



Sisters Salma, 10, and Saima, 7, with baby Moustafa waiting to begin their journey from Pakistan back to Afghanistan.

# *Progressing* towards Solutions





**D**urable solutions for refugees are an essential part of international protection. However, the rapid growth in numbers of people of concern to the organization continues to outpace the international community's capacity to provide sustainable solutions for them.

Millions of people have had to rely on humanitarian assistance for years – sometimes even for generations – as traditional solutions remain unavailable for the majority. Meanwhile, at a time of multiple crises, political solutions are vitally needed to prevent and address the root causes of forced displacement.

In response to these growing challenges, UNHCR is adapting its approach to comprehensive solutions by altering the way it plans and implements protection and solutions strategies. ●●●

## Preparing for future solutions

The same initiatives that aim to increase respect for the rights of people of concern to UNHCR and improve their overall situation are, in many cases, also supportive of solutions. In countries of asylum, advocating for the right of refugees to work, supporting fair employment conditions, and enabling them to establish businesses, all contribute to their well-being and self-sufficiency. At the same time, these interventions ensure that forced displacement does not diminish the capacity of refugees to care for their families and contribute to their communities, whether during displacement or upon return.

UNHCR is therefore advocating for a more progressive approach to solutions, with solutions-oriented planning from the early stages of displacement. Crossing a border to return home happens in an instant, but equipping individuals and communities to rebuild lost homes requires time and the meaningful engagement of a range of actors. UNHCR operations are developing multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, even while durable solutions remain elusive.

To advance the implementation of this approach, UNHCR is developing tools to help its country operations conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal, social and political barriers to solutions, as well as the priorities, perspectives and intentions of refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and other people of concern, as well as affected local communities. To be durable, a solution needs to address social, cultural, political, economic and legal facets of life in a given place.

To test and refine these approaches, multi-year strategies will be implemented in up to six pilot operations in 2016, including Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania. The selected operations will orient their programmes towards concrete, longer-term solutions objectives. All operations will work towards the socio-economic and, in some cases, the legal local integration of refugees. The experience and lessons learned from these pilots will provide an evidence base for changes to policy, planning, budgeting and reporting. They will serve as the first step towards adopting a programme cycle that responds to the protracted nature of refugee situations and the need for direct and early links to development planning.



# Collaborating to end displacement

In recognition of the contribution of multiple actors towards achieving durable solutions, UNHCR is also adjusting its approach to partnerships. In particular, the Office is working to link solution activities to broader development programmes. In order for refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people to have their solutions goals included in longer-term national planning, their needs must be included in key government development plans and, subsequently, in UN development response plans, and recognized as priorities by donors, multilateral and regional partners, and other key actors.

However, while UNHCR's advocacy and supervisory role remains critical, it may not always be best placed to lead operationally in every sector or region. For example, if a protection and solutions strategy in an area of return is developed as part of the process of updating national development and other planning, UNHCR's operational contributions may be limited to facilitating the inclusion of returnees and others in common assessments, and to supporting government and civil society structures to include refugees and returnees within development interventions.

New partnerships are already showing promising results. Together, UNHCR and the World Bank have achieved concrete outcomes, including the preparation of three joint regional forced displacement

studies, and the subsequent establishment of financial facilities for the Great Lakes Region (USD 100 million) and the Horn of Africa (USD 150 million). Supported by such programming, the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania are taking loans of USD 27 million and USD 50 million, respectively, for the provision of support for IDPs and for the integration of newly-naturalized Tanzanians (former Burundian refugees).

In 2016, UNHCR will work with regional partners to seek solutions for displaced Somalis through the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees and the Global Initiative for Somali Refugees, as well as the efforts of the Solutions Alliance Somalia group, to ensure cohesive operational planning inside Somalia. Together, these initiatives form the foundation of the humanitarian and development communities' contributions towards achieving stability in Somalia, as well as the first steps towards a regional approach to solutions being found for Somalis who will not be able to return in the short or medium term.

The Seeds for Solutions (see *Glossary*) programme will also continue in 2016, with more targeted support for those countries that have demonstrated their commitment to taking up concrete opportunities to pursue solutions.

UNHCR's most important partners in the search for solutions are populations of concern themselves. In 2016-2017, UNHCR will strengthen its interaction with affected communities, including through improved participatory assessments and the development of a more consultative approach to monitoring intentions, undertaken at the earliest stages of displacement.

In addition, 2016 will see the launch of 12 UNHCR Global Refugee Youth Consultations worldwide, which will provide a platform for dialogue and engagement with refugee youth, including on solutions. The consultations will result in the identification and documentation of "Core Actions for Refugee Youth", as well as guidance and policies on youth-inclusive programming.

## Ending displacement through resettlement

**T**he provision of resettlement places is a tangible expression of responsibility sharing. With rising refugee numbers and resettlement needs, the achievement of durable solutions through resettlement remains one of UNHCR's biggest challenges in 2016.

UNHCR estimates that more than 1.15 million refugees worldwide will be in need of resettlement in 2016, including refugees who have been in exile for a protracted period for whom resettlement is envisioned over a period of several years. This is a 22 per cent increase compared to the total projected resettlement needs in 2015, with the large rise in the number of Syrian refugees being a major contributing factor.

The number of States committed to resettling refugees continues to grow, with 28 States currently participating in UNHCR's resettlement programme. Italy

became a new resettlement country in 2014; the Republic of Korea announced a three-year resettlement pilot starting in 2015; and Poland will launch a pilot programme in 2016.

The Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and the Working Group on Resettlement are the key multilateral fora for UNHCR, States and NGOs to discuss and advance resettlement issues. Discussions are ongoing on how to simplify resettlement procedures, with the aim of improving their efficiency while maintaining the highest standards of integrity.

UNHCR is also reviewing its anti-fraud policy, to be issued in 2016, which will enhance the organization's capacity to address fraud at all stages in the procedures that lead up to resettlement.

UNHCR projected global resettlement needs and capacity for 2016						
Region of asylum	Total projected resettlement needs*		Total UNHCR submissions planned for 2016 (targets)**		Estimated UNHCR core staff capacity in 2016	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
Africa	117,549	391,939	14,355	46,519	5,156	17,570
Middle East and North Africa	131,305	369,334	12,459	38,300	6,460	16,925
Asia and the Pacific	54,747	169,559	7,363	15,878	4,271	10,087
Europe	67,717	214,972	7,786	20,920	5,202	14,390
The Americas	2,624	7,492	470	1,215	222	591
<b>Total</b>	<b>373,942</b>	<b>1,153,296</b>	<b>42,433</b>	<b>122,832</b>	<b>21,311</b>	<b>59,563</b>

\* Including multi-year planning

\*\* Targets are based upon UNHCR total capacity (core staff + affiliate workforce) to process resettlement submissions in 2016, and are subject to change.

## Promoting alternative forms of admission

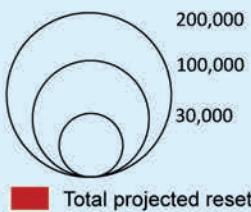
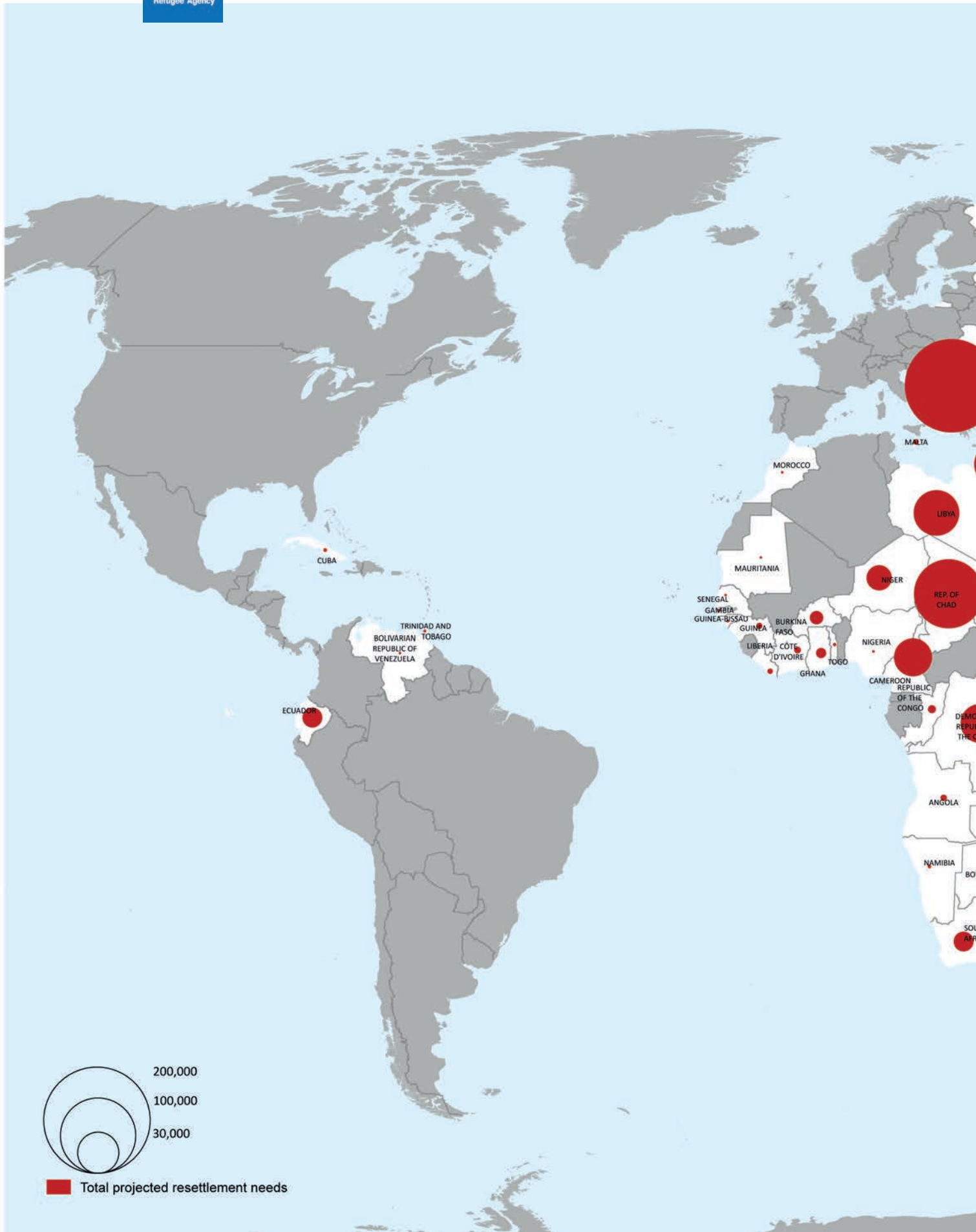
While UNHCR encourages countries to consider how the provision of asylum can provide a pathway to permanent settlement, any arrangement that meets international protection norms while permitting refugees to safely care for their families, develop their skills and enhance their resilience is an improvement on the living conditions of many.

Alternative forms of admission are complementary to traditional resettlement and are increasingly being used to provide solutions for refugees, in particular in response to the Syria situation. These include: humanitarian admission; humanitarian visas; private sponsorship; scholarships for

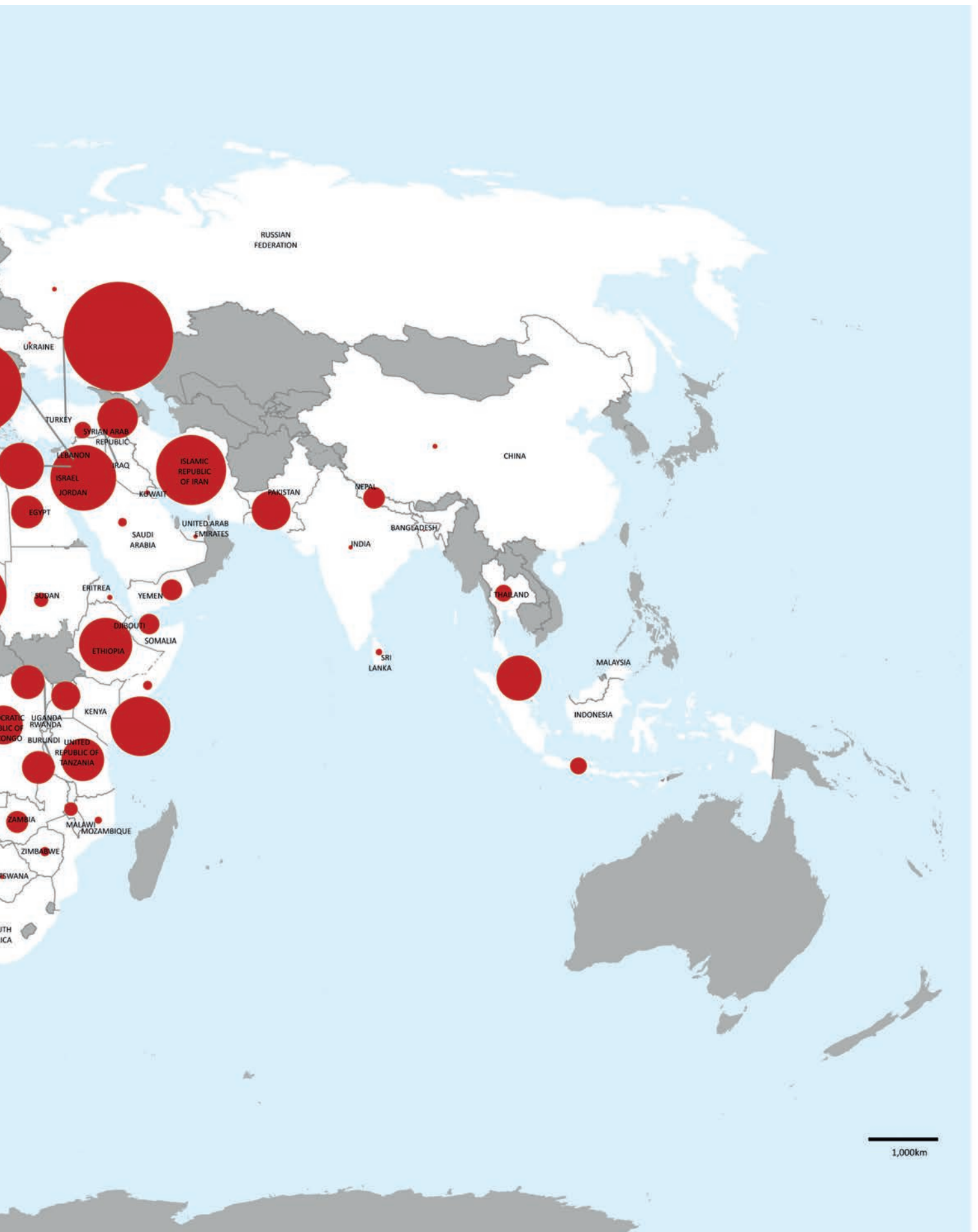
students; expanded opportunities for family reunification; medical evacuation; and labour mobility schemes with protection safeguards.

UNHCR works to ensure these initiatives are applied consistently and take into account different perspectives. A pilot scheme in South America, which supports the relocation of refugees from Ecuador to Brazil to take up employment opportunities, is expected to continue in 2016, testing a methodology that could be adapted to other settings. In other cases, shorter-term stay arrangements that provide for safe work opportunities, access to education for children, and freedom from the risk of refoulement, can offer much needed stability while longer-term options are being identified. ■

# Projected 2016 global resettlement



# needs by country of asylum (June 2015)





**AREAS OF INTERVENTION  
ANTICIPATED IN 2016**

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TARGETED**

**Comprehensive Solutions strategy developed, strengthened or updated**

Conduct Comprehensive Solutions profiling of population

- A more consultative methodology for conducting intentions monitoring will be developed and field-tested.
- Profiling in selected protracted populations to identify preferred solutions will be undertaken.

Develop and implement strategy

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- Profiling in selected protracted populations to identify preferred solutions will be undertaken.

**Coordination and partnerships strengthened**

Strengthen development partnerships

- Partnerships with development actors will be established or strengthened at regional, national and global levels, including through the Solutions Alliance.

**Self-reliance and livelihoods improved**

Facilitate access to work through removal of legal barriers

- Collaboration with governments, civil society and the private sector will be undertaken to support the removal of legal and practical barriers to self-reliance.
- People of concern will be supported to obtain work permits in countries of asylum, where conditions permit.

Develop and implement self-reliance and livelihoods strategy

- Private and public sector partners will be engaged in the planning and implementation of self-reliance and livelihood strategies and approaches.

**Potential for integration realized**

Conduct advocacy

- Implementation of the Alternatives to Camps Policy will be pursued to promote refugees' freedom of movement and self-sufficiency.

Make integration more sustainable

- Proactive work with governments and UN Country Teams will be undertaken to support the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees and stateless populations in local and national development plans.

Facilitate acquisition of residence permits

- Acquisition of residence permits will be facilitated in countries where opportunities are available.

Facilitate naturalization process

- The naturalization process will be supported in countries where opportunities are available.

**Potential for voluntary return realized**

Support voluntary return in safety and dignity

- Refugees will be supported to voluntarily return in safety and dignity in all situations where conditions permit.
- Improved guidance will be provided to field operations with the roll-out of the updated Voluntary Repatriation Handbook.

Make reintegration more sustainable

- Assessment and analysis will be undertaken among refugees in countries of asylum and returnees in countries of origin to plan for sustainable reintegration.
- Partnerships with development actors will be established at local and international levels to ensure that development programmes address the needs of returnees.

**Potential for resettlement realized**

Submit resettlement files

- Resettlement submissions will be increased by 2.5% in the Africa region.

Arrange resettlement departures

- Resettlement departures will be increased by 2.5% globally.

# Student returns to Somalia with dream of becoming a doctor

*This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story*

3 September 2015



**DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP, Kenya, September 2015** | Six years ago, when Rahma first arrived in Kenya as a refugee, she was illiterate. Now, 19, she has returned to Somalia with plans to be a doctor.

Rahma and her eight-year-old sister, Kadra, before embarking on their return journey to Somalia.

Last month, Rahma was on board two repatriation flights carrying 116 returnees from Kenya to Somalia – the final leg of what has been a transformative journey. She returned to her family not only full of hope, but also determined to pursue her studies.

“I am very happy because when I arrived in Dadaab I did not know how to write and read,” she said. “Now I can communicate well.” She can not only read, write and speak fluent English, but also has plans to become a medical doctor.

“I’ve studied a lot of biology because I want to become a medical doctor,” she says. “Now, I am reading a book by a South African doctor. I want to read, read, read, and continue my school studies. I will work hard then, God allows, I will succeed in my life.”

She intends to complete her secondary education in Mogadishu and then look for a scholarship to study in a medical university.

Rahma’s journey as a refugee began in December 2009, when she was 13. Forced to flee the conflict in Somalia, she arrived at Dadaab and settled in Hagadera camp, the largest and one of the oldest camps within the Dadaab complex, the world’s largest.

For many refugees in Dadaab, peace and education – often the first casualties of ongoing conflict – are the most valuable aspects of life as a camp refugee. Together, they change lives and can compensate in part for the sadness of exile.

Parents and students alike often mention education as a way to improve their own future and to contribute to the development of their country.

Rahma appreciates the support that she and her family received from the Kenyan Government and UNHCR while they were in the camps. She knows that life in Somalia is still challenging but remains hopeful about the future.

UNHCR is supporting the voluntary repatriations of Somali refugees from Kenya. This support includes standardized financial and in-kind assistance to ensure safe and dignified return, as well as longer-term support to help returnees reintegrate in areas they once fled from.

So far, a total of 3,820 Somali refugees have returned home since 8 December 2014, when UNHCR started supporting the voluntary return of Somali refugees in Kenya. ○