silver Spring. He was referring to a tweet shared by Donald Trump Jr. on Monday that shows a bowl of skittles and asks, if “I told you just three would kill you. Would you take a handful? That's our Syrian refugee problem.”

While it wasn't tweeted by the GOP presidential nominee, it reflects Donald Trump's views on accepting refugees into the United States, suggesting in tweets and rhetoric that it's a threat to our national security.

"I'm putting the people on notice that are coming here from Syria as part of this mass migration. That if I win, if I win, they're going back," said Trump in a campaign speech last September.

The concern also stems from cases in Europe when four terrorists posing as Syrian refugees made their way to Paris to carry out attacks on behalf of the Islamic State.

“The U.S. has resettled over three million refugees since we've started resettling refugees and we have the most sophisticated vetting process on the planet,” Chandrasekar said.

According to the [Cato Institute](#) "the chance of an American being murdered in a terrorist attack caused by a refugee is 1 in 3.64 billion per year."

“They're seeking safety and they're seeking a place where their children can grow up in peace,” Chandrasekar said.

Last month, the Obama Administration reached its goal of resettling 10,000 Syrian refugees in the 2016 fiscal year. The IRC resettled around 250 Syrian refugees in Maryland.

According to the State Department, the average screening process for most refugees typically takes 18 to 24 months.

“[The screening involves] multiple in-face interviews, providing of documentation to prove who they are, as well as the vetting of their background stories and their identities through multiple agencies before they’re given a decision to travel,” Chandrasekar said.

Above all, he said the tweet was misleading and not reflective of the reality Syrian refugees are trying to escape.

“I’m really asking all Americans to embrace this history, this tradition of giving sanctuary to those displaced, and to reject stereotyping of immigrants, of bigotry, and xenophobia,” Chandrasekar said.

Skittles maker Wrigley Americas also responded to the tweet. In a statement reported by The Hollywood Reporter, Denise Young, the vice-president of corporate affairs said, "Skittles are candy. Refugees are people. We don't feel it's an appropriate analogy. We will respectfully refrain from further commentary as anything we say could be misinterpreted as marketing."