Refugees from Burma have settled in the United States in large numbers since 2005. They are one of the largest refugee groups today. Many fled political, religious and economic persecution to neighboring countries. Having spent years in refugee camps, most arrived in the U.S. hoping for a better life. Myra Dahgaypaw, who is a former refugee, will discuss the history of the conflicts that led to the displacement of thousands of people. She will also explore some of the challenges that refugees face in this country.

Since the age of 13, Myra Dahgaypaw, has played a strong role in her community as an organizer. She is a Karen human rights activist from Karen State, Burma (officially known as Myanmar). She was an internally displaced person for about 12 years and a refugee for 17 years until she resettled to the United States. As a member of the Karen Women’s Organization and a board member of the Karen American Communities Foundation, she testified in a 2009 congressional hearing on human rights abuses in Burma. She worked as a Burmese human rights advocate at the U.N. for three years before becoming the national campaign coordinator for the U.S. Campaign for Burma. The USBC is an organization dedicated to empowering grassroots activists around the world to rally for human rights around the world to rally for human rights and to bring an end to the military dictatorship in Burma.