Refugees seeking resettlement in the United States must pass through a series of rigorous checkpoints aimed at ensuring they will not pose a security risk to the United States.

### Process Overview

1. **UNHCR Collects Identifying Documents**
   - UNHCR collects identifying documents, biographic information, and biometric data (such as an iris scan for Syrians), and in most cases, interviews the applicant to determine if they qualify as a refugee under international law.

2. **Syrian Refugees Flagged for Additional Security Screening**
   - Syrian refugees referred to the U.S. for resettlement are flagged for additional security screening.

3. **USCIS Conducts an In-Person Interview**
   - Before USCIS schedules an interview with the applicant abroad, a Refugees Affairs Division officer at USCIS headquarters reviews Syrian applications.

4. **The Screening Process Takes 18 to 24 Months**
   - A highly trained USCIS officer conducts a detailed, face-to-face interview with the applicant as well as accompanying family over age 14. The officer collects the applicant’s fingerprints and photographs. The officer evaluates the applicant’s credibility and considers whether their testimony is consistent with country conditions. Based on the interview and the refugee’s case file, the officer will determine whether the individual qualifies as a refugee and is otherwise admissible under U.S. law.

5. **Refugee Approved for Resettlement**
   - If the necessary criteria are met, the USCIS officer conditionally approves the refugee’s application for resettlement and submits it to the Department of State for final processing.

6. **Refugees Are Matched with a Sponsor Agency**
   - Agencies like the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants place refugees with a local partner agency or office that assists them upon arrival to the U.S.

7. **Refugees Are Offered Cultural Orientation While Waiting for Final Processing**
   - This orientation prepares them for their journey to and initial resettlement in the U.S.

8. **Refugees Are Admitted to the U.S. Upon Arrival at a U.S. Airport**
   - A Customs and Border Protection officer reviews the refugee’s documentation and conducts additional security checks against its National Targeting Center-Passenger program and the Transportation Security Administration’s Secure Flight program. CBP ensures that the arriving refugee is the same person who was screened and approved for admission to the United States.