



URUGUAY

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
URUGUAY



Overview Uruguay:

Resettlement Programme Since: 2009	Selection Missions: Yes	Dossier Submissions: No
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2013 Total resettlement admissions target:

Admissions goal for UNHCR presentations:	30 persons
Total goal for resettlement admissions:	30 persons

Regional allocations for 2013:

Africa	
Asia	
MENA	
Europa	
America	30

Sub-quota characteristics:

Designated sub-quota/reason for acceptance	
Emergency resettlement procedures	
Medical cases	
Cases of women at risk	
Unaccompanied minors	
Family reunification (within the programme)	

1. Resettlement Policy**1.1 Description of the country's resettlement policy**

The government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, within the framework of respect and protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in observance of international laws for the protection and integration of refugees, in the interest of strengthening international solidarity and finding lasting solutions to problems facing refugees, has agreed in conjunction with the UNHCR to establish a refugee resettlement programme in Uruguay. The programme aims to meet the needs of refugees whose life, safety, freedom and other fundamental human rights are threatened in their country of refuge, to facilitate their integration into Uruguayan society based on self-reliance and a positive contribution to local society.

1.2 Ministries or departments responsible for resettlement policy

The study and selection of candidates for resettlement is the responsibility of the Refugee Commission (CORE), consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior (National Directorate of Immigration), the University of the Republic, the legislative branch and one representative of an NGO appointed by the Regional Representative of UNHCR and other by an NGO whose aim and practice is focused on human rights. UNHCR or its representative will act as guests, with voice but no vote. The structure, jurisdiction and operation of the CORE are regulated by Law 18.076 of December 19, 2006. The Ecumenical Service for Human Dignity (SEDHU), UNHCR's implementing partner in Uruguay, is charged with monitoring, support and services to resettled people.

1.3 Process of determining the annual resettlement quota and composition

Resettlement applications are submitted by UNHCR to the CORE on the basis of the resettlement criteria in Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook (2004)¹. The number of people to resettle and resettlement criteria are established in the Framework Agreement on Refugee Resettlement concluded between UNHCR and Uruguay in 2006. The selection mission process, from receiving applications through the arrival of refugees in the country, takes about 6 months.

2. Eligibility Criteria for Recognition of Refugee and Asylum Status

2.1 National legislation that defines eligibility for refugee status

Law 18.076 on the Refugees' Right to Asylum of December 19, 2006 defines and regulates refugee status in accordance with the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, its 1967 Protocol, and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984.

The beneficiaries of the resettlement programme signed with UNHCR must be refugees under the terms of the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the Cartagena Declaration of 1984.

3. Resettlement Criteria

3.1 Eligibility criteria for refugee resettlement

The eligibility criteria for resettlement are set out in Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2004: the need for legal and physical protection and refugees without local integration prospects².

In 2011 the Government added the Women-at-Risk criteria.

In the second half of the year, Uruguay will start a pilot program for rural resettlement. The eligibility criteria for resettlement will be also the need for legal and physical protection combined with some additional criteria such as lack of integration prospects. The first 2 families that will be resettled under this new program are expected to arrive next September.

¹ The UNHCR Resettlement Handbook was revised in July 2011. The categories for consideration of resettlement are currently contained in Chapter 6 of the Handbook.

² According to the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook revision conducted in July 2011, the categories for considering resettlement are currently spelled out in Chapter 6 of the Handbook, and consist of the following: the need for legal and physical protection, survivors of violence and/or torture, refugees with medical needs, women at risk, family reunification, unaccompanied children and adolescents, and refugees with no prospect of alternative long-term solutions.

3.2 Admissibility criteria

There are no special criteria for admissibility.

4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

4.1 Resettlement allocations

The programme in its original stage provided for the resettlement of 15 persons a year during the first two years of the programme, with the possibility of extending the quota.

Until 2011 vulnerable cases, such as refugee Women-at-Risk (W-a-R), had not been included in the Solidarity Resettlement Program in Uruguay, due to the fact that Uruguay was waiting for the completion of the first two-year phase of the experience.

In 2011, during the Twinning Meeting held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in August 2010, Uruguay expressed its willingness to proceed with a resettlement programme for Women-at-Risk in 2011. The programme was designed for the resettlement of 5 cases (approx. 15 persons).

To date (2013) Uruguay has resettled 4 cases under the programme W-a-R.

4.2 Processing priorities

Priority is given to the resettlement needs of refugees from Latin America.

5. Refugee Presentation and Processing Through Dossier Selection

5.1 Policies on dossier case presentation

UNHCR will present the dossier, duly completed and signed by the individual, to CORE, together with all the documentation that is relevant and appropriate. CORE will review cases and decide whether an exception will take place and the parties may be selected without a personal interview.

5.2 Processing deadlines

CORE will make decisions on cases, based on available information, in a period not exceeding 60 days from receipt of applications, which it will then communicate to the UNHCR. The UNHCR may request a review of the case if it is rejected, on the basis of additional information provided by the latter.

The departure and arrival of those accepted for resettlement is coordinated by UNHCR and SEDHU, with the former responsible for travel expenses.

The State will provide all necessary resources to resettled refugees with respect to entry and legal residency. The Interior Ministry will streamline entry procedures and documentation for refugees. The Permanent Secretariat of CORE, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and SEDHU, is responsible for providing documents.

6. Presentation and Processing of Refugees Through Selection Missions

6.1 Selection Mission policies

The selection process missions shall be performed in the first country of refuge to facilitate the case assessments, provide information on the scope of the programme and living conditions in Uruguay, and start the process of integration of refugees. These selection missions follow the process described in the previous paragraph after CORE screens cases from among candidates nominated by the UNHCR.

7. Emergency/Urgent Cases

When there is an urgent need for legal and physical protection, UNHCR may present cases to CORE to be analyzed on the basis of existing documentation. The corresponding decision must be made within a month. So far, this procedure has not been applied.

8. Special Categories/Specific Needs

There are no sub-quotas assigned for cases with special needs.

9. Medical requirements

There are no pre-departure medical requirements.

10. Orientation

Information on living conditions in Uruguay, the general characteristics of the country's population, climate, cost of living, job prospects, education, health, and other aspects of interest is provided during the interviews. An educational video is shown and questions and concerns are addressed.

11. Travel

The UNHCR assumes responsibility for the coordination of travel and costs. This organization works with SEDHU to coordinate dates of departure and arrival, and reception of refugees at the port of entry.

Refugees accepted for resettlement only have access to the travel document issued by the country of refuge with the support of UNHCR.

12. Situation on Arrival and Paths for Obtaining Citizenship

12.1 Situation facing immigrants on arrival

Resettled persons enter the country with refugee status granted by CORE, and are under its and the UNHCR's protection.

12.2 Documentation issued

Entering refugees will be granted an identity card and a travel document, the first issued by the National Directorate of Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, and the second by the Bureau of Consular Affairs, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to Article 74 of the Constitution, men and women born anywhere in the territory of the Republic are considered citizens. As such, children born to refugees after their arrival are given identity cards issued by the National Civil Identification Bureau.

12.3 The requirements for obtaining citizenship

Resettled people can obtain legal citizenship by meeting the conditions of Section 75 of the Constitution: good behavior, with a family established in the country, having capital or property in the country or skilled in any science, art or industry and with 3 years of residence in the Republic; good behavior, without a family established in the country, some of the above qualities and residing for five years in the Republic; or obtain special permission from the legislature for outstanding service or outstanding merit. An individual may exercise the full rights of citizenship three years after legal citizenship papers have been issued.

13. Settlement in the Country and Community Services

13.1 Services and actors

Once refugees are in the country, support services and assistance are provided by SEDHU, which offers them guidance and information needed to start their life in the country, as well as legal advice in various areas of interest.

13.2 Reception

Upon arrival in Uruguay, refugees are received by SEDHU staff, which accompanies them to their temporary accommodations.

13.3 Guidance

Guidance is provided in all areas of interest at any point after arrival.

13.4 Housing

Preliminary housing is provided, consisting of a centrally located hotel in the city of Montevideo, until permanent housing is found. Information is provided on real estate and rental options. SEDHU usually prepares a list of options for house or apartment rentals in coordination with local real estate agencies, and, if necessary, SEDHU staff accompanies refugees on visits to choose a home. People are free to choose the home that best suits their needs and expectations, within the budget they have available as part of the aid they receive from the programme.

13.5 Health

Refugees can access public health services available to the entire population.

13.6 Language learning

To date, as only Spanish-speaking refugees have been resettled, there has been no need for language instruction.

13.7 Education

Children and adults have full access to the public education system, from elementary school through college, on an equal basis with the local population.

13.8 Vocational training and employment

The same as the previous applies for training and refresher courses. Financial assistance is provided for adult job training as deemed necessary and useful for insertion into the labor market.

There are no special employment programs for resettled refugees, which must seek employment under the same conditions as the local population.

13.9 Financial assistance

UNHCR provides financial support to refugees for their first year to meet basic needs, such as shelter, food and clothing, in order to facilitate their integration into local society. Thereafter, they must fend for themselves.

In the case of Women-at-Risk (W-a-R) monetary assistance is given for a period of two years. This is a full monthly stipend for the first 12 months, and a gradually decreasing monthly stipend for the remaining 12 months. Considering the vulnerability of Women-at-Risk (W-a-R) and the enhanced challenges they face as heads of household and/or single parents, it is deemed that, in their case, reaching the necessary level of empowerment to claim self-sufficiency requires double the time than in regular cases.

14. Refugee Family Reunification

14.1 Legislation related to rights and restrictions on family reunification

The right to family reunification is awarded to the refugee's spouse, partner, children and other relatives by consanguinity within the fourth degree, and to the second degree by marriage, in accordance with article 21 of Law 18.076 on the Refugees' Right to Asylum. To the extent that article 6 of the Framework Agreement for the Resettlement of Refugees with UNHCR refers to the current rules for granting this right to the family of resettled refugees, the definition of family reunification embodied in Law 18.076 is considered applicable to resettlement.

Article 21 of Law 18.076 Act determines the eligibility of family members for reunification, within the limits defined by application of exclusion clauses or cessation of refugee status.

Family reunification cases are not considered within the resettlement quota. Applications for family reunification are filed by the refugee in the Uruguay, and are channeled through the Regional Office of UNHCR. The annual quota of 15 people has currently been met by family groups, so there have been no cases of family reunification.

14.2 Case documentation

The required documentation consists of the information requested on the UNHCR Family Reunification Form and photocopy of documents verifying the family ties with the refugee seeking reunification. As there have been no cases of refugees applying for family reunification, a time frame cannot be estimated. However, since requests are transmitted through UNHCR offices, the time will depend largely on the latter, while with respect to application processing within the country, once CORE receives the request and documentation, it will provide a resolution as quickly as possible.

14.3 Rights of family members

Travel assistance will be provided in the same way as for refugees resettled through IOM. Economic assistance upon arrival will differ from that provided to resettled refugees. Depending on the particular situation and vulnerability of the case, as well as the budgetary situation and authorization of UNHCR, the family's budget may or may not include corresponding increases for the reunited members of the household. Upon arriving for family reunification, family members are also recognized as refugees in our country.

15. References, Resources

- <http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/htmlstat/pl/acuerdos/acue-ap-34955.htm>
- Law 18.076 on the Refugees' Right to Asylum:
<http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=18076&Anchor=>