

A young Syrian refugee who has serious medical problems is starting a new life in Germany.



Progressing towards Solutions



The search for solutions for refugees and other people of concern is at the forefront of UNHCR's work worldwide. The average length of displacement for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) has steadily stretched to around 17 years – almost a generation. In light of the growing number of people being forcibly displaced, concerted action to achieve durable solutions is vital. ●●●

The three traditional solutions available to refugees are: voluntary repatriation to their country of origin when conditions allow, local integration in the host country and resettlement to a third country. UNHCR uses all available solutions in a complementary manner to resolve displacement.

In 2014, the Office launched a dedicated fund, “Seeds for Solutions” (see *Glossary*), to advance the search for solutions using a multi-disciplinary approach. This funding, distributed to 19 operations in 2014, allowed UNHCR to place greater emphasis on data collection and analysis and develop multi-year strategies and partnerships for solutions.

Lessons learned from this experience will be applied to the launch in 2015 of multi-year, multi-partner plans for solutions in up to 10 country operations.

UNHCR will evaluate the extent to which longer-term planning for solutions, beyond the organization’s traditional biennial planning cycle, can facilitate better engagement with development and peacebuilding actors and help to integrate displacement needs into recovery and development programming.

Also in 2014, UNHCR explored new approaches that may help create solutions, such as labour mobility schemes to provide employment opportunities in third countries and the provision of documentation enabling refugees to access the labour market in their country of asylum. Progress in these areas helps refugees to resume normal lives, stay hopeful about their futures, and contribute to the development of the communities they live in. These initiatives can also serve the broader protection goals of social cohesion and peacebuilding in regions that host large numbers of refugees.

● *The Solutions Alliance*

UNHCR’s efforts to find solutions for people of concern commence at the emergency phase through advocacy for refugees and other populations of concern to gain access to national and local services, and are then pursued throughout all phases of a humanitarian situation as the organization seeks to ensure the inclusion of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people in national development plans. This approach not only supports the sustainability of the response, but also builds the capacity of relevant national services to meet the

specific needs of both people of concern and host communities.

In 2014, UNHCR and global partners established the Solutions Alliance, a network committed to supporting innovative and comprehensive approaches to solutions and to building greater cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, civil society and host governments in the search for solutions. Thematic groups, focusing on data management and research, the rule of law, and working with the private sector, aim to fill gaps in joint planning and activities.

In pursuit of comprehensive solutions

UNHCR country operations – such as in Burkina Faso, Chad, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka – have emphasized livelihoods and self-reliance initiatives in countries of asylum even when there was no immediate solution available. Similarly, in Cameroon and Niger the organization designed community-based emergency responses to support resilience among refugee communities, better equipping them to take up durable solutions once they are available.

Regional employment opportunities for refugees were a particular area of focus during 2014. Research into the application of the mobility provisions in regional agreements in the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) in the Americas and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will support progress in this area in 2015.

The importance of multi-partner strategies that bring together governments, people of concern and other international and national

stakeholders was again emphasized in 2014. The development of a portfolio of projects to advance the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) has resulted in better targeted programming in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, and a more collective and strategic approach to multi-year planning. Similarly, in Ecuador, a successful pilot project to support the local integration of 48 refugees was launched in 2014, with 36 refugees being granted Ecuadorian identification cards. This pilot project will be expanded in 2015.

In Colombia and Kyrgyzstan, solutions for IDPs are being pursued through joint action by various stakeholders, including the resolution of land and property disputes locally using community-based interventions. Recognizing that collective efforts to mainstream the needs of IDP communities can contribute to preventing conflict, in 2014 the UN Peacebuilding Fund included this approach as part of its approval of further funding packages for Kyrgyzstan.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE “SEEDS FOR SOLUTIONS” EXPERIENCE WILL BE APPLIED TO THE LAUNCH IN 2015 OF MULTI-YEAR, MULTI-PARTNER PLANS FOR SOLUTIONS IN UP TO 10 COUNTRY OPERATIONS.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2014

Potential for integration realized

- The Government of Zambia issued 108 residence permits to former refugees from Angola, and committed to issuing a total of 10,000 permits. Development programmes in settlement areas are underway.
- The local integration of 1,700 former Angolan refugees in Namibia began.
- In Benin, UNHCR and the Government worked to secure durable solutions for Togolese refugees who have been in the country since 2005. In 2013, the Government began issuing 10-year residence permits and continued to do so in 2014.
- In Dollo Ado in Ethiopia, UNHCR and partners, including the Government of Ethiopia, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) and the IKEA Foundation, are seeking to empower refugees and host communities by linking vocational skills training to income and job creation.
- UNHCR continued to design and support new approaches that can help create solutions, such as labour mobility schemes, temporary migration and alternative forms of legal stay – particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Potential for voluntary return realized/reintegration made more sustainable

- A pilot project to support the spontaneous return of Somali refugees from Kenya was launched in December 2014, with 1,160 refugees having returned to southern Somalia by January 2015. They have joined the 40,000 IDPs who have returned to this region in recent years.
- More than 16,000 refugees, primarily from the Central African Republic and the Congo, had returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as of 2014, with UNHCR support.
- A tripartite agreement between Burkina Faso, Mali and UNHCR was signed in January 2015 to facilitate the return of Malian refugees from Burkina Faso.

Comprehensive solutions strategy developed, strengthened or updated

- UNHCR worked with partners to better seize solutions opportunities.
- Progress continued on existing strategies, including the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, the Transitional Solutions Initiative (see *Glossary*) process in Colombia, and the group resettlement programme for Congolese refugees.
- The declaration of the cessation of refugee status for Liberians and Angolans is expected to be announced in 2015, following the finalization of operational strategies in 2014.
- The “Seeds for Solutions” (see *Glossary*) programme supported 19 country operations with additional funding (totalling USD 20 million) to strengthen planning and development of solutions strategies. Funding was received by UNHCR operations in: Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Costa Rica, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Zambia. UNHCR operations in Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda will join the programme in 2015.

Coordination and partnerships strengthened

- In 2014, UNHCR and global partners established the Solutions Alliance, a network of actors committed to supporting innovative and comprehensive approaches to solutions.
- A memorandum of understanding was concluded between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNHCR to provide support to refugees in protracted situations in Uganda, using development expertise and resources.
- UNHCR advocated for the recognition of displacement as a development challenge by supporting World Bank studies on displacement in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region.



LOCAL INTEGRATION

Legislation in **India** allows for Hindu or Sikh Afghans to obtain Indian citizenship under certain conditions. However, in recent years, only 11 individuals a year on average obtained citizenship, representing less than 0.5% of some 4,000 pending applications. This low figure was largely attributed to bureaucratic red tape in the application process.

In 2014, UNHCR made particular efforts to advocate with the Ministry of Home Affairs to simplify its procedures. In November 2014, a directive was issued, streamlining the passport renunciation process required to obtain Indian citizenship. In 2014, 53 individuals obtained citizenship – 1.3% of the total number of people who had applied for naturalization. Further, the new directive is expected to accelerate the naturalization process in 2015.



VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

In 2014, in a context marked by considerable insecurity and instability, UNHCR organized a successful repatriation operation in the **Central African Republic** that resulted in the closure of the Batalimo camp. Over 6,200 Congolese refugees were repatriated to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing nearly 93% of the 6,786 refugees who had expressed their intention to repatriate. In spite of the difficult conditions, in particular due to the absence of a tripartite agreement governing the logistics and modalities of the repatriation programme, UNHCR organized 12 convoys to facilitate the return of all refugees in safety and in dignity. The repatriation of the remaining refugees who have expressed their wish to repatriate – 500 refugees from the Zemio camp – is scheduled to begin in 2015.

In **Liberia**, the 100% target set as the baseline for repatriation in 2014 reached just 74% by the end of the year. UNHCR had originally planned to repatriate 16,000 Ivorian refugees. This number was later increased to 20,000 when the Office's efforts to engage with the refugees led to greater interest in repatriation. By 30 June 2014, over 12,200 Ivorian refugees had been repatriated.

However, the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic resulted in the closure of the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The repatriation exercise was suspended for the remainder of the year and UNHCR was unable to meet its planned target. ●

Resettlement and alternative forms of admission

Resettlement continued to serve as an important tool for protection and solutions, with 103,890* refugees submitted for resettlement consideration in 2014. UNHCR sought to enhance the strategic use of resettlement, including through the Solutions Alliance.

UNHCR also continued to focus on the implementation of a multi-year plan to enhance resettlement opportunities for Congolese refugees, in conjunction with efforts to explore other solutions with national and international partners. Since 2012, more than

33,500 Congolese refugees have been submitted for resettlement consideration.

In response to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, several States have provided various alternative or humanitarian forms of admission for Syrian refugees, including through family reunification programmes, education scholarships and private sponsorship. UNHCR has launched a campaign to secure up to 100,000 places for resettlement and other forms of admission for Syrian refugees, and is exploring how to extend this approach to other emergency situations. ■

**Following the publication of the Global Report 2014 (English version), the provisional figures for refugees submitted for resettlement consideration in 2014 have been updated. The total figure should read 103,890 (instead of "over 93,200").*

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2014

Potential for resettlement realized	
Submission of resettlement cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 103,890* refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration in 2014. 73,008* people departed to their resettlement country with UNHCR's assistance in 2014, a slight increase compared to 2013. ■ Japan joined the pool of resettlement countries, increasing the number of States offering regular resettlement places to 28 countries.
Women and girls at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 11% of all resettlement submissions in 2014 were for women and girls at risk, exceeding the target of 10% set by ExCom Conclusion No. 105(LVII) (2006) for a fourth consecutive year.
Resettlement in emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Videoconferencing was used to support resettlement processing where physical interviews with refugees were not possible for access or security reasons. ■ 450 refugees were transferred to emergency transit centres in the Philippines and Romania for final processing by receiving countries. ■ 21,111 Syrian refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration and 7,197 departed to their resettlement countries. UNHCR has launched a campaign to secure up to 100,000 resettlement places and other forms of admission for Syrian refugees in 2015-2016.
Reinforce the integrity and efficiency of the resettlement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UNHCR has implemented a global inventory of fraud occurrences in order to better track and report on fraud in resettlement procedures. Multifunctional anti-fraud assessment missions were carried out in Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Thailand. Recommendations include: developing and strengthening standard operating procedures relating to anti-fraud and integrity, conducting anti-fraud training for staff and compliance monitoring. ■ A comprehensive review of UNHCR policy was initiated to address resettlement-related fraud, including the establishment of a multifunctional Steering Committee on Guidance Related to Fraud Perpetrated by Persons of Concern.
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The reform process of the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) was completed in June 2014. These reforms have reinforced the value of the ATCR as a consultative forum for UNHCR and its partners to advance resettlement issues. Discussions at the WGR will henceforth be theme-focused, and chairs of core and contact groups will report annually on their planned activities.
Advocacy and awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UNHCR continued implementation of the multi-year plan to enhance resettlement of Congolese refugees through the Democratic Republic of the Congo Refugee Contact Group, in particular for Congolese refugees in Burundi, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. ■ In 2014, the Core Group on Syrian Resettlement held five meetings, focusing on three issues: simplification of procedures, advocating traditional and new forms of admission, and relationships with host countries. Two high-level ministerial meetings were convened to pledge resettlement places for Syrian refugees.

**Following the publication of the Global Report 2014 (English version), the provisional figures for refugees submitted for resettlement consideration and for UNHCR-assisted departures in 2014 have been updated. The total figure for refugees submitted for resettlement should read 103,890 (instead of "93,221"); and the total figure for UNHCR-assisted departures should read 73,008 (instead of "72,672").*

Tanzania grants citizenship to 162,000 Burundian refugees in historic decision

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story

17 October 2014

GENEVA, October 2014 (UNHCR) | In October 2014 the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania took the decision to grant citizenship to 162,156 former Burundian refugees. This is the largest group in UNHCR's history to be offered naturalization by a country of first asylum after decades in exile.



A group of Burundian refugees received their citizenship certificates from President Kikwete.

The United Republic of Tanzania also started the naturalization process for a further 40,000 people. In total, some 200,000 people are expected to be granted Tanzanian citizenship, including some of the children of Burundian refugees who fled their country amid ethnic conflict in 1972.

The naturalization programme was inaugurated by President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete in October 2014. Symbolically, the naturalization ceremony took place on Nyerere Day, as the nation marked the 15th anniversary of the death of its founding father and 1983 Nansen Refugee Award laureate, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, a passionate campaigner for refugee rights in Africa.

UNHCR's Representative, Joyce Mends-Cole, commended the United Republic of Tanzania as a model in the search for solutions for refugees, and as a country where the institution of asylum is preserved and respected.

"Nyerere famously said that no African should be a refugee in another African country and his successors have continued an enlightened and generous policy towards refugees," she said.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania first announced its willingness to offer naturalization to former Burundian refugees in December 2007. The refugees have lived in three settlement areas in the Tabora and Katavi regions in western Tanzania since 1972 and have become largely self-supporting, productive and tax-paying members of society. In addition to subsistence crops, the settlements also produced tobacco and coffee for export, contributing to the development of these remote regions.

While more than 162,000 former Burundian refugees have been found eligible for naturalization, an earlier initiative, which

involved relocating them to different regions of Tanzania, ran into obstacles and was halted after just 750 former refugees received their citizenship certificates in 2010. This resulted in great uncertainty for the former refugees: many stopped investing in agricultural activities and enrolling their children in secondary schools, as they were unsure of their status and whether they could stay in the settlements.

At the 2014 meeting of UNHCR's Executive Committee, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania announced that it had resolved the four year hiatus in the naturalization process for former Burundian refugees. It also announced that the new citizens would be allowed to remain in the settlements, where they could exercise their rights as Tanzanian citizens, or move to any other part of the country if they wished to do so. ○