



Frequently Asked Questions about Resettlement

1) What is refugee resettlement?.....	1
2) Which countries have resettlement programmes?.....	2
3) Who qualifies for resettlement?.....	3
Resettlement Submission Categories	4
4) How many refugees are resettled under UNHCR’s auspices each year?	5
5) What is the role of resettlement States?.....	6
6) How are refugees identified for resettlement?	7
How do States know which refugees need resettlement?	8
Do States decide who is selected for resettlement?	9
7) How quickly must States make decisions?	9
8) How does UNHCR address concerns about security and fraud?.....	10
9) What happens after refugees are resettled?.....	11
10) What role do NGOs have in refugee resettlement?	12
11) What about the family members of resettled refugees?	13
12) Who funds the refugee resettlement programmes?.....	14
13) What are the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement?.....	14
Working Group on Resettlement (WGR)	15
14) What are some useful UNHCR references on refugee resettlement?	15

1) What is refugee resettlement?

Resettlement under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) involves the selection and transfer of refugees¹ from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State that has agreed to admit them - as refugees - with permanent residence status. The status provided by the resettlement State ensures protection against *refoulement* and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.

Resettlement is one of three durable solutions UNHCR is mandated to implement in cooperation with States. It has a vital role for refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other human rights are at risk in the country where they sought refuge. Resettlement is thus an important tool for international protection as well as a durable solution. Where local integration is not an option, and voluntary repatriation is not viable or feasible in the near future, resettlement may be the only durable solution available, especially in protracted refugee situations.²

¹ Exceptions can be made for non-refugee stateless persons for whom resettlement is considered the most appropriate durable solution, and also for the resettlement of non-refugee dependent family members to retain family unity.

² Some 7.2 million refugees are in Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) - situations in which refugees have lived in exile for 5 years or more, and where there is a low likelihood of resolving their situation in the near future.

Resettlement is not a right, and there is no obligation on States to accept refugees for resettlement. Resettlement under UNHCR's auspices can only be achieved through collaboration with various partners, in particular resettlement States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). UNHCR identifies refugees in need of resettlement as part of its mandate, but it is States that offer permanent places of residence in their countries. NGOs and international organizations can also play a key role throughout the identification, pre-departure, and the post-resettlement integration processes.

Whether a refugee may be resettled depends on the admission criteria of the third State as well as the cooperation of the State where they have sought refuge. Resettlement is thus an important burden and responsibility-sharing tool. However, resettlement must be a complement to – and not a substitute for – the provision of protection where needed to persons who apply for asylum. Resettlement may also have strategic value, in that opening resettlement as a durable solution for a number of refugees may open avenues for others remaining behind to enjoy improved conditions of asylum in the country of asylum. Resettlement can thus be an important element of comprehensive solutions.

2) Which countries have resettlement programmes?

A number of States are considered traditional resettlement States because of their long-standing resettlement programmes, namely: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) and the United States of America. Other countries established programmes over the last decade, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Iceland, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Since 2007, 13 new countries³ have indicated their readiness to receive a limited number of resettlement submissions from UNHCR, eleven of which have formally announced the establishment of resettlement programmes: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain, Romania and Uruguay. Overall, the base of resettlement has been significantly broadened in recent years, from 14 resettlement States in 2005 to 26 resettlement States worldwide in 2012.⁴

The adoption of the Joint EU Resettlement Scheme is another positive step. It is intended to increase the number of resettlement places made available in EU Member States, and contribute to greater funding opportunities for resettlement.

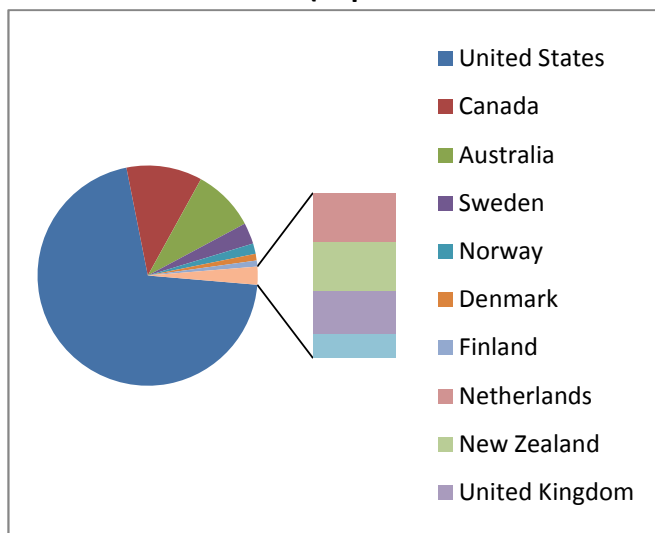
However, the number of resettlement places made available has not increased in parallel with the expansion in the number of resettlement countries, and continues to stand at some 80,000 available places annually. New resettlement countries are initially able to offer only a very limited number of places, as they require time and resources to build their capacity to develop and implement their resettlement programmes. Overall, three countries, the United States of America, Canada and Australia, provide ninety per cent of global resettlement places, while sixteen European countries provide 8 per cent. Five Latin American countries continue to offer a small number of resettlement places for Colombian

³ The 13 countries are Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Uruguay. A number of these countries previously had refugee resettlement programmes in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁴ Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria (implementation in 2012 onwards), Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary (implementation in 2012 onwards), Iceland, Ireland, Japan (pilot programme), the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, the United States of America.

refugees from the region, and in Asia, Japan is the only resettlement country, implementing a small pilot programme. UNHCR estimates the global resettlement needs at approximately 800,000 persons, envisaged over a period of several years. Resettlement needs therefore continued to outpace available resettlement places by a factor of 10 to 1.

Departures by country of resettlement in 2011 (Top ten UNHCR Resettlement Departures)



Country of resettlement	Departures (persons)
United States	43,215
Canada	6,827
Australia	5,597
Sweden	1,900
Norway	939
Denmark	598
Finland	543
Netherlands	479
New Zealand	457
United Kingdom	430
All others	232
Grand Total	61,231

This table shows the actual numbers of departures assisted by UNHCR in 2011. A number of resettlement countries (e.g. Australia, Canada and the United States) also admit refugees under family reunion and other migration programmes.

3) Who qualifies for resettlement?

Resettlement under UNHCR auspices is an invaluable protection tool to meet the specific needs of refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in their country of refuge. Emergency or urgent resettlement may be necessary to ensure the security of refugees who are threatened with *refoulement* to their country of origin or those whose physical safety is seriously threatened in the country where they have sought refuge. Resettlement may be the only way to reunite refugee families who, as a result of flight from persecution and displacement, find themselves divided by borders or by entire continents.

Resettlement is also a durable solution, and a key component of comprehensive solutions strategies. Consideration of all three durable solutions (voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement) may identify resettlement as the optimal solution for the individual or refugee groups in question. Refugees may not have immediate protection needs, but nevertheless require a durable solution – an end to their refugee situation through resettlement.

UNHCR supports the resettlement of individuals who:

- **are determined to be refugees** under UNHCR's mandate* for whom **resettlement is the most appropriate durable solution**, and
- fall under **UNHCR's Resettlement Submission Categories**.

**Exceptions can be made for non-refugee stateless persons for whom resettlement is considered the most appropriate durable solution, and also for the resettlement of non-refugee dependent family members to retain family unity.*

The *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* provides detailed guidance on the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, and the requirements for submission under the Resettlement Submission Categories. UNHCR encourages States to use the Resettlement Handbook to inform and guide their decisions on resettlement.

The most up-to-date version of UNHCR's Resettlement Handbook is available on UNHCR's website at www.unhcr.org/resettlementhandbook. Linked to the handbook online are individual Country Chapters, which provide detailed information about the resettlement programmes of each of the main resettlement States, including descriptions of the procedures for refugee selection and processing, and the reception arrangements and settlement services provided by the State. Additional information on settlement/integration services can be found in the *UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees* – also available on Refworld at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/405189284.html.

Resettlement Submission Categories

These categories are inclusive and may overlap. In many cases, submissions are made under both a primary and secondary category.

- **LEGAL AND/OR PHYSICAL PROTECTION NEEDS** of the refugee in the country of refuge (this includes a threat of *refoulement*);
- **SURVIVORS OF TORTURE AND/OR VIOLENCE**, in particular where repatriation or the conditions of asylum could result in further traumatization and/or heightened risk; or where appropriate treatment is not available;
- **MEDICAL NEEDS**, in particular life-saving treatment that is unavailable in the country of refuge;
- **WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK**, who have protection problems particular to their gender;
- **FAMILY REUNIFICATION**, when resettlement is the only means to reunite refugee family members who, owing to refugee flight or displacement, are separated by borders or entire continents;
- **CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AT RISK**, where a best interests determination supports resettlement;
- **LACK OF FORESEEABLE ALTERNATIVE DURABLE SOLUTIONS**, which generally is relevant only when other solutions are not feasible in the foreseeable future, when resettlement can be used strategically, and/or when it can open possibilities for comprehensive solutions.

Most of the Resettlement Submission Categories relate to specific international protection needs, such as where the physical or legal security of a refugee is at stake or where specialized services (e.g. psycho- social or medical) are required that are not available in the country of asylum. The use of resettlement as a tool for international protection generally requires the identification of particularly vulnerable people within a much larger group of refugees.

However, the resettlement of an entire refugee population in a country may be warranted in some situations, either to provide a durable solution, or to ensure international protection, or to provide a durable solution in a protracted refugee situation. For example, in circumstances where refugee status is not acknowledged or recognized and where all refugees face a risk of deportation and/or *refoulement*, resettlement of the whole group may be required to ensure their protection. Where a country has not ratified any of the

international or regional refugee treaties, has maintained a geographical restriction with respect to the 1951 Refugee Convention, or has not adopted domestic legislation and policies in line with the responsibilities they have assumed under international or regional conventions, resettlement may also be the most appropriate response to protection needs. In some cases, the reliance on resettlement as a tool for international protection may thus involve a considerable number of refugees.

Even if voluntary repatriation should become viable and feasible, local integration and resettlement may still continue to be the most appropriate durable solution for certain refugees. This may be the case, for example, for refugees who for reasons of trauma do not wish to return, or who might face particular protection problems with respect to the country of origin, despite important improvements or changes there. Particularly in post-conflict situations, it may take quite some time before peace and order have been fully re-established and administrative and judicial institutions are functioning effectively.

States recognize that resettlement – as a burden and responsibility sharing tool – can be used strategically to help open possibilities for self-reliance and local integration. Even where this is not possible, more extended use of resettlement in a particular situation could serve to improve the protection situation generally in the first country of asylum. Such a strategic use of resettlement is core to the *Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement* agreed in 2004⁵ as part of the Convention Plus initiative. It emphasizes indeed both comprehensive approaches and the strategic use of resettlement, and specifically sets out understandings related to such approaches in a multilateral context.

4) How many refugees are resettled under UNHCR's auspices each year?

The volume and scope of resettlement activity expanded considerably in recent years, reaching 128,000 submissions and 84,657 departures in 2009, the highest number in 16 years. However, the pace of UNHCR's resettlement submissions in 2008 and 2009 far outweighed resettlement States' capacity to process cases and resulted, in some situations, in a processing backlog.

Submissions levels declined to 108,000 in 2010, and to 90,000 in 2011, due in part to UNHCR's decision to align submission levels more closely with resettlement country processing capacities in order to prevent increasing case backlogs for certain refugee populations and the problems of worsening protection situations, frustrated expectations, and lengthy processing times that can result. Reduced submission levels were also due to the time involved in resolving complex case processing issues in regard to certain refugee populations undergoing large-scale resettlement processing.

By nationality, the main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement in 2011 were refugees from Myanmar (21,000), Iraq (19,700) and Somalia (13,700). In total, these three nationalities made up 66 per cent of all submissions.

In 2011 11 per cent of all refugee cases submitted for resettlement were for women and girls at risk, exceeding the objective set by ExCom Conclusion 105 to ensure that 10 per cent of all submissions are for cases of women and girls at risk.

⁵ High Commissioner's Forum, Forum/2004/6, 16 September 2004.

2007-2011 UNHCR Submissions and Departures

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Submissions	98,999	121,177	128,545	108,042	87,849
Departures	49,868	65,874	84,657	72,914	61,231

Departure levels have also dropped since 2009. In 2011 61,231 refugees departed to 22 countries of resettlement with UNHCR's assistance. The recent drop in departures is due in part due to the introduction of new security screening requirements by a major resettlement country, and in part to the challenges encountered by some resettlement countries in accessing refugee groups in host countries experiencing volatile security situations. Iraqi refugees were particularly affected, with 8,700 departures in 2011 representing a decrease of 46 per cent from the 2010 level and 62 per cent from the 2009 level. Departures of Somali refugees also slowed, with only 30 per cent of those submitted for resettlement actually departing in 2011.

UNHCR stepped up its advocacy with resettlement countries to address these operational challenges to efficient resettlement, particularly focusing upon lengthy processing times, the use of discriminatory selection criteria, and the difficulties faced by some resettlement countries in accessing certain refugee populations due to safety and security concerns.

5) What is the role of resettlement States?

Resettlement States have established regular refugee resettlement programmes, and agree to consider a certain number of submissions by UNHCR each year. Other countries may not have a yearly programme, but also resettle refugees on an *ad hoc* basis and may maintain special resettlement programmes benefiting refugees with specific needs.

Governments have the essential role of establishing and maintaining effective resettlement programmes, including services and supports to assist resettled refugees to integrate into their new communities. Very briefly, key aspects of resettlement programmes include:

- **A legal and policy framework** including legislation to provide resettled refugees a secure legal status on arrival, and access to fundamental civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the prospect of acquiring citizenship;
- **An institutional framework** to support resettlement, including decision-making structure, division of responsibilities, and resource allocation, as well as information-sharing and training of key partners including levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and other service providers;
- **Established processing procedures** including quota allocation, case submission, selection and departure procedures;
- **A reception and integration programme** to deliver essential services including reception, orientation, housing, financial assistance, medical care, language classes, employment preparation, and education, and to support community engagement;
- **Public engagement** to foster welcoming and hospitable communities, including through media attention.

UNHCR promotes the establishment of resettlement programmes that are:

- **predictable** in terms of admissions levels including multi-year commitments, budgets, and eligibility criteria;

- **diverse** in terms of the refugee beneficiaries, to include protection cases as well as refugees with specific needs;
- **responsive** to urgent needs, emerging needs and appeals for responsibility sharing;
- **non-discriminatory** in selecting refugees for resettlement on the basis of their needs, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, family size or other factors;
- **proactive** in addressing domestic considerations linked especially to budget constraints and problems related to integration;
- **holistic** and comprehensive in approach, in using resettlement to ensure protection, a durable solution, and effective sharing of burdens and responsibilities within the broader protection strategy; and

6) How are refugees identified for resettlement?

Ensuring fair and transparent access to the resettlement process is a UNHCR priority. The most vulnerable refugees are sometimes the least visible and vocal. Effective identification and referral mechanisms concentrate on proactively ensuring access to the resettlement process for those most in need. UNHCR has developed a range of tools and methodologies to increase UNHCR's ability to identify needs, and respond better to them.

The identification of refugees potentially in need of resettlement, and the subsequent assessment of individual cases is an ongoing, active and systematic process. It requires detailed knowledge and documentation of the refugee population and of their specific needs and vulnerabilities, and collaboration between UNHCR Protection, Community Services and Durable Solutions staff and implementing partners to identify and implement appropriate responses.

As with refugee status determination, proper registration data is a particularly important source of information, as it assists to protect the integrity of resettlement. An accurate, comprehensive and continuous registration is an effective way to identify individuals and groups in need of protection interventions, including resettlement.

Resettlement is incorporated in the development of overall protection strategies as part of annual regional and country operational planning. UNHCR country offices worldwide use a standard approach to determine the role and scope for resettlement within its overall protection and solution strategy. This determination is normally based on considerations related to the protection environment/framework in the country and the effective availability of other durable solutions. In this context, resettlement is both a protection tool as well as a durable solution that can be used strategically to help resolve specific refugee situations even if such interventions are not seen to be urgent or life saving.

UNHCR country offices prepare Summary Protection Assessments, which capture the protection situation and highlight key protection problems of the populations of concern at the time of planning. These assessments provide important information to assist with forward planning, especially with regard to the challenges and opportunities to promote resettlement, and the scope for working with partners, staffing and resources. The assessments also make effective use of resettlement tools such as baseline standard operating procedures, the database *proGres*, participatory assessments, the Heightened Risk Identification Tool and other ways to identify refugees with protection risks.

UNHCR developed the Heightened Risk Identification Tool (HRIT) to enhance its effectiveness in identifying refugees at risk by linking community-based/ participatory assessments and individual assessment methodologies. First issued in 2008 and revised in

2010, the HRIT has been widely used and field-tested in UNHCR operations worldwide with great success. The tool is designed to be used comprehensively by UNHCR staff involved in community services and/or protection activities (including resettlement) as well as their implementing partners to assist with the identification of individuals at risk in the country of asylum who require immediate protection intervention, which may include resettlement. The HRIT serves to: (i) implement ExCom Conclusion 105 on Women and Girls At-Risk and UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities 2010-2011; ii) strengthen needs-based planning, identification methodologies and case management systems; and iii) promote age, gender, and diversity sensitive approach.⁶

Drawing on these data sources, UNHCR country offices worldwide forecast the refugee resettlement needs for the next calendar year and UNHCR's capacity to address them. This information is compiled in the ***UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs*** document, which is then used for planning the global resettlement activities of the Office as it provides the rationale and scope of UNHCR's resettlement operations in any given country. Furthermore, the document allows UNHCR to chart the projected global resettlement needs and its capacity to address those needs; taking into account the resource and other challenges that impact resettlement delivery.

How do States know which refugees need resettlement?

The majority of resettlement States rely on UNHCR to recommend individuals and groups of refugees according to needs and priorities identified by UNHCR and its partners, and to present these individuals for resettlement consideration by States. The resettlement countries assess the individual case submissions made by UNHCR and decide whether or not to grant resettlement. States make the decision on admissibility according to their policies, laws and regulations.

The annual ***UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs*** document is shared with the resettlement partners in the lead-up to the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) held in Geneva. The document raises awareness of populations identified as in need of resettlement, and serves as the primary reference document for dialogue on resettlement needs, priorities, likely gaps and challenges in programme delivery, allowing informed decisions on quota and resource allocations.

UNHCR updates resettlement States throughout the year on the global resettlement needs and priorities. These discussions take place in various fora: (i) the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) involving States, NGOs, intergovernmental / international organizations and UNHCR; (ii) the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) meetings, which support the ATCR process and primarily consists of resettlement States, intergovernmental / international organizations and UNHCR with limited NGO participation; and (iii) bilateral meetings between individual resettlement States and UNHCR to confirm specific aspects of programme delivery. UNHCR also holds Regional Strategic Planning Meetings to strengthen coordination at a regional level.

A meeting between resettlement countries and UNHCR is routinely held in conjunction with the ATCR to discuss ways to respond to specific populations in need of resettlement, including populations for whom resettlement is a priority or where the strategic use of

⁶ *The significant participation of refugee girls, boys, women and men of all ages and backgrounds is integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all UNHCR policies and operations so that these impact equitably on people of concern.*

resettlement can be enhanced. This process is designed to strengthen the coordination and management of the global resettlement programme and ensure predictability for planning purposes. The outcome of these initial discussions serves to direct attention to specific refugee populations in priority need of resettlement.

Separate bilateral meetings are normally held outside the ATR and WGR framework to further discuss and confirm the size and composition of the targets set by resettlement countries for the upcoming year. This includes efforts by governments and UNHCR to bridge gaps and strengthen capacity to address identified needs.

Do States decide who is selected for resettlement?

Resettlement States determine the size and composition of their resettlement programmes, and assess the case submissions made by UNHCR. States decide who is granted resettlement admission according to their policies, criteria, laws and migration regulations. The country offering resettlement places therefore has full control with respect to decisions on individual cases.

Nevertheless, UNHCR urges all States to be guided by the agency's internationally recognized criteria on eligibility, global needs and priorities. To preserve the integrity of resettlement as a protection tool and durable solution for refugees most in need, it is important to ensure resettlement programmes are needs-based, non-discriminatory and achieve successful integration outcomes.

The measure of resettlement as a protection tool and durable solution is not only how many refugees in need of resettlement have access to this solution each year, but also the way they are selected, received and supported in the process of becoming full participants in their new communities. It is therefore vital that resettlement programmes are balanced according to global needs and priorities (including considerations of cultural, geographic and individual diversity). Hence, it is UNHCR's position that individuals selected for resettlement by States should be on the basis of protection needs, taking into account security concerns but not so-called "integration potential." It is important to distinguish considerations of integration from assessments that are related to concerns about public security.

In selecting refugees for resettlement, UNHCR urges resettlement States not to use integration potential and other discriminatory criteria (e.g. family size, age, health status, ethnicity and religion). Such discrimination undermines the protection and needs-based approach to resettlement creating inequalities and protection gaps, and limits access to resettlement by some refugees most at risk. The UNHCR assessment of global resettlement needs and priorities assists resettlement States in targeting their programmes. Furthermore, UNHCR engages in bilateral discussions with States to identify specific needs that could be met by the State.

The majority of refugee resettlement programmes worldwide rely on UNHCR to recommend specific refugees according to needs and priorities identified by UNHCR and its partners, and to present these cases to States for resettlement consideration. A number of resettlement States also have mechanisms in place to select individuals for resettlement without the direct involvement of UNHCR.

7) How quickly must States make decisions?

Delays in the processing of cases by UNHCR and resettlement countries can have serious protection implications for refugees. It is therefore incumbent on all parties to ensure a balanced and predictable programme delivery so that individuals receive timely

access to resettlement and information on case processing. UNHCR recognizes that different priorities should be used to help manage specific resettlement needs. Emergency cases, which typically involve immediate life-threatening situations, are expected to depart for resettlement within a period not exceeding seven days; urgent cases should depart within six weeks; and normal priority cases are to be resettled within 12 months. These benchmarks are used by UNHCR to gauge whether resettlement activities are efficient and responsive to the protection and resettlement needs of refugees.

As part of the Office's efforts to improve protection against *refoulement* [forced return] and to improve the urgent resettlement of people in perilous situations, UNHCR operationalized the concept of evacuation transit facilities to provide temporary safe haven for refugees pending final resettlement to a third country in 2008. Evacuation Transit Facilities (ETFs) first established in 2008 in Timisoara, Romania, have expanded to three fully operational facilities: the Evacuation Transit Centre (ETC) in Timisoara, Romania; the Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Manila, the Philippines; and the Evacuation Transit Centre (ETC) in Humene, Slovakia. Evacuation to an ETF is also a solution for refugees who cannot be processed in their host country due to inaccessibility or lack of security. Since the establishment of the ETFs in 2008/9, a total of 1,374 individuals of 15 nationalities from 18 countries of asylum have been transferred to ETFs, and 1,234 persons have departed to 11 resettlement countries.

8) How does UNHCR address concerns about security and fraud?

UNHCR is acutely aware of the concerns of States to maintain public security and combat terrorism. These concerns are entirely legitimate and UNHCR understands and shares the desire of States to ensure the integrity of resettlement programmes. A balance must be struck which addresses these concerns, whilst avoiding the erosion of long-standing refugee protection principles. Ideally, systems that protect the integrity of the resettlement process also serve to protect refugees.

It is in the interest of all parties involved in resettlement to ensure that fraudulent claims and/or individuals who fall under the ambit of Article 1F of the Refugee Convention are excluded from resettlement programmes globally. UNHCR takes such matters seriously and has instituted several measures to protect the integrity of its resettlement programme. To this end, it should be noted that international refugee instruments do not provide a safe haven to terrorists or war criminals. The refugee definition, properly applied, leads to exclusion of people responsible for serious criminal, including terrorist, acts.⁷ All UNHCR staff, irrespective of grade or function, have the responsibility of ensuring that protection activities, including resettlement, are carried out to the highest standards possible, and to prevent fraud and malfeasance in all activities.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that a clear management and accountability framework is in place for all resettlement activities in their respective offices. At the field level, management and accountability for resettlement activities rest with the Representative and the senior staff in charge of protection, and continue through staff with specified resettlement functions. Each office designates an officer accountable for resettlement activities within the field office.

UNHCR has a well-developed exclusion assessment process in place so that the quality and

⁷ See Article 1(F) of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees.

integrity of UNHCR's submissions for resettlement are carefully maintained, for instance by detailed verification and credibility assessments, both at the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) stage and during the process leading up to submission for resettlement. The exclusion clauses are applied scrupulously to protect the integrity of the institution of asylum; but given the possible serious consequences of exclusion, it is important to apply them with caution and only after a full assessment of the individual circumstances of the case. UNHCR takes every precaution to balance these considerations before making a resettlement submission. The standard of proof prescribed in Art. 1(F) is established at the level of "serious reasons for considering"; that is, below a requirement for proof beyond reasonable doubt, but above a reasonable suspicion. Proportionality is also considered a useful analytical tool, as in the gravity of an offence being weighed against the consequences of exclusion.⁸

These processes are documented and carried out in a way which seeks to insulate them from and address fraud, whether it is internal or external to UNHCR. Special case management and interview techniques are used to protect the integrity of case file data. All resettlement operations are required to follow Standard Operating Procedures. Each step in the process is documented and interviews recorded. The process is as transparent as possible and subject to several points of review within UNHCR.

UNHCR's electronic registration database, *proGres*, has been implemented in most field operations. The system has been designed to mitigate the risk of fraud. It includes special features to store biometric information (including photographs and fingerprints) and has an audit trail for internal oversight. The composition of families is carefully recorded and stored. All changes to electronic files are logged permanently.

9) What happens after refugees are resettled?

Resettlement is a process that does not end with the transfer of a refugee and her/his family and dependants to a new country. Just as with the other durable solutions, integration is thus essential to the durability of resettlement. The status provided in the country of resettlement (e.g. 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees' refugee status) should ensure protection against *refoulement* [forced return] and provide a resettled refugee and her/his family and dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. It should also carry with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.⁹

Integration requires receiving States to ensure that refugees have access to the resources required for their longer-term stability and adjustment to the new society and to foster a sense of belonging and participation. Integration is a mutual, gradual and multi-faceted process, with inter-related legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Willingness is required to welcome refugees and support them through public and private institutions, granting a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements and finally providing the possibility of naturalization. So too, refugees must abide by the laws and adapt to the customs and lifestyle of their adopted country whilst being able to maintain

⁸ *Guidelines on International Protection No. 5: Application of the Exclusion Clauses: Article 1F of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, 4 September 2003, HCR/GIP/03/05, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3f5857684.html>

⁹ *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, 2011 Revision, Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlementhandbook>

their own cultural identity. Refugees should take the values of their hosts into account, but the attitude of the receiving communities and host country institutions is also of paramount importance.

Integrating resettled refugees is beneficial for both the refugees and the State. Through integration, resettled refugees become independent and productive participants of society. This, in turn, empowers them to make valuable contributions to the host society. It is therefore crucial to put integration systems and programmes into place, including language and vocational training, as well as programmes facilitating access to education and employment. It is also important to have programmes in place to provide cultural orientation as well as manage the expectations of refugees prior to and after their arrival in the resettlement country. This will ease the process of adjustment to the new society and foster a positive attitude toward integration. It is equally important to provide for the possibility of and support for the reunification of family members who were separated by the refugee experience and unable to travel together for resettlement.

The success of integration programmes remains mostly dependent on the political will and commitment of the resettlement country, and the availability of human and financial resources governments allocate to such programmes.¹⁰

10) What role do NGOs have in refugee resettlement?

Non-governmental organization (NGO) partners are involved throughout the resettlement process from identification to integration. UNHCR is pleased to be working together with NGOs to promote resettlement through advocacy efforts, as well as with direct engagement of stakeholders through training and operational capacity building. Pursuant to the *Agenda for Protection* it is accepted that, given the specific areas of expertise and knowledge of refugee populations, NGOs supplement UNHCR's core role in facilitating many aspects of the resettlement process. UNHCR continues to strengthen partnerships with NGOs across the continuum of resettlement activities, including through sub-agreements and the deployment of NGO personnel to UNHCR operations.

UNHCR is also working closely with the NGO sector to explore new models for the identification and referral to UNHCR of refugees in need of resettlement. For example, sub-agreements with implementing partners in the areas of legal, social and medical assistance ensure a mainstreaming of UNHCR's organizational priorities and the identification of vulnerable individuals. Indeed, UNHCR's NGO implementing partners have a key role to play to bring to UNHCR's attention refugees who might be in need of this solution given their protection needs. This applies in particular to all implementing partners for projects in medical assistance, social/legal counselling and support.

¹⁰ [Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration](#), issued in October 2002 sets out best practice in various countries in the areas of initial reception, ways of preparing receiving communities, language training, education, employment, and the special needs of children.

To support and encourage strengthened cooperation, UNHCR and NGOs have developed the *UNHCR-NGO Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement*,¹¹ a collection of tools and examples that provides practical guidance for the UN refugee agency and NGOs to cooperate in various areas: operational activities; community outreach; information sharing, planning and advocacy; and reception and integration. UNHCR's Resettlement Service remains committed to its strategic objectives to engage proactively with the NGO sector to further develop innovative ways to combine resources and activities to improve resettlement delivery.

The specific role and function of NGOs within a country's resettlement programme varies from country to country. In many cases, NGOs provide a liaison function to the refugee, UNHCR and the receiving Government and community. Some resettlement countries involve NGOs intimately in case preparation, and pre-departure processing, as well as reception and integration. Others involve their NGOs in programme planning, selection missions, or dossier screening.

It is often through the work of NGOs and their community volunteers that the public first gets to know about refugees and the work of UNHCR. This aspect of NGO work has a positive impact on fundraising, advocacy for various refugee groups, and building public support for resettlement.

11) What about the family members of resettled refugees?

Ideally, all close family members and dependants should be resettled together to preserve the unity of the family. It is however not always possible for family members to remain together, as involuntary family separation often occurs in refugee situations. UNHCR promotes the unity of the family and urges all States to have generous and flexible programmes to facilitate family reunification. Indeed, a number of States have special programmes to facilitate family reunification of refugees without requiring the direct involvement of UNHCR. It is, after all, a State responsibility to uphold the principle of family unity.

Nevertheless, UNHCR has a responsibility, as part of its mandate to protect refugees, to promote and facilitate the reunification of refugee families. This means it should assist family members of a person who has been recognized as a refugee, to join her or him in the country of asylum or resettlement. This applies whether or not the family members are still in their country of origin. Except for certain special programmes, eligibility for UNHCR assistance with family reunification requires that at least one person within the family unit which is to be reunited must be a refugee under UNHCR's mandate or a person otherwise of concern to the organization. As a matter of principle, this includes situations where the refugee was recognized by a competent government authority. UNHCR's assistance and support may be requested by the family member(s), by the refugee, and/or by the UNHCR office where the refugee or her/his family member is living. This may involve helping refugees or their family members submit applications for family reunification and/or for entry or exit permission, through official procedures and in accordance with UNHCR's guidelines on family reunification.

¹¹ *This toolkit is a living repository for exchanging ideas on resettlement partnerships, available online at <http://www.unhcr.org/ngotoolkit>.*

12) Who funds the refugee resettlement programmes?

Refugee resettlement programmes are essentially funded by States. In certain situations, such as new/emerging resettlement countries in Latin America, UNHCR provides financial and technical support by way of contributions from donor States. However, in most cases, UNHCR would consider it a requirement that States fund their respective programmes. Resettlement countries are therefore expected to cover the costs associated with resettlement, such as: interview/selection missions, medical checks and pre-departure orientation, exit visas from country of asylum, travel from the country of asylum and on-arrival services in the new country of resettlement.¹² However, as with all new/emerging resettlement countries, UNHCR and other key stakeholders (including, in certain situations, other resettlement countries) would be able to provide specialized guidance and support. European States can also receive financial support from the European Refugee Fund administered by the European Commission.¹³

13) What are the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement?

The Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) started in 1995. This is an annual event that provides an important vehicle for strengthened cooperation between governments, NGOs and UNHCR in the area of resettlement. The ATCR allow for open and frank dialogue and strive to produce outcomes by forging coherent and collaborative approaches to enhance global resettlement delivery. The ATCR provides an opportunity and process to address a wide range of policy and procedural matters, including advocacy, capacity building and operational support, and serves to influence and focus joint strategies on resettlement consistent with UNHCR's global strategic priorities. An important outcome is the tripartite relationship itself, which promotes transparency and stimulates the development of new and innovative ways to solve problems and to combine resources to improve resettlement outcomes for refugees.

In recent years, the ATCR have taken place annually in July. The ATCR involve government representatives from resettlement States, NGOs involved in refugee resettlement, intergovernmental / international organizations and UNHCR. As part of UNHCR's global strategy to broaden the base on resettlement, the ATCR has been open to observers from States providing Evacuation Transit Facilities, potential/emerging resettlement States as well as to States interested in the resettlement process.

The consultations have become an important vehicle for UNHCR's cooperation with governments and NGOs and a mechanism to enhance partnership. They offer a forum to review progress on resettlement issues during the year, but more importantly, to re-focus and shape a joint strategy on resettlement. In particular, the consultations provide the appropriate environment to: raise awareness with a view toward building consensus in the UNHCR Executive Committee for the support of key resettlement issues, including the establishment of new programmes; share information on a regular basis

¹² An outline of these various activities can be found in the country chapters of the *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2011 revision*, as well as the *UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*.

¹³ See http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/funding/refugee/funding_refugee_en.htm for details on the European Refugee Fund.

about resettlement needs, provide opportunities for planning purposes and allow for analysis of important policy issues; focus attention on UNHCR's resettlement activities and priorities, relevant operational issues, and key responsibilities for case identification and referral.

Working Group on Resettlement (WGR)

The ATCR is supported by the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR), whose meetings provide a smaller, and more targeted consultative forum to discuss specific policy and operational aspects of resettlement. The WGR in the past was only open to resettlement States, IOM and UNHCR; however, in recent years moves have supported the involvement of limited number of NGOs in the WGR in recognition of the synergies between the ATCR and the WGR and in order to provide continuity and follow-up on ATCR conclusions and recommendations.

States volunteer to chair the ATCR / WGR process on a rotating basis, usually for one year, but occasionally extended for an additional year. The Chair is supported by an NGO focal point, who is nominated by the NGOs of the State that holds the chair in a given year. The focal point liaises closely with the chairperson and is responsible for ensuring NGO coordination in the lead-up to the ATCR. This includes a process of information sharing and consultation with the global NGO resettlement network – gathering input and suggestions on the format and content of the agenda as well as consolidating NGO input. UNHCR's Resettlement Service provides a critical role in supporting the process, not only in terms of steering the tripartite process with policy guidance and data, but also in terms of providing secretariat support to the ATCR.

14) What are some useful UNHCR references on refugee resettlement?

The following resources can be found at www.refworld.org and/or www.unhcr.org.

- [UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, including Country Chapters](#), 2011 revision
- Resettlement Fact Sheet
- [Self-Study Module: Resettlement Learning Programme](#), October 2011, Rev
- [Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration](#) (2002)
- [UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2012](#) (June 2011)
- [UNHCR-NGO Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement](#), 2011
- [UNHCR Position Paper on the Strategic Use of Resettlement](#) (June 2010)
- [Progress Report on Resettlement](#), Excom Standing Committee document, EC/61/SC/CRP.11 (31 May 2010)
- [The Strategic Use of Resettlement](#), A Discussion Paper Prepared by the Working Group on Resettlement, WGR/03/04.Rev3 (3 June 2003)
- [Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement](#), High Commissioner'Forum document, FORUM/2004/6 (16 September 2004)
- [Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern](#), EC/53/SC/INF.3, (16 September 2003)