

COUNTRY
CHAPTER
SWE

SWEDEN

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN



Sweden Overview

Resettlement programme since: 1950	Selection Missions: Yes	Dossier Submissions: approx. 1000-1300 persons
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Resettlement Admission Targets for 2014:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions :	1,900
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	1,900

Regional Allocations for 2014 :

Africa	450
Asia and Pacific:	200
Middle East and North Africa	600
Europe:	0
Americas:	150
Not geographically allocated (350 emergency and 150 pool places)	500

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	2014 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	350 places worldwide for emergency and urgent submissions via HQ, Nairobi and Beirut HUBs
Medical cases	If also presented with a protection need
Women at risk cases	If also presented with a protection need
Unaccompanied children	If also presented with a protection need
Family Reunion (within programme)	Referred to mainstream family reunification schemes outside of the resettlement programme
Other, please specify	

1. Resettlement Policy

Since 1950 the Swedish government has accepted organised resettlement within the framework of the Swedish resettlement program. The Swedish resettlement program applies to individuals in need of international protection.

The general guidelines for the Swedish resettlement program are established annually by the Government (**Ministry of Justice**) after approval by the Swedish parliament. The guidelines and the actual resettlement are carried out in close cooperation with UNHCR.

The **Swedish Migration Board** decides on the allocation of the Swedish Quota and is the operational authority i.e. decides on resident permits and makes travel arrangements for those individuals accepted for resettlement (often referred to as quota refugees). Hence, the Swedish Migration Board is the main actor for resettlement to Sweden.

Transportation and other practical matters are handled by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) following a written agreement.

During the period 2008 – 2014 the Swedish parliament, as recommended by the Government, has allotted funds corresponding to the resettlement in Sweden of 1900 quota refugees per year.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility and Asylum

According to the **Aliens Act** (2005:716) a person has the right to asylum as a Convention refugee if he or she meets the definition defined in the Act. The wording of the definition is virtually identical to the definition in the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 (Geneva Convention) as supplemented by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967.

According to the Aliens Act, Convention refugees are those who have left their country of nationality and have a well founded fear of persecution in that country due to their race, their nationality, their religious or political beliefs or on grounds of gender, sexual orientation or other membership of a particular social group.

Also in accordance with the Aliens Act, individuals who are not Convention refugees may also qualify for asylum (also referred to as subsidiary protection). One category of individuals in need of subsidiary protection are those who have left their country of nationality and have a well founded fear of suffering the death penalty or execution; or torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Furthermore, subsidiary protection is applicable to civilians in need of protection due to a serious and individual threat to his or her life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. This subsidiary protection status is internationally recognised and is based on EU rules. According to the Swedish Aliens Act there is also another category of subsidiary protection. An individual is considered “otherwise in need of protection” because of external or internal armed conflict or because of other severe tension in his or her home country; because of well-grounded fear of being subjected to serious abuse; or because he or she cannot return to his or her home country due to a natural disaster.

The corresponding applies to a stateless person. In accordance with the Aliens Act agents of persecution embrace both non-state agents and state agents of persecution.

In the preparatory works to the Aliens Act it is stated that guidance can be sought in UNHCR’s Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status and UNHCR’s Executive Committee Conclusions.

3. Criteria for Resettlement

In order to be eligible for resettlement to Sweden, a person must be considered a refugee or a person otherwise in need of protection, as described by the **Aliens Act** (see section 2). S/he must be able to articulate an individual need for protection in relation to his/her native country. Cases should be submitted by UNHCR. In exceptional cases, submissions can also be made by a Swedish diplomatic mission. Sweden offers resettlement also to Tribunal witnesses and their family members.

All cases are examined in accordance with the Aliens Act and current practice. The same criteria apply for resettlement as for regular asylum. While Sweden only resettles protection cases, the fact that persons may have medical or other special needs on top of their protection needs does not disqualify them from resettlement. Reasons not to accept a case for resettlement can be (not counting the exclusion clauses stated in the 1951 Convention): heavy criminality, drug addiction or if the person can be considered a threat towards the safety of the country, or towards other persons.

All cases submitted for resettlement are screened and cleared by the Security Police. Sweden does not require any other assessments (of medical needs, integration potential, or else) to be made before decision or departure.

While there is no specified sub-quota, Sweden accepts limited numbers of unaccompanied minors within the resettlement program. When a child is submitted for resettlement without its parents, a Best Interests Determination (BID) should be conducted. In order to allow for

a child accompanied by only one parent to resettle to Sweden, a signed consent form should - when possible - be collected from the absent parent/s. If circumstances are such that a consent form cannot be presented although thorough efforts have been made, the Swedish Migration Board will decide on a case to case basis whether resettlement of the child can be justified.

In accordance with the principle of family unity, resettlement is generally offered to all family members in a case, even if the need for protection only applies to one or a few. This applies to the core family - that is married or unmarried spouses and their children (under 18 years of age). The Swedish Migration Board may in exceptional cases decide to offer resettlement to only one or some of the family members.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

Each year the Swedish parliament (the **Riksdag**) allots funds to the resettlement of refugees to Sweden. The Swedish Migration Board, acting on behalf of the Swedish Government, is the main actor responsible for resettlement to Sweden. In accordance with the annual government decision the Swedish Migration Board in close cooperation with UNHCR and other parties concerned draw up the guidelines of the resettlement program e.g. composition and regional focus. The guidelines are based on UNHCR's assessment of current resettlement needs and priorities. Circumstances such as protracted refugee situations are also considered, as well as the possibility of strategic use of resettlement.

The Governments of the Nordic countries meet in matters of overall policy for regular consultations within the framework of the **Nordic Council for Refugee Affairs (NSHF)**. Correspondingly current resettlement countries, UNHCR and IOM meet for the purpose of regular information exchange and consultation regarding the issue of strategic and operational resettlement at least two times a year. Similarly, above mentioned actors, involved NGOs, countries that are new to resettlement and, as a rule, representatives from the European Commission, meet at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). During this meeting UNHCR presents the assessment of current resettlement needs and priorities and the resettlement countries indicate forthcoming resettlement allocations.

The resettlement target/quota is divided almost equally between processing via in-country selection and dossier selection. Each year the Swedish Migration Board undertakes 4-5 in-country selection missions.

The table below provides figures and main nationalities according to the Swedish resettlement programme for 2008-2014.

Year	Target / quota	Main nationalities
2008	1900	Palestinians, Afghans, Burmese
2009	1900	Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghans, Burmese, Eritreans
2010	1900	Somali, Afghans, Eritreans, Palestinians
2011	1900	Somali, Afghans, Eritreans, Ethiopians
2012	1900	Somali, Afghans, Eritreans, Colombians, Sudanese
2013	1900	Somali, Afghans, Eritreans, Colombians, Congolese
2014	1900	Syrians, Somali, Afghans, Eritreans, Colombians, Congolese

The target/quota numbers refer to individuals actually resettled (departed), and operates on an annual basis. Refugees granted a residence permit and also transferred to Sweden are to be counted as part of the annual target/quota. The processing can be carried over into the next year if transfer has not taken place. Unused quota cannot be rolled over to the following year.

The funds allocated for the Swedish resettlement program are used for resettlement to Sweden and to a limited extent as a contribution to projects designed to help solve refugee problems outside Sweden.

5. Submission and Processing via Dossier Selection

5.1 Case Documentation

For the Migration Board to reach a decision a carefully completed and updated RRF must be presented. Exact personal data including photographs of the applicants, family details and possible relatives in Sweden are to be listed. Information regarding linguistic qualifications, educational background, working experience as well as correct personal data is of importance in order to facilitate proper reception in a municipality.

A full examination of the applicant's refugee claim, establishing if a continued individual need for protection exists, should be done in each case.

The possible application of article 1F of the Geneva Convention is to be examined by UNHCR and an explicit declaration by UNHCR is in this regard required. The declaration should include and indicate activities e.g. involvement in armed struggle, previous convictions and military background.

Cases where the applicant has medical needs/problems should be accompanied by medical documentation wherever possible. A specific needs assessment should be conducted by UNHCR.

If the Swedish Migration Board finds the basic material insufficient or unreliable, supplementary information is obtained from UNHCR or some other relevant source, such as an embassy or NGO.

Occasionally, presentations may be submitted by a Swedish diplomatic mission.

5.2 Decision-Making Process

All refugee resettlement submissions are considered by the Swedish Migration Board in accordance with established policies. An applicant must meet the criteria in the Geneva Convention or meet the criteria for subsidiary protection to be offered resettlement in Sweden.

The final decision to accept or reject a submitted case will be made by a case officer. If such a case is rejected, information outlining the reasons for the rejection will be included in the decision.

Determination of refugee status is considered and decided in conjunction to the final decision on residence permits. However, individuals accepted for resettlement can only apply for a travel document and for official recognition of their refugee status after their arrival in Sweden.

Decisions are sent both to the appropriate Swedish embassy and to UNHCR. To help prepare the practical details of the resettlement process, IOM is also informed. If the refugees lack valid passports, temporary alien's passports are issued by the Swedish embassy.

5.3 Recourse Processing

Cases dismissed by the Swedish Migration Board are not subject to appeal, although they can be re-submitted by UNHCR if new facts have emerged or the Swedish admission criteria have been modified.

Furthermore, if UNHCR presents cases dismissed by some other country, the reasons for dismissal should be clearly set forth in the accompanying documentation.

5.4 Processing Times

Processing time i.e. time from submission to decision is normally 20 days, except for emergency cases which are normally processed within 5 working days.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

6.1 Selection mission policies

Each year the Swedish Migration Board undertakes 3-5 in-country selection missions. The basic criteria for in-country selections are as outlined in Section 3.

6.2 Preparations

In-country selections are discussed in detail with UNHCR and the Swedish embassy concerned in order to reach the most suitable logistical approach, scope of the selection, and various practical details such as accommodation, transport, security, meetings, etc.

Selection missions are executed in close cooperation with the Swedish diplomatic mission and UNHCR. The Migration Board assumes responsibility for preparation, staffing, practical implementations and any post-processing or follow-up that may be required.

To facilitate preparations the **Swedish Migration Board** uses the Pre-Mission Questionnaire for Resettlement Interview Missions and the Pre-Mission Checklist for Resettlement Interview Missions supplied by UNHCR. Pre-missions are also used to meet with partners on site and to jointly discuss timelines, risks and objectives concerning the selection.

All documentation i.e. by RRF and all possible supplementary documentation should be provided by UNHCR and made available at least one month before the planned date of departure. To ensure sufficient scope for selection and avoid no-shows, presentations should envisage about 25 percent more persons than will be selected. However this can vary depending on basic conditions for each mission.

6.3 Case Documentation

Presentations should clearly indicate whether the persons recommended have relatives in Sweden, and, if so, state their names, the degree of kinship, their place of domicile, and, to facilitate identification, give as many personal particulars as possible. (For further information on case documentation see Section 5.1)

6.4 Decision Making Process

Interviews are carried out on an individual basis and the aim is to supplement the information provided in the RRF, hence provide a sufficient base for the assessment of refugee status and the final decision by the Swedish Migration Board. At the end of each day the delegation conducts a careful review of the cases considered during the day.

Once all the interviews have been completed, the delegation undertakes a second review of each case. A final decision, including a status determination in affirmative decisions, is then reached. Occasionally, doubtful cases may be referred to Sweden for consultation and consequently the decision may be postponed. These cases are categorized as pending cases.

The delegation then provides the embassy, UNHCR and IOM, together or individually, with an oral report on the course and progress of its work and announces cases finally accepted or rejected.

Grounds for rejection are given orally and in writing. Concrete plans as to the time and the means of transfer of the refugees to Sweden and the practical details of their travel documents etc, are also discussed during this meeting.

6.5 Processing Time

The length of time needed for in-country selections depends both on the scope of the assignment and the size of the delegation. Excluding the preparation period and any follow-up that may be needed, two to four weeks are considered normal.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

7.1 Policies and procedures for receiving referrals for emergency/urgent submissions and routing of submissions

In 2010 the Swedish Migration Board had 350 places allocated for emergency (and urgent) cases world wide. Emergency cases are to be submitted primarily by UNHCR headquarters. In accordance with the “2009 Draft Pilot Project for Partial Delegation of Authority to the Beirut and Nairobi Hubs”, the latter also have the authority of submitting emergency cases.

Emergency cases are processed as quickly as possible, usually within 5 working days. Such cases are initiated and processed in the same manner as the dossier selection cases described in Section 5. The basic criteria are as outlined in Sections 2 and 3.

To preserve the special status and processing routines applied to emergency cases, the Swedish Migration Board recommends that considerable restraint should be exercised in their presentation enabling the Swedish Migration Board to move quickly in processing the case.

7.2 Case documentation for emergency/urgent cases

It is a mandatory requirement for UNHCR offices to complete and send the “Cover Message Form for resettlement submissions through the HQ Processing unit and under the Pilot Project”. In each case it shall be indicated if the potential emergency of the case is related to acceptance and/or departure.

8. Special Categories/Special Needs

Sweden does not have any sub-quotas for medical or other special needs. It is, however, important that the RRF indicate whether the person is in need of some special care or treatment. This will be a valuable source of information for the municipal authorities charged with his or her care.

9. Medical Requirements

Sweden does not require UNHCR or IOM to carry out a medical examination of refugees entitled to resettlement in Sweden. However it is still important to clearly indicate the individual's state of health and to include relevant medical documentation in the submission. This will be a valuable source of information both for the refugee and for the municipal authorities charged with his or her care.

According to an agreement between the Swedish Migration Board and IOM the Swedish Migration Board has the possibility to appoint a medical check-up to be carried out by IOM.

10. Orientation (pre-departure)

Up until 2007 the Swedish Integration Board (now abolished) was responsible for conducting pre-departure orientation sessions for quota refugees. Due to various constraints, including financial, only a small number of refugees were targeted with these activities. In 2008 and 2009, the Swedish Migration Board, now responsible for the cultural orientation and preparations, ran a project co-funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) to develop a strategy for pre-departure orientation. In 2010, 50 percent of the

refugees selected for resettlement to Sweden (mainly those selected via in country selection missions, but also some of the dossier selected groups) were offered an orientation program.

The scope and length of the orientation varies depending on the needs of each target group, but generally two types of sessions are used: full cultural orientation programs, ranging between one to two weeks, and shorter workshops on a few days. Each refugee is offered between 5-10 hours of information within these programs.

The programs are carried out by officers from the Migration Board together with officials from some of the receiving municipalities. Costs depend on the location, size of the group as well as the team, and are generally covered by the Migration Board. Municipalities pay for their own expenses.

11. Travel

The Migration Board cooperates with IOM in making travel arrangements for individuals to be resettled. It can take 2-3 months to prepare the transfer to Sweden after the decision has been taken regarding a residence permit.

Arrangements must be made in order to acquire acceptance from the local authorities in Sweden, obtain the necessary exit permits from the country or countries of residence, issue passports and travel documents, provide information on the final destination, describe the route to be traveled, draw up timetables, etc. Furthermore, before departure the municipal staff at the receiving municipality will prepare for the arrivals and the finding of accommodation. Travelling can take place once accommodation in Sweden has been arranged. If medical escorts or group escorts are needed, it has to be approved by the Migration Board. IOM is also asked to provide the refugees with warmer clothing during the cold period.

When asking IOM to start preparing for the refugees' departure, UNHCR and the respective Swedish embassy are also instructed to start preparing for exit permits and to issue travel documents. The proof of the residence permit is placed in the travel document by the embassies. In order to be able to issue travel documents, the embassy must be provided with personal data such as date of birth, height and a photo of the refugee. This is normally shared by the local UNHCR office.

12. Status on Arrival and the Path to Citizenship

When refugees arrive in Sweden they have already been **granted a permanent residence permit**. Those who are resettled are either Convention refugees or persons in need of subsidiary protection. Convention refugees are entitled to apply for a travel document and for an official recognition of their refugee status. The determination of refugee status is done in conjunction with the decision regarding residence permits but the application for a travel document and the recognition of refugee status can only be done after arrival in Sweden.

12.1 Swedish citizenship

Aliens who have lived in Sweden for five years (four years for Convention refugees) and have proven their identity are entitled to Swedish citizenship. Certain conditions are imposed before an alien can acquire Swedish citizenship i.e. among others age requirement, record of good conduct and relinquishment of previous citizenship.

Swedish law permits dual citizenship. Regulations in the person's country of origin therefore determine whether dual citizenship is possible.

12.2 Voluntary repatriation

If a person granted a residence permit wishes to repatriate, he or she may apply for an allowance. In order for a person to receive an allowance, the inability to pay the travel expenses must be proved.

12.3 Re-immigration

If a person granted a residence permit moves out of Sweden to his or her native country or elsewhere he or she will have the permit withdrawn two years after departure. It is possible to apply for a new residence permit. In such a case considerations e.g. time spent in Sweden and links with the native country or elsewhere, are considered.

13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Actors

The system of refugee reception is based on the voluntary participation of the majority of municipalities in Sweden. The Swedish Migration Board reaches agreements with the individual municipality on the reception of refugees and each municipality entering into an agreement is compensated financially by the State.

13.2 Reception

Resettled individuals will be provided with support from the municipality in which they are resettled. The municipality is required to provide an individual introduction program for each refugee resettled. The program is drawn up in close cooperation with the individual concerned, the local employment office and other possible parties.

During this introduction period the individual has access to income support, language training and job search assistance. The length of the program is approximately two years but varies on an individual basis. The Swedish Employment Service is responsible for supporting new arrivals in gradually finding their way into the labour market.

The state grant for each refugee resettled in a municipality is expected to suffice for all costs paid by the municipality during the introductory period. An additional grant is payable for elderly or disabled refugees and for unaccompanied minor. Regarding unaccompanied minors the municipality is to provide sheltered accommodation and additional support.

13.3 Housing

The Swedish Migration Board always attempts to locate a place in a municipality close to other relatives already settled in Sweden. Refugees are otherwise free to settle anywhere in Sweden, although if they need help in finding permanent accommodation they must accept a home in the municipality allocated to them.

A special home furnishing and equipment loan is available to refugees. This loan may be applied for by a refugee with a minimum age of 18 years who have arranged for a flat in a municipality. The amount is payable as a fixed percentage of the current basic amount established by the national social insurance scheme. The time allowed for repayment depends on the amount borrowed.

13.4 Health

Resettled refugees have access to the public health care services under the same conditions as Swedish citizens. Public health care is tax financed in Sweden.

Health screening is offered to all resettled refugees upon arrival in Sweden.

13.5 Language Training

All municipalities are to offer refugees and other immigrants language training within “*The Swedish for Immigrants program*” (SFI) or equivalent courses no later than three months after the individual's arrival in the municipality.

All school-age children, in the custody of a person or persons whose native language is not Swedish, are entitled to tuition in their native language at primary and secondary schools and at certain other schools as well.

13.6 Education

All children in Sweden enjoy the same access to the national school system and the current curriculums, whether the children are native Swedes, immigrants or refugees and are also entitled to the same forms of educational assistance e.g. grants and loans.

13.7 Vocational Training / Employment

Persons with official refugee status or who hold a residence permit on similar grounds are permitted to take up employment on equal terms with Swedish citizens. The Swedish Employment Service is responsible for mapping and supporting new arrivals in becoming attractive on the labour market.

Refugees are entitled to financial assistance if they are unable to support themselves by any other means. Refugees enjoy the same right to financial assistance from the local services as Swedish citizens. The amount paid out varies from one municipality to another.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

14.1 Policy concerning Family Reunification of Refugees

In addition to the general rules on family reunification there are also special rules assignable to Convention refugees and aliens otherwise in need of international protection. Furthermore, there is only exceptionally a distinction between Convention refugees and aliens otherwise in need of international protection, as Convention refugees may be granted contributions to cover the family members' expenses for travelling to Sweden.

14.2 Criteria for Family Reunification

The categories of family members entitled to a residence permit on the grounds of family reunification are the following:

- a **spouse or a cohabiting partner** of someone who is either resident in Sweden, or has been granted a residence permit to settle in Sweden;
- a **child who is under the age of 18 and unmarried**, if the child has a parent who is resident in or has been granted a residence permit to settle in Sweden, alternatively, has a parent who is married to or a cohabiting partner with a person resident in Sweden or granted a residence permit.

Furthermore, residence permit shall be given to an alien who is a parent of an unmarried alien child under the age of 18 who is a refugee or a person otherwise in need of protection, if the child arrived in Sweden separately from both parents or from another adult who may be regarded as having taken the place of the parents, or if the child has been left unaccompanied after arrival.

A close relative outside the immediate circle of the nuclear family may be given residence permit if he or she was a member of the same household as the relative in Sweden. Additionally, a special relationship of dependence that already existed in the country of origin, making it difficult for the relatives to live apart, must be proved.

In exceptional circumstances a residence permit may also be granted to an alien if he or she, in another way than described above, is related to an alien who is a Convention refugee or a person otherwise in need of protection.

An application for a residence permit can be rejected if e.g. it is based on incorrect information or a bogus relationship

14.3 Allocations for Family Reunification

When an alien has been granted a residence permit in Sweden according to the rules of the 1951 Convention, contributions may be granted in order for family members to travel to Sweden for reunification purposes. It is a condition that the family members fall into one of the following categories:

- spouse or cohabiting partner;
- unmarried children under the age of 20; and
- parents and siblings assuming the refugee is under 18 years old.

Furthermore, the family members must have been granted residence permit and have valid passports. It is also a prerequisite that the refugee and the family members lack funds of their own to cover the travel expenses.

14.4 Routing of Applications

As a principle rule, applications for family reunification should be handed in by the applicant at a Swedish embassy or consulate in his or her country of origin or habitual residence.

An interview with the applicant is conducted and the following report is forwarded to the Migration Board along with the actual application. The Migration Board then conducts an investigation with the relative in Sweden.

14.5 Verification of Relationships

Applications should be accompanied by documents confirming the relationship, civil status and other particulars of personal circumstances, e.g. passport, national service discharge book or marriage certificate. If possible, confirmation of identity should also be provided in presentations submitted by UNHCR.

14.6 Processing and Decision-Making

After having received the application and the accompanying report, the Migration Board contacts the person resident in Sweden and asks him or her to verify the particulars provided and to supply any further information that may be needed. Decisions on residence permits are made by the Migration Board. In family reunification cases, the residence permits granted are normally permanent.

Appeal against a decision concerning a residence permit may be lodged with one of the three Migration Courts. The decision of the Migration Court can be appealed against and lodged with the Migration Court of Appeal.

Decisions on travel allowance are made by the Migration Board and there is no right to appeal.

15. References/Resources

More information can be found on the Swedish Migration Board's website

www.migrationsverket.se

www.migrationsverket.se/resettlement

www.migrationsverket.se/kvot

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