

Ireland

There were a total of **4,873 asylum applications** in Ireland in 2019, a 22% increase year on year.

As a result, the number of people living in reception centres and emergency accommodation increased by 24% to 7,612.

Of these, over **10%** had some form of status but were unable to leave, largely because of continued pressure on the housing sector.

Ireland continued to welcome refugees on the resettlement programme in 2019. 783 Syrian and Iraqi refugees arrived from Lebanon

and Jordan during the year.

Meanwhile, families began arriving on the new community sponsorship programme which officially launched in April 2019. During the year, 27 refugees were welcomed on the programme by local groups across Ireland.

TOP 5 NATIONALITIES GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS/ SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION 2019*

1. **Libyan**
2. **Syrian**
3. **Afghan**
4. **Sudanese**
5. **Zimbabwean**

KEY FIGURES

27%

Recognition Rate for Refugee Status / Subsidiary Protection. 24.5% were successful on appeal at the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

783

The number of people who arrived on the resettlement programme from Lebanon and Jordan in 2019.

4,873

The number of applications for asylum in 2019.

*(Jan-June 2019)

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

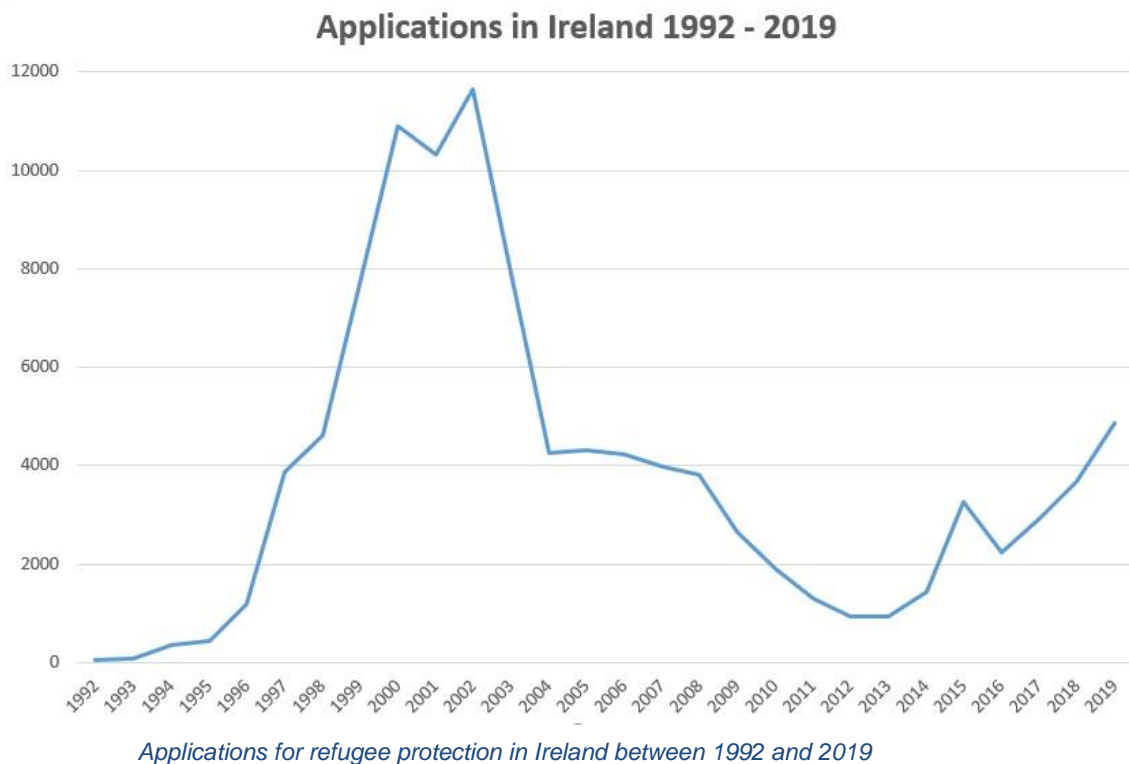
- 7 National Staff
- 2 Affiliated Workforce

Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Dublin

Author Onjali Rauf launches UNHCR/Children's Books Ireland annual refugee reading campaign in June with children from St Mary's Primary School, Dublin 1





Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Irish government, officials, NGOs and other partners to protect people forced to flee their homes and support them to live their lives with dignity and respect.

Main Activities

Protection

- By the end of December 2019, 6,013 people were living in reception centres. A further 1,559 people were housed in emergency accommodation.

UNHCR participated in the advisory group working on the standards for reception centres which were published in April 2019. In advance of the standards becoming binding in January 2021, UNHCR recommended that concrete steps be taken to ensure their full implementation. The Agency also advocated for the establishment of an independent inspectorate to carry out inspections in Direct Provision centres against

the newly approved standards.

[In its submission](#) to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality on 22 May, UNHCR briefed members on challenges facing asylum-seekers in the protection and accommodation system in Ireland. UNHCR's Head of Office focused on the length of time protection applicants must wait for a final decision on their application and the need for continued collaboration between civil society and government to resolve ongoing issues in the system.



UNHCR at the Oireachtas Justice Committee with the Irish Immigrant Council, Judge Bryan McMahon, Committee Chair Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin T.D. and Senator Frances Black.

- UNHCR provides monthly information sessions on the international protection system to newly arrived asylum-seekers at Baleskin reception centre with JRS Ireland. During 2019, UNHCR conducted 10 such sessions.
- Ireland made a number of interventions on hate crime and racial discrimination in 2019. In its [submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), UNHCR recommended the creation of a new National Action Plan Against Racism and the development of infrastructure to monitor and collect relevant data on discrimination and racism.

UNHCR also made a submission to the State's review of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. The submission outlined Ireland's commitments under international

law to strengthen legislation on hate-crime and hate-speech.

- UNHCR engaged in the consultation process for the third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and made a number of recommendations to better support women affected by conflict seeking protection in Ireland. These included the introduction of a vulnerability screening mechanism, as required by the recast Reception Conditions Directive, which Ireland opted into in 2018. UNHCR also recommended that vulnerable women and girls be given access to necessary therapeutic and psychosocial supports, the collection and publication of data on the subject, and the introduction of gender guidelines to ensure a gender-sensitive reception system and asylum procedure.

Quality

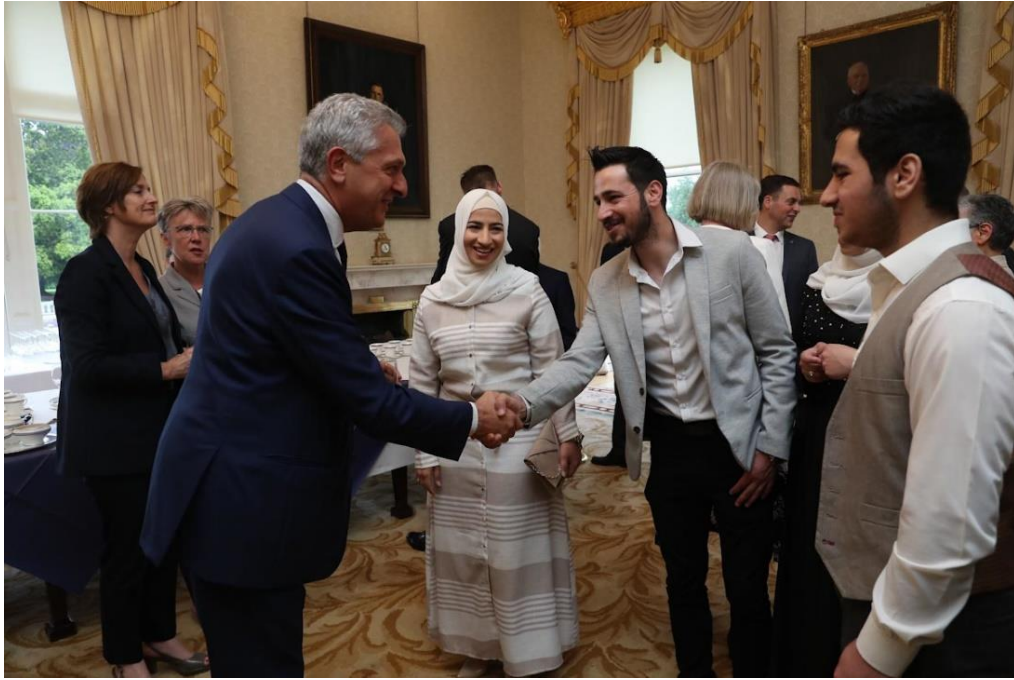
- In line with the Agency's advisory role as set out in Article 35 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR continued to work with the International Protection Office (IPO) and International Protection Tribunal (IPAT) on improving the quality of decision making. This work included the development and delivery of training and other support initiatives. The work being undertaken draws on best practice developed by UNHCR through activities implemented in other EU Member States and internationally.
- UNHCR carried out a number of workshops, training exercises and information sessions during 2019. These included inductions for new staff and panel members in the International Protection Office, anti-human trafficking training with the Irish authorities and various lectures at universities and other educational institutions.
- 27% of those who applied for refugee status or subsidiary protection were successful at first instance (the International Protection Office) in 2019. Of those that appealed to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 24.5% were successful.

Durable Solutions

- The Irish Government officially launched the Community Sponsorship Programme in collaboration with UNHCR and a number of NGOs on the 30th of November 2019. The Irish programme allows community groups to sponsor refugees in their new local area once they've arrived in Ireland. The group can help with access to public services and getting to know the area. It differs to traditional resettlement models whereby the government is the main provider of these services. Since a pilot programme was established in December 2018, 30 people have arrived on the scheme. Ireland was awarded the International Award at the Community Sponsorship Awards 2019 on 8 October in London.

- UNHCR, in partnership with the Irish Red Cross and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) established the Travel Assistance Programme in 2006. It is the only programme of its kind in Ireland. The programme assists refugees or those granted subsidiary protection in overcoming the financial and administrative obstacles to family reunification. In 2019 the programme assisted 19 individuals including one Syrian and 18 non-Syrians (Albanian, Afghan, Congolese, Kenyan, and Zimbabwean) to reunite with family members in Ireland. Of the 19 assisted, 12 were minors, including three unaccompanied minors. The average length of separation for families availing of the travel assistance programme was seven years.
- Resettlement is a vital protection tool that protects the most at risk refugees. However, of the estimated 1.4 million refugees identified as being in need of resettlement in 2019, only 63,727 were actually resettled. UNHCR continued to support the Irish authorities in providing safe and legal pathways to refugees, with 783 refugees arriving in 2019 from Lebanon and Jordan. In December, Ireland pledged to shelter 2,900 people over the next four years.
- The High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi made an official visit to Ireland in July. During his visit, he launched UNHCR's [Refugee Employment Toolkit](#) at the office of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). In addition to the toolkit, UNHCR also published a [Reference Guide for HR Departments](#) on the steps to be taken in employing refugees.

The High Commissioner met with the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, President Michael D. Higgins and government ministers during his visit. Commending longstanding Irish efforts to support refugees, the High Commissioner [expressed his hope](#) that waiting times in the international protection procedure will continue to fall. He also welcomed the introduction of a number of reforms intended to improve reception conditions for protection applicants in Ireland.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi meets with the al-Kharita family at Áras an Uachtaráin, Dublin, in July 2019.

External Relations

- In October, UNHCR organized the [Refugee Food Fair](#). A series of food themed events took place in Letterkenny, Buncrana, Roscommon, Westport, Ballina, Ballyhaunis, Tullamore and Granard. Resettlement support workers worked with refugee families to cook and share food from their home countries with the local community, who attended specially organised events in each location.
- In June, UNHCR and Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI) organised the [10th Fair Play Football Cup](#) in the Law Society, Dublin. Some 500 people watched on as 20 teams of refugees, asylum-seekers and members of the public from across Ireland took part in the tournament.
- Chef Jess Murphy continued to support the office's work, travelling to Lebanon and Jordan to meet with refugees in April. In Lebanon she met with two families who are being resettled to Ireland and [wrote a column for The Irish Times](#) discussing how the issue of food transcends barriers and borders



UNHCR High Profile Supporter Jess Murphy meets with Anas and his son Abdel Ilah in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon

- To mark World Refugee Day, UNHCR and over 200 libraries and bookshops around Ireland took part in the annual Book Reading Campaign run in partnership with Children's Books Ireland. Children's book writer Onjali Q. Rauf helped launch the campaign in St Mary's Primary School, Dublin 7. Using UNHCR's specially selected book lists for [children](#) and [adults](#), readers had a wide selection of stories from around the world to choose from in the form of fact, fiction, autobiography and photography.
- The beginning of 2019 saw the opening of the Little Museum of Dublin's exhibit on refugees and the reception system in Ireland. The exhibit, 'Leave to Remain', showcased photographs by Serbian artist Vukasin Nedeljkovic and [video interviews with refugees who have made Ireland home](#). The museum was an important partner for UNHCR during the start of the year, with award winning writer Sebastian Barry attending a busy opening night.

Officially opening the exhibit, he read from a text based on the journey of a young [Irishman on a coffin ship bound for Quebec in 1847](#), reflecting on the relationship between victims of the Great Famine and people coming to Ireland today to seek shelter.
- Representing Ireland at the Global Refugee Forum at the beginning of December, Minister for Equality, Immigration and Integration David Stanton announced that the Irish government will pledge to welcome 2,900 refugees between 2020 and 2023 as part of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP).

The arrivals for the first two years will largely comprise Syrian refugees resident in Jordan and Lebanon, along with 150 refugees resident in Ethiopia. Ireland also pledged to provide 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2030 in official development assistance.



Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the continued support provided by Irish Aid to UNHCR programmes around the world. Ireland donated \$18m to UNHCR during 2019. This funding helped UNHCR support refugees around the world, including in major emergency situations.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi with Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney in July, when Ireland pledged to increase funding to UNHCR

CONTACTS

Jody Clarke, Senior External Relations Associate, CLARKE@unhcr.org,
Tel: +353 1631 4614, Mobile +353 87 989 3461

LINKS

[Europe portal](#) - [UNHCR Ireland](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#)

