

COUNTRY
CHAPTER

BKF

BURKINA FASO

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BURKINA FASO



1. Resettlement Policy

In spite of its fragile economic situation, Burkina Faso accepts resettlement of refugees on its territory and considers this responsibility as part of burden sharing in the framework of inter-African solidarity to which it has constantly been attached.

2. Criteria for Refugee Status Eligibility and Asylum

Candidates for resettlement must be refugees as defined by the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 on refugee status and its 1967 Protocol, by the Convention of the Organization of African Unity of 10 September 1969 governing the status of refugees in Africa and by ZATU (Law) ANV No 28/FP/PRES of 3 August 1988 on the status of refugees in Burkina Faso. They may also be refugees recognized under UNHCR mandate.

Burkina Faso grants priority to refugees of African origin and gives privilege to the physical and juridical protection of candidates; resettlement of a refugee must not harm the interests of the country.

3. Criteria for Resettlement

The following categories will be given priority. These are persons who, first and foremost, need physical or juridical protection:

3.1 Survivors of Violence and Torture

Refugees who have been victims of violence and/or torture or have been threatened by violation of their human rights or by violations of conventions and/or laws regarding refugees' rights: threats of refoulement, expulsion or deportation, threats of detention or arbitrary imprisonment, threats to the right to physical integrity. Individual assistance will be granted according to the identified requirements of the concerned persons.

3.2 Refugees with Medical Needs

Medical cases will not be accepted into Burkina Faso unless sanitary structures to cover their requirements will have been previously identified. Refugees are considered medical cases when they have no hope of leading a normal life in their first country of asylum due to lack of adequate medical care.

3.3 Women at Risk

These are persons who have lost a vital support mechanism for the safeguard of their dignity as women or for whom it is impossible to lead a normal socio-economic life.

3.4 Children

An unaccompanied minor is a person of less than eighteen (18) years of age, who is separated from the parents and for whom no one is responsible by virtue of law or custom. The best interest of the child is taken into account.

3.5 Refugees with no other Durable Solution

Refugees without any hope of local integration in the first country of asylum and cannot opt for voluntary repatriation in a foreseeable future.

4. Resettlement Allocations / Processing Priorities

The Government of Burkina Faso offers 100 places a year for an initial period of two (2) years which is renewable.

4.1 Case Documentation

The dossier of the case includes:

- a duly filled-in UNHCR "Resettlement Registration Form" (RRF)
- a letter covering the transmission of the individual case (IC) listing in detail the criteria which made the person eligible for refugee status and resettlement.

4.2 Routing of Submission

The dossier is transmitted to the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF) for study by the Committee on Eligibility either by the Resettlement Section in Geneva, or by the UNHCR Field Office, or through the diplomatic missions of Burkina Faso abroad.

When the application for resettlement involves a group of refugees, CONAREF after consultation with UNHCR, may designate one or two of its members for a mission to the first country of asylum to interview the candidates.

UNHCR is notified of the decision by the President or Vice President of CONAREF and/or by the Coordinator by delegation.

4.3 Recourse Processing

No recourse is possible should a case be rejected. However the dossier may be submitted a second time if the candidate can supply relevant additional information. The same dossier cannot be re-examined after two rejections.

4.4 Processing Times

All applications are processed during the regular sessions of the Committee on Eligibility.

5. Emergency Cases

When there is an urgent need for resettlement, the Committee on Eligibility meets after consulting the President of CONAREF.

6. Family Reunification of Refugees

It is granted automatically for members of a nuclear family.

It is granted to other persons upon presentation of documents proving the degree of the relationship. Also granted if the presence of the candidate for family reunification is judged to be necessary for the resettled refugee.

6.1 Routing of Applications

Members of the family who are in Burkina Faso initiate the request and submit it to UNHCR. The application is then transmitted to CONAREF for examination and decision.

6.2 Verification of relationships

It is carried out on the basis of marriage or birth certificates, guardianship acts, adoption certificates. When such certificates are not available, an attestation of UNHCR Delegation in the first country of asylum and/or a sworn declaration is indispensable.

7. Medical Requirements

Persons accepted for resettlement will go through medical screening. CONAREF will take all the necessary measures so that a person granted resettlement and with particular health requirements will be received in appropriate medical structures. Costs for the examination and health care are covered by the project.

8. Travel

All travel costs are borne by the project. It is UNHCR that organises the travel in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

9. Status on Arrival

When they arrive the competent authorities deliver to the accepted candidates a refugee identity card (RIC) which is the equivalent to permanent residence. Resettled refugees may opt for naturalization in accordance with the laws in force in Burkina Faso.

All resettled refugees may solicit voluntary repatriation and, to this end, have the benefit of assistance from UNHCR according to the procedure in force at that time.

10. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

10.1 Actors

CONAREF, UNHCR and designated partners.

10.2 Orientation

The purpose of the resettlement project is to offer the best conditions for the development of the accepted candidate. Burkina Faso does everything it possibly can to give the resettled refugee the same opportunity as the national citizen in order to facilitate a rapid integration in the society of the country.

The resettled refugee is received by the Social Orientation Service of CONAREF or by the designated partner immediately after the first few weeks of arrival.

10.3 Reception

Refugees selected for resettlement are received at points of entry at the frontiers by CONAREF and UNHCR and taken to their places of residence.

10.4 Basic Needs

10.4.1 Housing

Resettled refugees are taken to places previously determined by the Government authorities. The places of residence are chosen in order to achieve effective integration taking also into account the refugee's profile.

Burkina Faso being the official country of residence of resettled refugees, travel documents are established for those who have a right to them in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention.

Burkina Faso guarantees freedom of movement within the national territory as long as the customs and habits of the local population are respected and national security is not threatened.

10.4.2 Health

Resettled refugees have access to health care and services under the same conditions as nationals.

10.4.3 Education/Vocational Training

Resettled refugees have access to education and vocational training under the same conditions as nationals.

10.4.4 Other Needs

During the first months of their arrival, resettled refugees receive assistance with food, clothing and domestic goods. Such assistance is modulated according to the needs of the concerned persons.

11. Language Training

When necessary, the project provides courses in the official language of Burkina Faso and in one of the national languages practised in the place of residence.

12. Integration Activities / Employment

Burkina Faso treats resettled refugees on the same footing as nationals in matters regarding agricultural or commercial activities.

As for employment in the public sector, resettled refugees are only allowed to exercise jobs with contracts limited in time according to article 5 of ZATU N028/FP/PRES of 3 August 1988 on the status of refugees.

13. Resources

UNHCR finances this pilot project. Nevertheless bilateral donors, NGOs and members of the civil society and sponsors will be solicited for assistance as well.