

**COUNTRY
CHAPTER**

FRA

FRANCE

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE



France Overview

Resettlement programme since: **2008** Selection Missions: **Yes** Dossier Submissions: **Yes**

Resettlement Admission Targets for 2015:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions :	100 dossier submissions, unspecified number of persons
Total Resettlement Admission Target	100 dossier submissions each year under the 2008 act agreement and additional places through an ad hoc humanitarian admission programme for up to 500 Syrian refugees

Regional Allocations for 2015 (not applicable):

Africa	n/a
Asia	n/a
Middle East and North Africa	500 (Syrians)
Americas	n/a
Europe	n/a
Not geographically allocated	Remaining places

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	No specific sub-quota
Medical cases	No specific sub-quota
Women-at-risk cases	No specific sub-quota
Unaccompanied children	No specific sub-quota
Family Reunion (within programme)	Outside of resettlement programme

1. Resettlement Policy

1.1 Description of France's resettlement policy

France has a strong commitment to resettlement which has seen significant increase in recent years.

Following the framework agreement signed between UNHCR and France in 2008, France committed itself to consider 100 dossier submissions each year under the mandate of UNHCR. France's priority is to accept and facilitate the resettlement of the principal claimant

and family members who cannot return to their country of origin and who are not able to integrate in their first country of asylum.

At the end of 2013, a new programme was set up, in close collaboration with UNHCR, to welcome 500 vulnerable Syrian refugees in 2014. This programme has been implemented partly through the annual resettlement quota and partly through an additional ad hoc humanitarian admission programme (HAP) for refugees who are not under UNHCR mandate.

In 2014, 300 Syrian nationals arrived to France under this new programme, which was renewed in 2015. An additional 643 Syrians arrived in 2015 (of which 561 were admitted under the HAP).

In 2015, 766 refugees of various nationalities were welcomed to France under resettlement or humanitarian admission, including the Syrians mentioned above.

In addition to this national programme, in 2015, France committed to welcome 2,375 refugees under the July 2015 European conclusions. The first selection mission was implemented at the end of 2015 in Lebanon and Jordan and the first Syrian refugees welcomed under this scheme arrived in 2016. They will continue to arrive until 2017.

In addition, as part of the EU Turkey agreement in March 2016, France committed to resettle up to 6,000 Syrians refugees out of Turkey.

Finally, France took additional national commitments to resettle an additional 2,000 Syrian refugees out of Lebanon in 2016/2017.

In total, France has committed to resettle around 10,000 refugees between 2016 and 2017.

1.2 Ministries and Departments responsible for resettlement policy

The Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals (Directorate of Asylum) is in charge of the resettlement programme (both at the policy and operational level), and is accountable to the Ministry of Interior.

1.3 Process for deciding the annual resettlement quota and its composition

As noted above, France committed itself to review a hundred cases per year within the framework of the 2008 agreement with UNHCR. Additional resettlement/HAP places are decided each year by the Government.

2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility Asylum

2.1 National legislation defining refugee status eligibility

The code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law provides two types of protection.

Refugee status is accorded to any person persecuted as a result of his/her actions in favour of freedom and to any person falling under UNHCR's mandate under Articles 6 and 7 of its statute as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14th, 1950 or who meets the definition under Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of July 28th 1951.

The benefit of subsidiary protection is meanwhile granted to any person who does not fulfil the conditions for refugee status, but who establishes that he/she faces a serious threat in his/her country of origin (death penalty, torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, generalized violence resulting from an internal or international armed conflict).

2.2 Distinction if any between refugee status criteria for asylum-seekers, and that for resettled refugees

As refugees recognized under the 1951 Geneva Convention, and under UNHCR's mandate, resettled individuals automatically and quickly obtain the transfer of their status by the French

Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). For people welcomed under the HAP, since they were not already recognized by UNHCR, their status will depend on the status determination done by OFPRA during the selection mission and will be either granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

3. Criteria for Resettlement

3.1 Refugee resettlement eligibility criteria

All refugees who meet the definition of Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention are eligible for resettlement. Cases should be submitted by UNHCR.

3.2 Admissibility Criteria

The absence of threats to security and public order is carefully reviewed. Specialized security services are systematically consulted during the review of the case.

3.3 Other humanitarian immigration programmes

In addition to resettlement, France has a longstanding tradition of welcoming individuals who face danger in their own country due to political or humanitarian crisis. France has a dedicated programme to grant long term visas to those who seek asylum in France. This visa scheme has recently benefitted Syrians as well as more recently, Iraqis from religious minorities who are persecuted due to their religion. Between 2013 and 2015, France has issued this specific visa to over 2,900 Syrians and Syrian-based Palestinians and more than 2,000 visas to Iraqis.

Finally, France has a strong commitment to the new European Union relocation programme adopted in September 2015 and is committed to relocate up to 30,000 refugees.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocations including sub-quotas

Aside from the current population of Syrian nationals, France did not set priorities for UNHCR based on specific categories of persons nor specific geographical locations.

However, France establishes national forecasts each year for specific categories (vulnerable women, unaccompanied children, medical cases, victims of violence, and urgent need for legal or physical protection) for which EU funding can be obtained.

4.2 Processing priorities

Most of the 100 cases are submitted by UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, although, since 2013, cases may also be submitted directly by two UNHCR Hub offices (Nairobi and Beirut). Most cases submitted for the Humanitarian Admission Programme are submitted directly by Beirut.

5. Submission and Processing via Dossier Selection

5.1 Dossier (RRF) submission policies, case documentation, decision-making and processing times

UNHCR submits one hundred cases to France each year. Each case may include several family members in addition to the principal applicant, (usually spouse and children, but some cases may include the principal applicant's parents or grandchildren, nieces / nephews, etc.) in the application submitted for resettlement.

The Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) is usually sent with a letter of introduction and relevant supporting documents such as: medical record, full copies of children's birth certificates, copies of divorce decrees, of death certificates, etc., Best Interest Determination (BID) reports related to the situation of the children included in the application, and consent of the parent (not included in the application) to the relocation of the child with the principal applicant.

Applications are processed in chronological order by date of receipt, unless an emergency is reported. The general information of each file is stored in statistical tables in order to accurately track the stages of the file processing.

As part of the review process, each dossier is summarized in French.

After consultation with the security services to ensure that candidates for resettlement are not known in the context of terrorism and not subject to a national arrest warrant, the case and the summary are submitted to the geographical divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an opinion ("sensitive" cases also require the opinion of OFPRA). Once the opinions are collected, the case is then reviewed collectively by officers-in-charge of the Department of asylum and protection (in the Asylum Directorate), who decide whether or not to grant resettlement to the applicant.

In the event of a refusal, UNHCR is immediately notified by mail.

In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Directorate immediately informs UNHCR of its decision in principle. However, the travel procedure for applicants occurs later on, depending on the availability of accommodation provided to this end. To launch the arrival procedure, instruction to issue a visa is sent by the Asylum Directorate to the relevant French Consulate. Instruction is also given to International Organization for Migration (IOM) to proceed with the adequate travel arrangements.

5.2 Recourses, appeals

There is no appeal procedure.

6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection

As part of the HAP programme, France has carried out selection missions in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan since 2014.

All cases have to be submitted by UNHCR prior to the selection mission. The cases submitted through the HAP are persons who are registered with UNHCR but have not yet been recognized under the mandate of UNHCR.

The Asylum Directorate of the French Ministry of Interior and the French embassy are involved to arrange logistical and other organizational matters with the support of IOM. OFPRA, the determining agency as well as the Ministry of Interior is in charge of the selection mission.

The delegation for a selection mission consists, as a rule, of a mission leader, caseworkers who are specialized in the region from OFPRA, as well as officers from the Ministry of Interior.

7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases

France does not have a quota for emergency cases. Urgent cases are given priority, regardless of the chronological order of receipt, and follow exactly the procedure as described above. The refusal decision or the agreement is sent to the UNHCR in Geneva as soon as possible. In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Directorate strives to quickly find suitable accommodation, in collaboration with the OFII.

8. Special Categories/Special Needs

8.1 Sub-quotas dedicated to specific needs cases

France does not set quotas for cases involving people with specific needs, however, particular attention is given to applications related to such individuals.

9. Medical Requirements

9.1 Screening procedures

Applications submitted by UNHCR as medical cases, or cases not submitted as such but related to individuals with health problems, are consistently forwarded for advice to the OFII's doctor in order to assess care needs.

9.2 Health criteria and exclusion factors

France does not set preconditions of eligibility related to the candidates' state of health.

9.3 Pre-departure examination procedures

A medical examination is carried out before departure to ensure that individuals whose resettlement has been accepted can travel safely. This examination is conducted by the IOM.

10. Pre-departure orientation

Pre-departure information is distributed by IOM in the form of a brochure. Cultural information sessions are organized by IOM for trips involving at least ten individuals.

11. Travel

11.1 Travel booking procedures

The formalities to book plane tickets and issue travel documents are fulfilled by IOM. Costs are paid by OFII, partly covered through European Funding (AMIF). The formalities to issue travel documents (consular laissez-passer and long-stay visas) are done by the French consular section of the country of first asylum with the assistance of IOM and UNHCR when necessary. The French consular authorities are informed of the priority nature of these claims.

12. Status on Arrival and the Path to Citizenship

12.1 Immigration status on arrival

The status depends on whether the case has been accepted through dossier or selection mission, though both arrive through a long term visa for asylum.

For the dossier cases, resettled refugees have to complete administrative procedures at the prefecture of their place of residence to obtain a first temporary residence permit for a period of a month, the time to submit their application to OFPRA to obtain the transfer of their refugee status. While waiting for their refugee status to be transferred, which is usually done in a short period of time after arrival, their temporary permit is renewed as long as necessary to obtain asylum protection and to ensure that they have access to social benefits. Nevertheless, they are not authorized to work before granted protection. Once the status has been transferred, they are entitled to a ten year residency card.

For cases selected during a selection mission, refugee or subsidiary protection status is granted as soon as the person arrives to France. Upon arrival, they have to immediately apply to prefectures for the residency card that is valid for ten years (for those granted refugee status) and one year renewable card (for those granted subsidiary protection).

12.2 Documentation issued, including travel documents

In addition to the residency card, if the individual wants to travel, they may request from the prefecture a refugee travel document with a validity period of two years, allowing them to travel in all countries with the exception of their country of origin.

12.3 Documents issued to children born after arrival but before naturalization of their parents

Children, whether born before or after their parents arrived in France, do not need to have a stay permit before their age of majority. However, a refugee travel document may be issued to them in the same way as to their parents.

12.4 Process for regularization of status and citizenship, including requirements and time frames

French nationality may be acquired by resettled refugees as soon as they have recognized refugee status in France. Though, it requires that certain conditions are met: the individual must have not been convicted in court, must demonstrate a good knowledge of the French language, history, culture and society, and must adhere to the fundamental principles and values of the French Republic.

Children born in France obtain citizenship by right when they are 18 years of age if they have five years of residence in France since the age of 11. They can get it in advance from the age of 13 if they have lived at least five years in France since the age of 8.

13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

13.1 Overview of Services for Resettled Refugees

Upon arrival in France, resettled refugees are greeted by an IOM officer who escorts them to the meeting point with an OFII officer. Then they are then either directed to specific reception and accommodation schemes dedicated to resettled refugees, mainly managed by nongovernmental organizations financed by the Government and EU funding, or directly to their own fully furnished rental home, where the lease will be signed by them as soon as they receive the social benefits.

In both cases, they are supported in their administrative steps for the prefecture and OFPRA and receive social assistance for health and education, as well as financial assistance for food. All their medical and hospital expenses are covered by the French social welfare system under the same conditions as French citizens. Education is free and compulsory for children from 6 to 16 years of age.

Upon the transfer of refugee status, a reception and integration contract (CI) is concluded by OFII with the resettled refugee. This contract plans a civic training on French institutions and values of the Republic as well as language training sanctioned by a diploma. A skills assessment is also made to prepare the resettled refugee for his/her job search.

Access to employment is a key step of the integration process of resettled refugees. The resettled refugee is accompanied throughout the process by an agent of the public employment service, "Pôle Emploi". During his/her job search, the resettled refugee receives a minimum income.

14. Family Reunification of Refugees

Family reunification may be requested for the refugee's spouse and children. The stay is granted by right to the following members of the family of the resettled refugee:

- The spouse when the marriage took place prior to the agreement to resettlement or, failing this, when it took place at least one year previously, subject to actual cohabitation by the spouses;
- Children under the age of 19

15. References/Resources