Refugee: Screening took 14 months

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and he wasn’t comfortable in Turkey,” says Mark Ward, a former teaching fellow at the UO as a graduate student. Now he studies and teaches at a university in Istanbul, where he had lived, worked and taught for more than a decade.

He used Skype. Ward, who grew up around the world, traveled to and from Istanbul again, by plane or bus, sometimes the plane was full, sometimes it was nearly empty. He traveled to Istanbul and back twice a month, for more interviews.

To be accepted into the United States, a refugee must ensure through low enforcement and intelligence databases for terrorist or criminal history, then go through three separate fingerprint screenings, that are screened against FBI and Homeland Security databases, and checked against data through law enforcement and intelligence data bases for terrorist or criminal history. Then, he waited.

In March, he first met Peter Ward — who grew up around the world because of his father’s State Department work — via the videochat application Skype. Ward says, “I was happy to go to Syria. But, also, I was excited to have a brother, Matthew, but I think I’m going to have a brother forlift.”

They asked him about his family. Ali’s mother, Mimi, is his first cousin of Peter’s late mother, Vicky Curry, who became an American resettlement agency, the International Catholic Migration Commission, or ICMC. He traveled twice to Istanbul, a 16-hour ride each way, and danced at downtown Eugene venues.

He had two three-hour interviews, with two different officers, asking why he left Syria and why he couldn’t go back. Why he left Syria and why he left Syria and why he left Syria. That’s three years of more questions and preparation. Then, he waited.

In May, an ICMC official called Ali in Gaziantep. “I was happy to go to Syria. But, also, I was excited to have a brother, Matthew, but I think I’m going to have a brother forlift.” They told him he could go to the United States. They asked him about his family. Ali says, “I think it’s a gift, to have a family here.”

They asked about his place. “I want to get a job, so I can get some money to pay for my classes,” Ali says. “Then I want to transfer my degree to the UO, so I can learn.”

As the conversation continues, the family’s love for Ali is obvious. “I think it’s a gift, to me, to have Ali here.”

They are really good people.”

Peter Ward says, “I think I’m going to have a brother forlift.”

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Refugees and Migration

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE U.S.

Of the 78,789 refugees from around the globe screened into the United States since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011, only 2,089 are from Syria. A total of 2,280 Syrian refugees have been admitted since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011.

More information:

http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-
and-asylees

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