

**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 2018 /2019:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	10 000 for 2018/2019
Total Resettlement Admission Target	10 000

Regional Allocations for 2018/2019:

Africa	3.000* (including evacuees from Libya)
Asia	n/a
Middle East and North Africa	7.000* (Syrians)
Americas	n/a
Europe	n/a
Not geographically allocated	100 dossiers cases/year

* pledges for a period of two years

Sub-quota features:

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	No specific quota but priority will be given to evacuees from Libya
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 a significant increase in recent years.

It is important to note that, the asylum and migration Law of September, 10, 2018 (Law number n° 2018-778) has, for the first time, given a legal basis to the French resettlement program. It includes, in the code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law, a new chapter about the external dimension of asylum with a single article (Art. L. 714-1) mentioning March 2014, revised November 2018

that the French authorities can organise the resettlement of vulnerable people in need of international protection.

Prior to this law, the only framework for resettlement which was existing was the bilateral agreement between France and UNHCR.

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

In 2014/2015, France implemented a new resettlement program dedicated to welcome **500 Syrian refugees per year**. This programme has been implemented partly through the annual resettlement on dossier quota and partly through an additional ad hoc humanitarian admission programme (HAP) with selection missions in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt.

In 2016 and 2017, within the framework of European resettlement commitments, France welcomed **3657 refugees of various nationalities, mostly Syrians**.

At the end of 2017, **new Presidential commitments were taken to welcome 10.000 refugees over a two year period** of which 7.000 would come from Middle-East (Syrians) and 3.000 would come from Niger and Chad (Subsahrians including evacuees from Libya).

Since December 2017 and until 31st October 2018, 4565 refugees have already been welcomed under this new commitment. Among the latter, 3734 are Syrians mainly from Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Besides, the new selection missions set up in Niger and Chad allowed 773 Sub-Saharan refugees to come, including 192 evacuees from Libya. Lastly, 58 other refugees of various nationalities came to France under the 2008 Act Agreement.

1.2 Ministries and Departments responsible for resettlement policy

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

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 places are decided 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

When refugees are 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). This is the case for the resettled refugees accepted on a dossier basis. For people who have been identified through a selection mission, 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

As mentioned in the new legal text adopted in 2018, the French resettlement program targets vulnerable refugees.

In addition, 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 want to 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 2018, France has issued this specific visa to more than 6400 Syrians and Palestinians from Syria, and more than 7,000 visas to Iraqis.

In addition, France started in 2017 a new private sponsorship program "corridors humanitaires" with five national religious based NGOs. The goal is to welcome 500 vulnerable Syrian or Iraqis refugees from Lebanon.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocations including sub-quotas

Aside from the current population of Syrian nationals, France has set in 2017 new other priorities for UNHCR on Niger and Chad for Sub-Saharan refugees and evacuees from Libya.

4.2 Processing priorities

The 100 cases are submitted by UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, and since 2013, may also be submitted directly by other UNHCR Hub offices currently located in Amman and Nairobi. As much as possible, the cases should be aligned with the EU resettlement priorities.

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 relevant supporting documents such as: medical record, full copies of children's birth certificates, copies of divorce decrees, 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 resettlement of the child with the principal applicant.

Applications are processed in chronological order, unless an emergency is reported. 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 dossier is submitted to the geographical divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an opinion ("sensitive" cases also require the opinion of the French determining agency 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

France has carried out selection missions in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Niger and Chad since 2014.

All cases have to be submitted by UNHCR prior to the selection mission. The cases submitted are persons who are registered with UNHCR and identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement due to vulnerability criteria.

Under the coordination of the Asylum Directorate of the French Ministry of Interior, IOM organizes, in relationship with UNHCR, the logistics of the selection mission. 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.

After the selection mission, OFPRA sends the list of accepted refugees to the Asylum Directorate, which then launches the process to seek suitable accommodation to France and organize the transfer to France, with IOM.

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 office which submitted the case (i.e. Geneva, Amman or Nairobi, as applicable), as soon as possible. In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Directorate strives to quickly find suitable accommodation, in collaboration with 22 associations that have been selected to host and provide support to these resettled refugees.

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 screening "Fit to fly" is, systematically, carried out before departure to ensure that individuals whose resettlement has been accepted can travel safely. This examination is conducted by IOM. For cases identified with medical issues during the selection mission, or based on UNHCR information, a full medical examination is organised by IOM, at the request of the Asylum Directorate.

10. Pre-departure orientation

Pre-departure information is distributed by IOM in the form of a brochure translated into Arabic and English. Cultural information sessions are organized by IOM for trips involving at least ten individuals. A video, translated in most of the languages of the resettled refugees is supporting the cultural orientation session.

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 the IOM, covered through European Funding (AMIF) paid by the Asylum Directorate. 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). Starting in January 2019, the initial duration of the residency card for people under subsidiary protection will be extended to four years.

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 the NGO in charge of their accommodation. 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 Republican Integration contract (CIR) is concluded by OFII with the resettled refugee. This contract plans civic trainings on French institutions and values of the Republic and on life and employment in France as well as language training sanctioned by a diploma.

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

The code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law, Art. L. 714-1