



# Welcome to Europe!

## A Guide to Resettlement:

A Comparative Review of Resettlement in Europe



Endurbúseta áttaleptís Resettlement Réin stallation Hervestíng Reasentamiento Reinsedlamiento  
Umstíðlunng Réinstallaçáo Undlleensíjótíamínen Gjenbasetning Genbasetning Vidarebosättning  
Přesídlování Genbosætning Hervestíng Endurbúseta Resettlement Vidarebosättning Áttaleptís

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## Foreword

# Welcome to Europe!

## 'A Comparative Review of Resettlement in Europe'

EU humanitarian assistance provides essential emergency relief in refugee situations around the globe. Such assistance, as exemplified through resettlement efforts undertaken by EU Member States after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, highlights the considerable impact of the EU's solidarity with other countries. The EU's combined support will continue to be of vital importance in strengthening the capacity of host countries to respond to refugees' needs for resettlement, as well as other durable solutions.

Resettlement is an important and integral part of the external dimension of EU asylum policy. As UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner of Protection emphasised at the 2007 meeting of UNHCR's Executive Committee, 'While fewer than one per cent of the world's refugees may be resettled in any given year, resettlement is an important protection tool, a durable solution and a concrete manifestation of responsibility-sharing'.<sup>1</sup> However, resettlement in EU Member States must be a complement to—and not a substitute for—the provision of protection where needed to persons who apply for asylum in the EU. In this context, it is hoped that further development of the Common European Asylum System will help to reinforce the crucial role of resettlement in Europe. In this connection, the emphasis placed on the future scope for resettlement by part of the European Commission's Green Paper of June 2007<sup>2</sup> is welcome.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by Ms Erika Feller, Assistant High Commissioner of Protection, United Nations High Commission for Refugees, at the Fifty-eighth Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 3 October 2007. See <http://www.unhcr.org/admin/ADMIN/4704d4f32.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> COM(2007)301 final of 6.6.2007.

UNHCR views its NGO partners as 'strategic partners, not implementing ones'.<sup>3</sup> UNHCR is pleased to be working together with NGOs to promote resettlement on the European continent through advocacy efforts, as well as direct engagement of stakeholders through training and operational capacity-building. The ICMC–UNHCR partnership has been a positive example of a partnership in resettlement, exemplified in particular through the UNHCR–ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme. Indeed, the integral role of NGOs develops public support for resettlement and underpins the integration of resettled refugees.

At present, seven EU Member States are currently engaged in resettlement efforts (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and UK), in addition to Norway and Iceland. Several other Member States have recently expressed interest in undertaking new resettlement activities and UNHCR hopes that the support for resettlement offered by the new European Refugee Fund will encourage more Member States to engage in resettlement.

This publication will serve to reinforce the essential role of resettlement in Europe. In the long run, access to resettlement should not only decrease the potential for secondary movements for refugees who have not found effective protection in countries of 'first asylum', but also reduce their exploitation by human traffickers. UNHCR hopes that readers will be inspired to promote resettlement as part of a comprehensive approach to refugee protection in Europe, linked not only to the Common European Asylum System, but also to the entire range of migration issues as well as the other 'durable solutions'.

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UNHCR

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<sup>3</sup> Opening Statement by Mr António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at the Fifty-eighth Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 1 October 2007.

See <http://www.unhcr.org/admin/ADMIN/4700eff54.html>.



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We hope that this guide will be widely used and be an input for future European resettlement activities and training.

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## **Introduction**

# **Welcome to Europe!**

## **And to this guide to European resettlement practices**

“Welcome to Europe!” These are generous words, offering hospitality and community to people from other lands. They also express confidence in the value of a region and bear witness to human commitment and future vision. For men, women and children who have fled for their lives from persecution and violence in their own lands, they are words of rescue, of new life and hope; an invitation to join and contribute to a new society.

Around 5,500 refugees are welcomed in a number of European countries each year through established resettlement programmes. Such programmes work with the UN refugee agency to identify, prepare and bring to Europe individuals who have been forced to leave their own countries and who lack any reasonable prospect either of returning to their country of origin, or of staying in the country to which they had fled. Considered a durable solution, resettlement in a “third country” is a lasting welcome for people in need of international protection.

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) presents this publication with great appreciation for the efforts of all those organisations and bodies which are working to expand Europe’s welcome to an increased number of refugees. The guide describes how resettlement actually works in Europe today, from the commitment of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to the work that governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) do as partners in resettlement. It is produced as a follow-up to the ICMC resettlement training, organised in collaboration with UNHCR, which united participants from governmental bodies and NGOs from three resettlement countries—Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden—with three countries that are considering implementation of a resettlement programme—the Czech Republic, Italy and Spain. The training itself was a key component of the larger ICMC project, *“Practical Cooperation for a European Resettlement Network”*, partly financed by the European Commission.

This publication offers an overview of the UNHCR framework for resettlement, field experiences, perspectives and the knowledge of a number of European NGOs and

government staff working in resettlement programmes, a country-by-country description of existing resettlement programmes, partners and practices in the countries currently conducting resettlement in Europe, an elaboration of practices widely recognised as best practices in their specific country context and a number of topics of further interest for research and/or follow-up in Europe.

It is the first time that much of the information regarding resettlement throughout Europe has been gathered and presented in this manner, and we are grateful to the European Commission for their support in the many efforts that have contributed to the publication of this comprehensive guide. We sincerely hope that the joint efforts of the Commission, UNHCR, contributing government bodies and partner organisations of this European NGO network will encourage more European governments to implement this durable solution and that the quality and the range of services offered within refugee resettlement programmes may be further developed and increased.

ICMC is deeply committed to that goal, within its mission of serving and protecting refugees and other uprooted people regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality. Established by the Catholic Church in the very same year as the international Refugee Convention and UNHCR, ICMC has processed and accompanied over a million resettled refugees in the last 56 years—most notably in Europe following the Second World War, in Southeast Asia during the 1980s, in the Balkans at the turn of the millennium, and in the Middle East today. In Turkey, India, Lebanon and Pakistan, ICMC conducts resettlement processing for hundreds of refugees each year from a broad region of the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and prepares them for resettlement to a new home country. In 2006-07, the ICMC Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) in Turkey alone accounted for nearly one-half of the Iraqi refugees accepted for resettlement by the United States. Acutely aware that less than 1% of the world's refugees benefit from these programmes, ICMC is strongly committed to assisting the most vulnerable through individual assistance, anti-trafficking and programmes for specific vulnerable groups, such as women at risk. ICMC also deploys experts in over 30 countries around the world to assist UNHCR in identifying, assessing and referring refugees for resettlement, as well as for other durable solutions.

Finally, ICMC members and partners in receiving countries work to achieve the end goal of successful resettlement: helping refugees to build a new life, to integrate

within and contribute to the country that has so graciously said, **"Welcome!"**

***Johan Ketelers***

Secretary General

ICMC



# Welcome to Europe!

**A Comparative Guide to Resettlement**



International Catholic  
Migration Commission  
Europe

Endurbússeta áttaleptíðs Resettlement Reinslallan Hervestiging Resensamíento Reinsdíameto  
Umstedlling Reinslallagðo Undalleensjöftamínen Gjenbøsetting Genbøsetning Vidarebøsetting  
Presfólvarní Genbøsetning Hervestiging Endurbússeta Resettlement Vidarebøsetning Áttaleptíðs

## Chapter 1—UNHCR -Framework for Resettlement, Updated in 2009

States have the primary responsibility for protecting refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works to ensure that governments take all actions necessary to protect refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern who are on their territory or who are seeking admission to their territory. UNHCR, the sole international organisation mandated to protect refugees globally, also strives to secure durable solutions for refugees so that they can resume their normal lives. Statistical information and figures in this chapter were gathered from UNHCR sources and are listed in the references section.

### 1.1 International Protection

The international protection of refugees begins with securing admission to a country of asylum, the granting of asylum and ensuring respect for their fundamental human rights. The latter includes the right not to be forcibly returned to a country where one's safety or survival is threatened also known as the principle of *non-refoulement*.

**International protection** can be defined as:

All actions aimed at ensuring the equal access to and enjoyment of the rights of women, men, girls and boys of concern to UNHCR, in accordance with the relevant bodies of law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

*(An Introduction to International Protection. UNHCR, August 2005. p. 7)*

The core of international refugee law is the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol*; it is the only universal treaty that defines a specific regime for those in need of international protection. The universal definition of a refugee and the principle of **non-refoulement** are fundamental components of the 1951 Convention.



### The 1951 definition of a refugee (*art.1 A(2) 1951 Convention*)

- Someone who is outside his/her country of origin
- and has a well-founded fear of persecution
- because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion
- and is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution

It requires States to cooperate with UNHCR and lists the rights and obligations of refugees; for example, protection must be extended to all refugees without discrimination and minimum standards of treatment must be observed in relation to refugees. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol do not, however, stipulate the method by which refugee status determination and the identification of refugees should be conducted. The determination process, therefore, varies greatly between countries. It is the primary responsibility of States to determine within their jurisdiction who is a refugee. UNHCR may conduct refugee status determination under its mandate when a State is unable or unwilling to do so. This is often the case when States are not parties to the 1951 Convention or other key refugee instruments. In 2008, the total population of concern to UNHCR was some 34,4 million people. The number of refugees under the UNHCR's direct responsibility was 10,5 million at the year's end. In addition, some 4,7 million Palestinian refugees are not included in this number as Palestinian refugees generally fall under the UNRWA Mandate.<sup>1</sup> The majority of refugees of concern and of people in refugee-like situations (10,5 million)<sup>2</sup> can be found in Asia and Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 13,000 Palestinians refugees in Iraq fall under the UNHCR Mandate.

<sup>2</sup> As of 2007, the methodology for estimating the number of refugees of concern in industrialised countries was modified so that those refugees arriving through resettlement programmes are no longer included in the figures. In addition, where figures are based on UNHCR estimates, a cut-off period of 10 years is implemented for refugees in industrialised countries. Finally, those who are considered to be in a refugee-like situation are now included in a sub-group under the general refugee population of concern. See FICSS, UNHCR, 2007 Global Trends, Geneva, June 2008.

**Voluntary repatriation:** refugees return voluntarily, with dignity and under secure conditions to their country of origin.

**Local integration:** the country of asylum provides residency with the prospect of becoming a naturalized citizen.

**Resettlement:** refugees are transferred from the country of asylum to a third State willing to admit them on a permanent basis with the prospect of becoming a naturalized citizen.

### **Comprehensive Approach to Durable Solutions**

The second part of UNHCR's mandate is to promote **durable solutions** to refugees' problems. These solutions seek to end the cycle of displacement by resolving their plight so refugees can lead normal lives with basic fundamental rights ensured. Durable solutions take the form of voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement.

It is important to note that there is **no hierarchy** among these three durable solutions although there is an order of application. The three solutions are complementary in nature and when applied together can form a viable and comprehensive strategy for resolving a refugee situation within a protection framework, referred to in the *Agenda for Protection (discussed below)*. This means, for example, while voluntary repatriation is ongoing for a certain refugee population, specific individuals or groups of refugees within this population can be considered for resettlement. Although UNHCR has a role in relation to each of the durable solutions, the success of any one of them is dependent on the participation of various actors, primarily concerned states. One **example** that illustrates the three solutions working in a complementary and simultaneous nature is the programme for Afghan refugees in the early 2000s. Once the need for protection ceased, UNHCR promoted voluntary repatriation for the refugee population in general. At the same time, however, a continued need for protection of specific Afghan refugees was acknowledged and UNHCR advocated for local integration and resettlement in third countries for some refugees while repatriation was ongoing.

## 1.2 Resettlement

Resettlement is geared primarily to the specific needs of refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in the country where they sought refuge, guided by UNHCR's **resettlement criteria** (see *Chapter 5 in the 2007 edition of this guide*). The decision to resettle a refugee is normally made only in the absence of other options such as voluntary repatriation and local integration, or where resettlement is the only viable solution to the pressing protection problems of a refugee. Resettlement can be used strategically or in concert with other durable solutions, which can lead to an optimal solution for the individual or refugee groups in question. Indeed, resettlement becomes a priority when there is no other way to guarantee the legal or physical security of the person concerned. The whole **process of resettlement** can be defined as:

The selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them—as refugees—with permanent residence status. The status provided should ensure protection against *refoulement* and provide a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. It should also carry with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.

*(UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2006)*

Very few refugees, less than one percent of the total refugee population, benefit from resettlement. Nevertheless, resettlement fulfils three equally important **objectives**:

- **Tool of refugee protection**—providing individual protection to refugees or refugee families with specific and immediate protection needs.

Extract from the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCFR) 2007 brochure on resettlement in the Netherlands:

*Rana has lived in Syria since the age of four. She and her family fled their Iraq, in 1979 because her father feared for his life. Rana's father has always been an active member of the opposition but when Saddam Hussein came to power opposition was not tolerated. During a raid at their grandparents' house looking for opposition members, her father managed to escape through the backdoor. They left Iraq immediately after the raid and finally ended up in Syria. Life in Syria was not easy but they felt safe. Her father continued his political activities, travelling between Syria and Iraq. When during the late 90s relations between the Syrian and the Iraqi Government improved, their situation worsened; the secret*

- **Durable solution**—providing a solution for refugees in the absence of or in parallel with other durable solutions.

*Gaston fled the ethnic violence in Burundi in 1972 for Tanzania along with thousands of other Hutu Burundians. After more than 30 years, he still is there. He married and he and his wife have had three children in the meantime but nothing else has changed. He still finds himself in the same refugee camp, with no access to proper employment, no proper education opportunities for his children, and without freedom of movement. Building a life in this situation is simply not possible. Returning home to Burundi is not a realistic option either. Gaston has no links anymore with his country. When he fled he was still a child and the few memories that remain are those of war, violence and fear. He lost most of his family members; having been born in Tanzania, his children have no attachment to Burundi. Finally, Gaston and his family have been given the opportunity to resettle to a third country where they can lead normal lives and start thinking about a future.*

*The situation in Burundi and Tanzania is real and though the story is based refugees' experiences, the characters are fictitious.*

- **International responsibility-sharing**—easing the strain on the country of asylum

through responsibility-sharing and solidarity among States by employing a combination of the following approaches:

- Efficient and/or strategic resettlement to third countries (ex. through group resettlement)
- Financial assistance for repatriation and/or local integration
- Aid for the rehabilitation of refugee host countries following return of refugees

*Due to their geographical proximity, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon are at the frontline of the Iraqi refugee crisis, having already taken in over two million Iraqi refugees (estimate). By resettling Iraqi refugees from these countries, the responsibility to provide protection and a durable solution can be shared internationally. Although the EU did not promptly respond to the Iraqi Crisis, the November 2008 EU Council Conclusions encouraged Member States to make a commitment to resettle 10 000 refugees from Iraq, prioritising vulnerable cases, minorities and Palestinians. Inciting a momentous response, these Conclusions preceded the decisions of several non-resettlement countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Italy) to engage in ad-hoc resettlement of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees.<sup>3</sup>*

Resettlement can assist in creating a better understanding of the plight of refugees in general among the citizens of countries away from situations of war and persecution. The important contribution that refugees can make to their new countries is not emphasised enough. Refugees bring important skills and diversity that enrich and benefit the resettlement country when acknowledged and utilised. Recently, integration programmes have been giving attention to the involvement of refugees as active members of society and better use of their contributions, this topic is further discussed in Chapter 5 of the 2007 edition of this guide.

A refugee does not have a right to resettlement and States are not legally obliged to resettle refugees. Today a small number of States, only 21 countries, operate established **resettlement programmes** providing resettlement places on an annual basis. Each of these States sets its own regulations and procedures in respect to the resettlement of refugees, which do not necessarily correspond with the resettlement criteria and related considerations of UNHCR. Even so, UNHCR's guidelines on resettlement are

<sup>3</sup> Council Conclusions on the reception of Iraqi refugees, Justice and Home Affairs Council, November 27-28, 2008.

endorsed by the international community and uphold humanitarian principles.

### **Strategic Use of Resettlement**

As already mentioned, when considering the application of durable solutions, only a minority of the world's refugees can be expected to secure a durable solution through third-country resettlement. In order to maximise benefits accrued from resettlement, where possible, it should be planned in the context of a strategic and/or comprehensive solution. The **strategic use of resettlement** has been defined as:

*'The strategic use of resettlement is the planned use of resettlement in a manner that maximizes the benefits, directly or indirectly, benefits other than those received by the refugee being resettled. Those benefits may accrue to other refugees, the hosting state, other states or the international protection regime in general.'* (Standing Committee Paper, EC/53/SC/CRP.10/Add.1, pg. 2, Executive Committee of the UNHCR's Programme. 2003)

#### *Piloting for a joint EU Resettlement Scheme*

*The aforementioned EU resettlement effort initiated by the November 2008 Council Conclusions is an example of strategic use of resettlement. By resettling more refugees from Iraq, the EU has acted in solidarity with and has taken some of the burden off of asylum countries Syria and Jordan. In turn, these countries will be able to continue to give access to refugees seeking protection, while avoiding refoulement and guaranteeing access to fundamental human rights for those refugees who will not be resettled.*

### **Three durable solutions, One country—Tanzania**

*Tanzania is a time-honoured host of one of the largest refugee populations in the world. In early 2000, the number of refugees stood at 700 000. Through the use of all three durable solutions, the UNHCR and the Tanzanian Government have reduced the number of refugee camps from 11 in early 2007 to just four in 2009. Voluntary repatriation has been an answer for more than 350 Burundians and 60 000 Congolese. UNHCR must be sure that conditions are stable for the return of refugees, therefore it has increased its food assistance period and provides a cash grant to help refugees start over in their country of origin. Since 2007, resettlement has been the solution for more than 7 000 Burundians who have begun anew in the United States. As a third solution, the Tanzanian Government has accepted the assistance of the UNHCR in naturalising many Burundians who have lived in Tanzania since fleeing their country in 1972, in addition to a small group of Somali Bantus. Permanent residency, allows these refugees to locally integrate and seek a livelihood that is independent from the camp. Today the efforts at finding solutions for refugees must to continue, however the three-solution approach has certainly been successful: in 2008 less than half (or 322,000) of the total population in 2000 remained in Tanzanian refugee camps.*

The strategic use of resettlement does not necessarily mean the simultaneous use of all three durable solutions. There are situations where resettlement could be used as part of a package of durable solutions in order to create a comprehensive solution, which can occur when an entire population of refugees from the same country of origin in a given first asylum country secures a durable solution.

### Strategic use of resettlement—India

*UNHCR India has, since 1980, supported under its direct care one of the largest and most protracted urban refugee populations globally. In addition to Afghans who have been refugees in India for over 27 years, a continuing population of Myanmar refugees, arriving since 1989, is also present. In 2005, a concerted effort was made to identify realistic durable solutions for these two populations, many of whom had severe protection problems which worsened over the years in a harsh urban environment, and who could not return to Afghanistan or to Myanmar for protection-related reasons. India, which had allowed these populations to stay, was reluctant to provide local integration prospects for all, but in negotiation was willing to consider naturalisation for those refugees who were deemed to be of Indian origin (Hindus and Sikhs). Other refugees needed an alternative solution, and through proactive consultation with resettlement countries, UNHCR was able to negotiate that the majority would locally integrate through naturalisation, and remaining cases would leave India through resettlement to a third country. This arrangement, although not articulated formally, demonstrates responsibility-sharing in the search for durable solutions. The ability to negotiate local integration became possible as resettlement countries agreed to provide solutions for remaining cases. In turn, it addressed a stalemated situation by providing protection and a durable solution to refugees in exile for three decades. In doing so, the protection environment generally has now become more receptive to newly arriving refugees, notably from Myanmar and Iraq, who require full protection support. Both India and partner countries have appreciated the importance of collaboration, and the willingness to offer further protection for new cases is underlined by the understanding that this type of collaboration and responsibility-sharing is available.*

In order to attain strategic use of resettlement, with desirable and lasting outcomes, some elements should be taken into consideration:

- The global resettlement capacity needs to increase substantially. This can be done through an increase in the annual resettlement targets of existing resettlement countries but more importantly through the expansion of the number of resettlement countries, in order to diversify the resettlement opportunities



available to refugees.

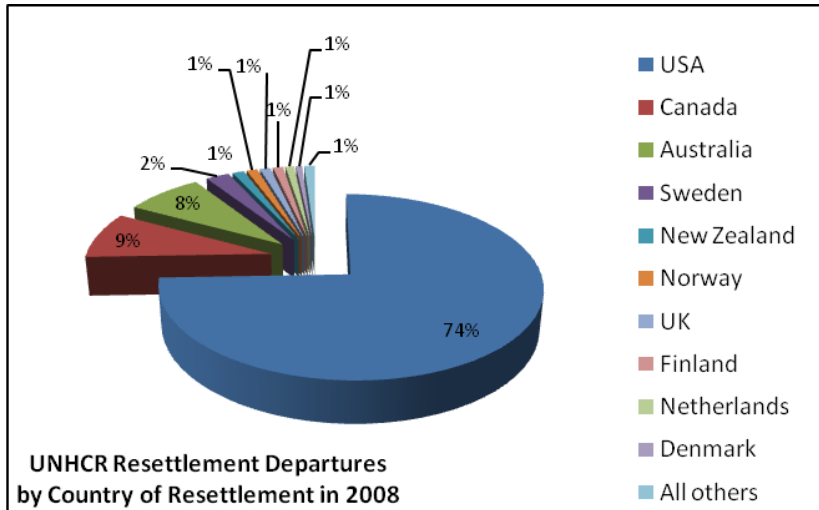
- There will be a greater need for consultation and collective decision-making in determining appropriate response to refugee outflows and the durable solution needs of a refugee situation.
- Different approaches to resettlement countries' selection criteria—if resettlement is going to be used strategically, more focus on group resettlement will be needed and flexibility from resettlement States in terms of admissions and in accordance with the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement.
- Through involvement in active partnerships with countries of first asylum, resettlement States may combine undertakings for resettlement with guarantees for additional benefits such as improvements for others in the refugee population.

### Global Resettlement Operations

As mentioned previously, there are currently **21 countries**, listed in the table below, that operate a resettlement programme, most of which maintain an annual resettlement quota.

Continent	Resettlement Countries
Asia	Australia and New Zealand ( <i>Japan is planning a pilot programme in 2009</i> )
Europe	EU: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania ( <i>pilot</i> ), Sweden and the United Kingdom Non-EU: Iceland and Norway
North America	Canada and the United States of America
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay

Refugee departures to 21 resettlement countries through annual programme quotas and to the 9 other countries implementing ad-hoc resettlement (in the form of humanitarian, family reunification and/or private sponsorship programmes), totalled approximately 88 800 persons in 2008. Ninety per cent of departures go to just three countries: Australia, Canada and the United States.



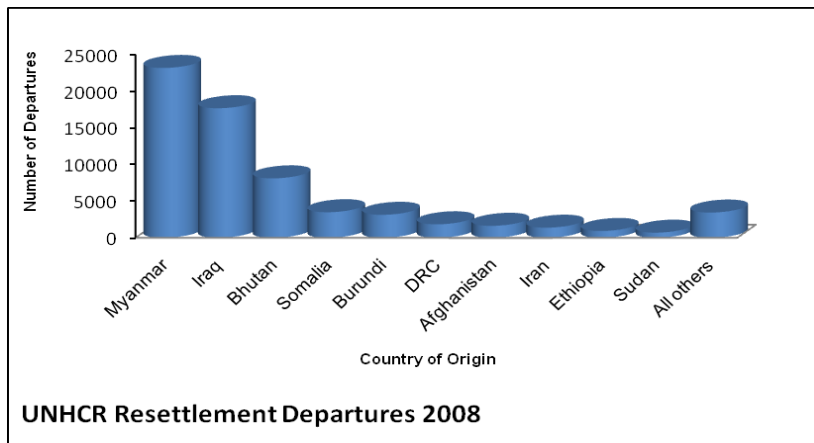
Source: Compiled by ICMC, based on UNHCR figures from 2009

The 'theoretical' resettlement capacity refers to the number of places allocated for resettlement by Governments; this number reached 100 000 places in 2008. Though 76 000 places were allocated for UNHCR submissions, only 67 000 refugees departed in the same year. Insufficient planning, lack of cooperation between actors and security procedures are among the factors that impede timely and complete use of annual quotas.

Some of these 21 countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and the United States of America, are considered **'traditional' resettlement countries** due to their long-standing programmes. A number of other countries established programmes in the past decade: Iceland, Ireland, and the UK in Europe, and Argentina, Brazil and Chile in Latin America. The most recent official resettlement programmes began in 2007 and

2008 in the Czech Republic, France, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania and Uruguay. Still other states, such as Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland occasionally accept refugees for resettlement but do not set annual targets, this is also referred to as ‘ad hoc’ resettlement.

In 2008, the majority of the 67 000 UNHCR assisted resettlement departures went to the USA (48 800),<sup>4</sup> Canada (5 700), Australia (5 100), Sweden (1 500), New Zealand (800) and Norway (700).<sup>5</sup> The number of departures has increased by 31 per cent when compared with the previous year. The total number of UNHCR submissions for 2008 was 121 500, up from 99 000 refugees submitted for resettlement in 2007. The largest groups according to country of origin submitted for resettlement in 2008 were Iraqis (33 500), Myanmarese (30 400) and Bhutanese (23 500). Following UNHCR submissions, the figure below demonstrates the number of resettlement departures according to country of origin in the same year.



Source: UNHCR Global Resettlement Statistical Report 2008 (provisional as of February 2009).

Submissions in this period came primarily from Asia & the Pacific, MENA (Middle

<sup>4</sup> Resettlement statistics for the United States, Canada and Australia may also include persons resettled for the purpose of family reunification or under humanitarian programmes (i.e. not at the request of UNHCR).

<sup>5</sup> Departures figures are displayed here due to the variability between the annual quota established and the actual number of departures. Figures of *accepted* refugees can be inaccurate when estimating the number of refugees benefiting from resettlement because those accepted for resettlement are not certain to arrive in the same year.

East and North Africa) and Africa. In 2008, less than half of the projected need for resettlement (154 701 persons) was met by resettlement countries. UNHCR had the capacity (human resources) to process and register 127 006 refugees for resettlement. To address this shortfall in the future, both the number of places provided by States and the UNHCR field capacity must increase. For 2009, the UNHCR estimated that 561 137 people around the world will be in need of resettlement.

The opening of an Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Timisoara, Romania in 2008 was a recent move to respond effectively to emergency cases and prevent *refoulement*. By temporarily evacuating refugees to Romania, a safe haven is provided for a maximum stay of six months for those refugees whose immediate safety or livelihood has been threatened. Emergency resettlement from the ETC will offer logistical benefits for countries. The centre received its first groups of refugees in November 2008. Since then, refugees have arrived from Iraq (Palestinians) and Libya (Eritreans and Sudanese). A total of 38 refugees have been resettled from the ETC with departures to Sweden, the USA and Canada. In July 2009, an additional transit centre was opened in Bratislava, Slovakia that will allow the reception and transfer of 98 Palestinians (who have fled Iraq) coming from the Al-Waleed camp in Syria where they have been stranded for six years. UNHCR discussions are currently being held to install another transit centre in the Philippines. Although the ETCs have only recently opened, several countries have expressed interest in resettlement facilitated through the centres.

### **Existing Mechanisms for Resettlement Planning**

UNHCR launched the **Global Consultations on International Protection** in late 2000 to engage States and other partners in a broad-ranging dialogue on how to best revitalise the existing international refugee protection regime for the 21<sup>st</sup> century while ensuring flexibility to address new problems. One of the principal outcomes of this process was the **Agenda for Protection** adopted in 2002. The *Agenda for Protection* contains various tools and approaches to bolster and improve protection for refugees worldwide. Two other initiatives are:

- **Convention Plus:** an initiative providing the tools to implement special

agreements, including Comprehensive Plans of Action that will bring together a mix of durable solutions in a strategic manner.

- **Multilateral Framework of Understanding on Resettlement:** prepared by the *Core Group on Resettlement* under the *Convention Plus Forum* to provide a framework that will guide deliberations on the adoption of special agreements with a set of delineated actions for the parties involved.

These initiatives created a new impetus for resettlement and strengthened the concepts of a comprehensive approach to durable solutions and the strategic use of resettlement.

In addition to the aforementioned frameworks, several mechanisms exist for the practical planning of resettlement. Each year UNHCR produces the **Projected Global Resettlement Needs** document to assist resettlement countries, NGO partners and UNHCR in planning their respective activities and the allocation of resettlement places and resources. This assessment is based on a yearly exercise undertaken by UNHCR Country Offices. For 2010, global resettlement needs are estimated at 747 000 persons. On the basis of a prioritisation, UNHCR estimates that out of this number, for 2010 alone, 203 000 persons will be in need of resettlement.

In order to improve, standardise and systematise the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, UNHCR has developed the **Heightened Risk Identification Tool** and baseline **Standard Operating Procedures** for use in Country Offices. The *Heightened Risk Identification Tool* is designed to increase UNHCR's effectiveness in identifying refugees who are at-risk and vulnerable by linking community-based participatory assessments and individual assessment methods. It should be noted that this tool was developed for use in a comprehensive manner and not solely for the purpose of resettlement need identification. The baseline *Standard Operating Procedures* will ensure a level of global standardisation, transparency and predictability in resettlement delivery.

The previously mentioned *Projected Global Resettlement Needs* document is shared with the resettlement countries as a precursor to the **Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR)** that is held each year in June. The ATCR is a conference bringing together the key players in resettlement (resettlement countries, NGO partners and UNHCR) to talk about resettlement issues. During the 2008 ATCR, working groups on certain resettlement-related issues were formed to discuss specific issues of mutual concern. The *Projected Global Resettlement Needs*

document is also the main reference document for the development of the **Indications Chart**, regularly updated throughout the year and used to indicate resettlement places offered by resettlement countries in response to identified needs. In conjunction with the ATCR, an *indications meeting* is held between resettlement countries and UNHCR to discuss specific populations in need of resettlement. The whole ‘indications process’ is designed to strengthen the coordination and management of the global resettlement programme and attempts to match UNHCR’s resettlement needs with the quotas or targets of resettlement countries.

During the year, the **Working Group on Resettlement (WGR)**, invites resettlement countries, to meetings in October and March to follow up on commitments made by States during the preceding ATCR and to revise commitments to respond to eventual new resettlement needs respectively.<sup>6</sup> In addition, **Regional Planning Meetings** are held annually in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. These meetings are organised in order to gather information on the current situation in each region, prepare for the coming year and allow for the exchange of experiences among staff from different operations. The meetings are attended by relevant resettlement staff from the field, regional offices and headquarters. One day is also set aside for discussions with resettlement countries and NGOs. This mechanism allows for a continuous dialogue between key players and for a systematic revisiting of the resettlement needs and places.

### **Protracted Refugee Situations**

In 2008, than 5.7 million refugees, or nearly 60 percent of the world’s refugee population, live in such a **state of prolonged limbo**. The UNHCR Standing Committee has defined a **protracted refugee situation** as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> NGOs are invited to participate in the March WGR.

A situation in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting state of limbo or a refugee camp population of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more consecutive years in developing countries. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance.

*(2004 Standing Committee Paper (EC/54/SC/CRP14))*

A total of 29 protracted refugee situations have been identified in the world, the majority located in very poor and unstable regions. Though the total number of refugee situations has decreased, refugees are spending longer periods in exile: rising from nine years in 1993 to 17 years at the end of 2003. Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest number of protracted refugee situations: 13 situations with a population of 1,4 million refugees. In terms of population, the CASWANAME region (Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East) has the highest number of refugees; 3,7 million refugees in 12 protracted refugee situations. The largest protracted refugee situations under UNHCR's mandate in terms of population are:

Pakistan (1 780 200 Afghans)

Iran (935 600 Afghans)

Chad (268 000 Sudanese)

Kenya (259 100 Somalis)

Tanzania (240 500 Burundians)

Saudi Arabia (240 000 Palestinians)

Venezuela (201 100 Colombians)

If we look at the causes of protracted refugee situations, three issues should be mentioned:

- Protracted refugee situations stem from **political action and inaction**, both in the country of asylum and in the country of origin.
- The traditional **durable solutions** —repatriation, integration and resettlement— are not necessarily viable options to resolve protracted refugee situations.
- Regional and international actors have no interest in getting involved in poor and

unstable areas. Consequently, the number of protracted refugee situations has multiplied in these areas. Linked to this is the issue of the **lack of media attention** that these so-called low-profile regions receive—there is a “chain reaction” between media attention, donor support and refugee livelihood.

The **consequences** of being confined to a refugee camp—often in isolated and insecure areas, with restrictions on movement and therefore with limited or no access to employment and education—are disastrous, creating a culture of dependence and rendering parts of the refugee population vulnerable to exploitation. A comprehensive approach to durable solutions and the strategic use of resettlement have been recognised as valuable tools in resolving protracted refugee situations. In 2008, UNHCR assisted the departure of 22 606 refugees in seven protracted situations where resettlement takes place and where the total number of refugees in 2006 was calculated at 2 290 000.<sup>7</sup> In addition, tools have been developed in connection with the reintegration of refugees and development assistance for refugees, emphasising in particular refugee self-reliance.

### **Group Resettlement**

UNHCR has expanded its efforts to create more resettlement opportunities for refugees by designing an approach for the identification and processing of groups for resettlement consideration without the submission of individual Resettlement Registration Forms (RRF). The framework for group resettlement is provided in the **UNHCR Methodology for Group Resettlement**. This Group Methodology is intended to assist in integrating and systematising enhanced resettlement efforts into UNHCR office operations and durable solutions planning. It aims to enhance and systematise the identification of refugee populations for whom resettlement may be an appropriate durable solution. The methodology also provides guidance with respect to **general parameters** that may assist in identifying a **potential group** for resettlement. Members of a group should ideally have the same nationality and ideally possess some sort of identification. Groups should also share common characteristics, be clearly delineated and finite, and be located in an area that is recognised and established. A recent example of the utilisation of group resettlement assisted by the UNHCR and negotiated in 2007 by the Core Group of resettlement countries addressed resettlement as a solution for the 107 000 **Bhutanese refugees**

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<sup>7</sup> Numbers of departures were not yet reported for Eritrean refugees coming from Sudan.



living in camps in eastern Nepal since the early 1990s. The agreement involved commitments to resettle Bhutanese refugees to the US (60 000 place), Canada (5 000 places) and Australia (5 000 places). The total number of arrivals to the US of Bhutanese in 2008 was 7 317.



# Welcome to Europe!

## A Comparative Guide to Resettlement



International Catholic  
Migration Commission  
Europe

Endurbúsara áttleipfrés Resettlement Réinstallation Hervestiging Reasenfamílió Reinsedliameto  
Umsiedlung Reinstalagáó Undheensjöftamínen Gjenbøseffing Genbøseffing Vidarebøsaáttíng  
Přesídlování Genbøsaáttíng Hervestiging Endurbúsara Resettlement Vidarebøsaáttíng Áttleipfrés

## Part II—Resettlement in Europe—the Road Ahead

### Introduction

The European share of global resettlement of refugees remains modest, with 5,610 places available in 2007. At present, nine European countries have active resettlement programmes, providing protection to refugees and offering them the chance to rebuild their lives in safety. In July 2007, Portugal announced the establishment of a resettlement programme, with a quota of 30 persons. As of this year, there are thus seven resettlement countries inside the European Union—Denmark, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom—while two, Norway and Iceland, are outside the EU.

Among the European programmes, the programmes in Iceland (1996), Ireland (1999) and the United Kingdom (2003) are relatively recent and have now become fully established. Looking at the European resettlement efforts for 2007, an analysis of results at the mid-year point suggests that most country quotas (except for Portugal, which is still unknown) would be filled by the end of the year.

#### European Resettlement Programmes—Resettlement Quotas 2007

Country	DK	FIN	GB	IRL	NL	P*	S	Total EU	IS	N	Total Europe
Quota	500	750	500	200	500	30	1900	4,380	30	1200	5,610

Source: Government Departments and Portuguese Refugee Council  
 (\*The Programme in Portugal was announced in July 2007)

## The Search for Durable Solutions:

### Making the case for why Europe should resettle more

As the European Union continues to advance its efforts to establish a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), its relations with countries outside the Union (**the External Dimension**) are becoming increasingly important. The internal EU asylum system should not be seen to operate in a vacuum; an **external component of solidarity**, i.e. sharing the responsibility for refugee protection with third countries, needs to be seen as complementary to the CEAS. The expansion of resettlement thus *adds* to the existing European and/or national systems that deal with the asylum seekers who have arrived and are making their protection claims within Europe. Resettlement must then never be seen in the context of negating the right to seek/enjoy asylum in Europe, or be considered as a potential substitute for States' obligations under international and European law. At the same time, resettlement is only one way of addressing the protection needs of refugees in regions of refugee origin. Comprehensive approaches towards the range of durable solutions (of which resettlement is only one) are required, which implies long-term development assistance inputs.

The European Commission, UNHCR, the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and a growing number of NGO organisations and other stakeholders are actively advocating for a **renewed EU commitment to resettlement**. Present refugee crises and an increased number of protracted refugee situations have resulted in UNHCR's identified resettlement needs currently outstripping the global number of available resettlement places. A tangible gesture of European responsibility-sharing, by means of an offer of additional resettlement places, is increasingly needed to respond to the protection needs of refugees in the world. In summary, the following key reasons demonstrate why Europe should become **more actively engaged in resettlement**:

- Through resettlement, Member States can offer **safe access to protection for those refugees most in need**: the most vulnerable, those who are at risk in the first country of asylum and those in protracted refugee situations.
- 6.5 million of the 9.9 million refugees of concern to UNHCR are estimated to live in developing countries. The EU Member States can **express their solidarity and take their share of responsibility**, in particular sharing the responsibility

with the countries of first asylum which host the vast majority of refugees in the regions of origin.

- **Resettlement forms part of the European humanitarian tradition.** European resettlement efforts have been undertaken by many European countries in the past, including countries like Belgium, France and Germany, and have addressed the urgent protection needs of refugees—for example, the 1956 Hungarian Crisis, the Chilean dissidents and the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indochinese refugees.
- **Europe's contribution to providing international protection to refugees has diminished.** Asylum applications in the EU have fallen considerably over the last five years, while at the same time the overall number of refugees worldwide is increasing. Europe has the absorption capacity and the proven capability to resettle refugees. Europe can do it, and should do much more.
- Through resettlement and international responsibility-sharing, Member States can prove to those countries that are receiving refugees that there exists a political will to assist third countries in their efforts. As such, the EU can promote **a strategic use of resettlement** which benefits all refugees, not just those eligible for resettlement. In this manner, resettlement can create **protection benefits** for the remaining refugees who are not going to be resettled..
- Resettlement has proved to be an important means of promoting **public understanding of refugees in general** and the **benefits** they bring to host countries. A deeper understanding of refugee realities globally, especially at local levels, can lead to increased civil society involvement and a more welcoming society (*see examples in Chapter 8*).

## The European Refugee Fund III:

### A new regime for the financing of resettlement activities

The European Refugee Fund (ERF) for the period 2008-2013 (also called ERF III), established by Decision No 573/ 2007/EC, will come into effect in January 2008 as part of the general programme “Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows”. The ERF III will be an important tool to support the expansion of resettlement in the European Union (EU). The European Commission has **defined resettlement** within the context of the new ERF. This provides helpful clarity to States and other actors engaged with the EU in resettlement, since in several Member States there is still a lack of understanding—if not outright misunderstanding—about the exact meaning of resettlement. (See *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook definition, Chapter 1.*)

#### *Special Definition of Resettlement for the Purposes of EU Funding*

The ERF III supports actions in Member States relating to the resettlement of persons ‘resettled or being resettled’. Actions can thus benefit 1) refugees who are in the process of being resettled and are still in the country of first asylum and 2) resettled refugees in Europe.

Article 3 (1) (d) of Decision No 573/ 2007/EC defines resettlement as: *the process whereby, on a request from UNHCR based on a person’s need for international protection, third-country nationals or stateless persons are transferred from a third country to a Member State where they are permitted to reside with refugee status (within the meaning of Article 2(d) of the European Union “Qualification Directive” 2004/83/EC) or a status which offers the same rights and benefits under national and Community law as refugee status.*

The definition stipulates two conditions which must be satisfied before an action can be classified as resettlement, and thus **eligible for financing under the ERF III**.

1. An eligibility assessment by UNHCR. Only actions undertaken by Member States for the resettlement of persons who have been **identified as eligible for resettlement by UNHCR, according to the criteria developed in the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook**, can be financed under the ERF III.
2. In addition, and in order to be considered as resettlement, Member States must grant persons resettled on their territory either **refugee status or an equivalent status offering the same rights and benefits**, so as to guarantee the

effectiveness and the durability of the protection solution.

The rights of refugees specified in the **European Union Qualification Directive**—such as social welfare and benefits, health treatment, education, etc.—are thus equally applied to resettled refugees.

It is clear that actions carried out as **intra-European Union burden-sharing** (for example with respect to the transfer of recognised refugees from Malta to another EU country) are **not** considered by the EU to be resettlement under this particular definition. These actions can, however, be financed under article 3 (e).

The ERF will be able to **support the whole range of activities** integral to resettlement, both in the third country and in the EU Member State. Articles 3(5) and (7) establish a range of actions that can be financed, such as:

- a) **The establishment of national resettlement programmes.** This can include actions such as the training of selecting officers, the development of specific integration programmes and private sponsorship programmes, training and capacity-building actions, as well as actions raising awareness among receiving communities and the general public;
- b) **The selection and transfer** of refugees to the Member States' territories. This can include actions such as conducting missions to the host country, interviews, medical and security screening, pre-departure orientation programmes, transportation of the resettled persons and their belongings;
- c) The provision to resettled persons of **appropriate reception conditions and integration measures**, including actions such as information and assistance immediately upon arrival, interpretation services, information packages and comprehensive cultural and civic orientation courses.

### *The Regime for Financial Support*

The upcoming ERF III considerably expands financial support measures for resettlement, either to initiate new programmes or to expand or improve existing ones. Additional financial support is provided for in Article 13 (3). Member States which resettle persons under the following categories will receive a one-off additional fixed amount of EUR 4,000 for each resettled person:

- a) Refugees from a country or region designated under the **Regional Protection Programmes (RPP)**

- b) For the resettlement of **certain vulnerable categories of persons**, in particular:
- Women at risk
  - Unaccompanied minors and other minors at risk for whom resettlement is determined to be in their best interest
  - Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement.

A Member State agreeing to resettle 20 refugees under one of these categories would thus receive a contribution of EUR 80,000. This funding must be used for resettlement in general but can be allocated to a range of activities. Funding is a **fixed amount**, regardless of whether a refugee falls under more than one category—a woman at risk with serious medical needs, for example. The additional support offered is an incentive to increase Member States' willingness to resettle vulnerable individuals. The ERF amount is, however, relatively modest. For example, the budget allocated by the UK Home Office per refugee is around EUR 15,000.

The Fund finances up to 50% of the supported projects, the remainder to be co-financed by public or private sources. The Fund's contribution may be increased to 75% for addressing specific priorities. The European Commission has defined three priorities for interventions under the ERF. **Priority 3** relates to **'actions which enhance responsibility-sharing between Member States and with third countries'**, thus intra-European burden-sharing and resettlement. Priority 3 is optional and Member States can indicate whether they wish to present programmes under this priority. For 2008, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have indicated that they will include resettlement in their multi-annual programme. Of the new resettlement countries, Portugal and Romania have indicated that they will request support to establish a resettlement programme.

Multi-annual programmes are approved by the European Commission and managed at national level by the **designated national authority**. According to articles 11 and 27, the national authority must **establish and consult with a 'partnership'**, including authorities and bodies involved in the implementation of the multi-annual programme. The partnership may include regional, local, urban and other public authorities, UNHCR and bodies representing civil society, such as NGOs or social partners.

Regardless of the importance of financial incentives given by the ERF III, the continued engagement and leadership of the European Commission will be essential to encouraging Member States to offer (or increase) resettlement places, as will



coordinated actions and initiatives by EU Member States to further define and implement joint programmes.

## The Regional Protection Programmes:

### First steps towards a European Resettlement Programme?

As part of the Programme for Freedom, Security and Justice for the years 2005-2010, to be known as the 'Hague Programme', the European Council called in 2004 for the development, in partnership and in close cooperation with UNHCR, of so-called *Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs)*. These programmes aim to strengthen the asylum systems in third countries and include a joint resettlement programme for EU Member States willing to participate in such a programme. RPPs focus on priority regions identified by the Member States. In September 2005, the European Commission issued a detailed proposal for *pilot* RPPs in identified priority regions, namely *Tanzania* (Great Lakes region), targeted both as a region of origin and a region of transit, and the *Western Newly Independent States (WNIS)*—Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus—and after considerable delays the two RPP pilot projects eventually started in January 2007.

Although projects have only recently started, the Commission is requested to evaluate the (preliminary) project results in 2008. Based on these, the Commission may develop a proposal for a more structured approach to resettlement activities. From January 2008 onwards, ERF III offers additional funding possibilities for EU Member States that pledge resettlement places in the context of RPPs (*see p.24 above*). In the WNIS countries as well as in Tanzania, UNHCR has already demonstrated its capacity to submit resettlement cases for 2007 and 2008. In 2008, UNHCR has an estimated capacity of around 1,500 persons from Tanzania and 425 from WNIS (mostly from Ukraine). Caseloads include vulnerable groups such as women at risk, children, people with special medical needs, and the elderly. It is strongly hoped that European governments will respond to the calls made by UNHCR and the European Commission to offer resettlement to a number of the cases identified. The RPP concept has been called for by the EU Member States, which now have the responsibility to make this still largely theoretical concept work in practice.

### *The Pilot Regional Protection Programme in Tanzania*

The pilot RPP in Tanzania was defined on the basis of the study *‘Identifying gaps in protection capacity in Tanzania’*, by UNHCR. The RPP programme, which started in 2007, aims to support a **comprehensive approach to ensure durable solutions** and includes the following actions:

Strengthening the protection capacity of the Tanzanian authorities

Improving security in refugee camps/host communities

Promoting the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees by providing information through radio and other means of mass communication

Enhancing access to resettlement

Facilitating the registration of all refugees in Tanzania

Increasing engagement from Tanzanian civil society

The **Netherlands** and **Denmark** both completed missions to Tanzania during 2007 and selected Congolese and Burundian refugees to be admitted through their respective programmes. The Netherlands is expected to conduct further selection missions to Tanzania in 2008, under its regular quota programme.

At the same time, the **United States** is resettling **13,000 of the so-called ‘1972 Burundians’** (those who have suffered multiple displacements during the past 35 years), within a **‘group resettlement’** plan for the period 2006-2009. After more than 30 years of exile, these refugees will be accepted for resettlement and will be able to rebuild their lives in the US. It is hoped that the Member States can learn from this ‘group resettlement’ experience in the context of a joint resettlement programme for Europe. (See *Chapter 1 on group resettlement and Chapter 5 on the experience of an ICMC Deployee working with the ‘1972 Burundians’ in Tanzania.*)

### *Joint EU Resettlement Schemes—how will they function?*

Both UNHCR and NGOs have flagged up the importance of joint programmes as a tool for responding to **emergency refugee situations** as well, recognising that this falls outside the framework of the RPPs. It is envisioned that joint resettlement programmes could be used to cover situations such as those in **Syria and Jordan**, where the presence of large numbers of Iraqis has recently placed a heavy burden on the host country. Syria, for example, is reported to be the largest recipient of Iraqi refugees, with an estimated 1.2 million refugees, followed by Jordan with some

750,000. There would be considerable potential for **strategic use of resettlement** in these situations. A significant European engagement in resettlement would provide a tangible expression of international solidarity and burden-sharing with the countries in the Middle East region, encouraging these countries to continue to give access to refugees seeking protection, to respect the principle of *non-refoulement* and to guarantee access to fundamental rights for the large majority of refugees that would not be resettled.

Still, it is unclear how such joint resettlement programmes would function, either within or outside the Regional Protection Programme context. Several suggestions have been put forward in this respect. The European Commission examined this issue in a comprehensive report in 2003 entitled *Feasibility of Resettlement in the European Union*, conducted by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). Other publications looking at this issue include ECRE's '**The Way Forward: Towards a European Resettlement Programme**', outlining how a European Scheme could function. The ECRE report includes suggestions on the identification of refugees, processing, decision-making and pre-departure activities and stresses the roles that UNHCR, NGOs and refugees could play as stakeholders in such a programme. There are significant efficiency benefits that could accrue from the application of joint EU resettlement criteria. If several Member States offer resettlement places for a particular refugee caseload, the time and resources required for UNHCR to identify and prepare resettlement submissions could be significantly less than if a single set of EU resettlement criteria were applied. When verifying the selection missions carried out and programmed for 2007, one notices that EU countries are indeed offering resettlement places for the same caseloads. All of the EU resettlement countries, for example, select Burmese refugees (excluding Portugal, which has only recently declared its programme).

If Member States would commit to jointly resettling a certain number of refugees, there could be different options to pursue. In the case of somewhat larger quotas, the coordination of selection missions on a European level would seem a logical first step. Currently, several countries may arrive one after the other to undertake selection interviews, completely unaware of the visits of other EU Member States. In the longer term, consideration could be given to 'joint EU resettlement selection missions', enabling direct involvement with fewer resources. New resettlement countries could benefit considerably from cooperation in joint missions (starting with maybe only two countries). In this scenario, new resettlement countries could benefit

from the logistical arrangements, infrastructure and expertise of another Member State during the set-up phase of a programme or through long-standing arrangements. It should be noted that in 2007 Belgium, the Czech Republic and Romania (with the Netherlands, as part of the project 'Durable Solutions in Practice') and Spain (with Finland, as part of the MOST ('Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training Related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees') project) have been involved in such 'twinning programmes' on selection missions. This could possibly lead to further cooperation in any resulting resettlement programmes and to the identification of caseloads for which joint missions could be undertaken. When engaging in emergency resettlement, selection of candidates is almost invariably done 'on paper', as time constraints and safety reasons may not allow for a selection mission. The Swedish resettlement programme (branded SQSQ: Swedish Quota, Speed and Quality) demonstrates the best practice in handling such emergency cases, which could easily be shared with other EU countries. For new countries with very small resettlement targets and caseloads, selections on a dossier basis represent an efficient model for case review.

## Setting up a Resettlement Programme:

### The experience of the UK Home Office

Resettlement countries are increasingly offering other EU Member States practical cooperation to engage in resettlement. The UK Home Office recently shared its experience of planning and establishing a resettlement programme with Germany, at a seminar for German politicians organised by the Churches Commission on Migrants in Europe (CCME). The presentation was part of CCME's ERF-funded programme 'Resettlement in Europe: Broadening the Basis', which seeks to engage new EU countries in resettlement. The United Kingdom announced its intention to start the Gateway Resettlement Programme in 2002 and in March 2004 the first refugees from Liberia arrived. ICMC interviewed Kevin Finch from the UK Home Office, who managed the overseas side of the resettlement programme from its first arrivals, about his experience with establishing the programme. The box shows the key ingredients that the UK Government feel made the successful establishment of the Gateway Programme possible.

#### Setting up the Gateway Programme: the recipe that worked for the UK

- *Consider if resettlement relates to your overall migration strategy*
- *Carefully plan a resettlement programme in advance*
- *Focus on a few different ethnic groups/nationalities when ensuring a minimum number to establish a group*
- *Where possible, settle such groups in the same city or close by, to allow communities and support structures to “take root”*
- *Keep firm control of the selection process but allow for flexibility*
- *Ensure the engagement, from the conception of the programme, of local authorities who will receive refugees*
- *Ensure before selection that local capacity exists to receive refugees*
- *Ensure the engagement of NGOs in the planning and implementation of reception*
- *Mobilise public opinion and involve the media from the conception phase onwards*
- *Engage the accommodation sector in the planning process and consider partnerships with private contractors*

## *The Experience of the UK in establishing a Resettlement Programme*

### ***What were the considerations which led the UK to establish a quota programme?***

The introduction of the resettlement programme was not considered in isolation but was introduced as part of a balanced immigration strategy, which the UK is promoting. This strategy:

- tackles abuse of the asylum system by those not in need of protection;
- promotes better integration programmes for those with the right to settle; and
- introduces resettlement as a new legal route, a Gateway, to the UK for those in need of protection without forcing them into the hands of people traffickers.

### ***How does the UK Home Office refugee selection process work?***

On the basis of the annual UNHCR Global Resettlement Needs document, the UK Government decides which nationalities it will take up for the coming budgetary year. UNHCR then refers cases of this nationality to the UK Home Office, where the caseworkers conduct a sift, taking out cases with identified serious issues relating to security, housing capacity and medical issues. Thereafter, the Home Office sends out a team to interview the cases; the files are then brought back to the UK where a decision is made. Each selection mission team consists of 3-4 officials and costs on average between £11,000 and £15,000 (EUR 16–20,000).

### ***Does the UK take dossier and medical cases?***

From the beginning, the UK decided not to accept UNHCR dossier referrals. The reasons for this were twofold: firstly, the UK realised they would probably face a very critical press when introducing the programme. The UK Government therefore wanted to keep strict and full control of the selection process, maximising government responsibility and integrity in the process. This could only be guaranteed if the UK Home Office selected all candidates personally. Another reason for this decision was that individual interviews were considered the best and most efficient method of selecting the large number of cases needed to fulfil its quota of 500 individuals. Dossier cases afford less opportunity for having a claim examined by a government official in greater detail. Medical cases, including HIV/AIDS, can be admitted to the UK after referral to Ministers. However, the UK is concerned about conditions that raise serious cost and public health issues.

***How do you plan which resettlement groups will be resettled to the UK?***

The nationalities selected are influenced by domestic and foreign considerations, safety of interviewers and language abilities. The planning of which resettlement groups to take is very important, since this has consequences for the reception and integration phase. For example, resettling Burmese refugees initially posed a serious challenge, since translation services for this group were not readily available. Selecting two different ethnic Burmese groups further complicated matters. In our planning of resettlement groups we therefore selected more Burmese groups over several years, resettling them to the same area. In this way community leadership and refugee community support could be built up and NGOs and local authorities could gain and transfer knowledge on special needs.

***Does the UK verify refugee status as part of the procedure?***

One issue for the UK was whether to apply its own assessment of Convention status to cases submitted. The UK did this at first but found that the grant rate was not particularly high, owing to issues such as the length of time that a refugee can spend in a protracted refugee situation. In such situations the UK would find it difficult in a lot of cases to grant Convention status because of political opinion. Our original policy led to a two-tier grant of status, as those who did not qualify for Convention status were granted a form of subsidiary protection. This raised significant post-arrival problems in terms of granting benefits, access to further education and family reunion entitlement. The policy was later changed so that the recommendation of UNHCR to grant refugee status was accepted in most circumstances, which solved the problem.

***How was support from local authorities and NGOs built up?***

Something the UK probably started on a bit too late was the planning process of our resettlement programme, to engage local authorities in participating in the programme. In the UK it was considered important to count on the voluntary participation of local authorities; however, it turned out initially to be a major challenge to acquire their support in this largely unknown endeavour. We also decided not to settle refugees in London or the South East, which historically have received most refugees and where the housing pressure is considerable. A strength of our programme is that NGOs run most of the integration support programmes in conjunction with local authorities. Sheffield was the first city to pick up on the programme, offering to receive the first group of Liberians. From that time coordination with the local authorities became an integrated part of the planning

process. Each local authority in the programme typically accepts 60-80 refugees per year. Since the programme places the refugees upon arrival in the cities/towns of destination and does not have an intermediate reception phase in centres, the availability of housing must be immediate. Housing is an important issue for the UK owing to a lack of readily available large properties. Therefore, private contractors were used in a number of cases.



## EU Member States Engaging in Resettlement:

### Latest developments

In recent years a number of European countries have expressed interest in establishing national resettlement schemes and receiving refugees through resettlement on an ad hoc basis. Portugal has been the latest country to establish a resettlement programme, bringing the total number of EU Member States offering a resettlement programme to seven. This section looks at where European countries stand now with respect to resettlement.

#### *Portugal: a new country programme in the making*

The Portuguese Asylum Law 15/98, article 27, provides the legal basis for a resettlement procedure on a dossier basis. All refugees under the UNHCR mandate are admissible according to the law. Resettlement requests are submitted by UNHCR to, and decided upon by, the Minister of Internal Administration. In 2006, the Government accepted 33 refugees on an ad hoc basis, providing for the resettlement of refugees from the DRC, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Ethiopia and India. These cases were based on the UNHCR Handbook criteria of legal or physical protection needs and lack of local integration prospects in the first country of asylum. Then in July 2007, the Government adopted Resolution No 110/2007, which allows for **the resettlement of a minimum of 30 persons on an annual basis**, under the Portuguese Asylum Law.

The Ministries responsible for the coordination and financing of the reception and integration of resettled refugees in Portugal are the Ministry of Internal Administration, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Health. The Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR) is mandated to implement initial reception services at the Refugee Reception Centre of CPR over a period of six months and to provide an integration programme for newly arrived refugees, in cooperation with local social security services, among others. Resettled refugees are issued a residence permit upon arrival, offering refugee status or temporary humanitarian protection ranging from one to five years, and is renewable. After six years of continued residence in Portugal, refugees are entitled to Portuguese nationality. During the first six months in Portugal, CPR support includes financial assistance, legal and social advice, Portuguese language classes, computer training and cultural activities. After six months refugees are placed in private housing with financial

support from the local social security services. CPR supports refugees in their efforts to secure appropriate housing. The CPR's employment service in the Refugee Reception Centre offers job counselling and mediation. Refugees are expected to become self-sufficient by the end of the first year and are then mainstreamed into the general Social Security regime.

*The Czech Republic: continue ad hoc or establish a country programme?*

Of the new EU Member States, the Czech Republic is the first to have resettled refugees on an ad hoc basis. Responding to an urgent appeal from UNHCR in 2005, the Czech Republic resettled a group of fifteen recognised refugees from Uzbekistan. The group consisted of three married couples and nine single men. The Czech Republic developed a tailor-made integration programme for this group, which was credited as having been the key to the success of the resettlement exercise. Constraints, however, included the lack of prospects for family reunification from Uzbekistan. Nonetheless, in March 2006 two families were reunified. In June 2007, the Czech Republic resettled another group of ten recognised refugees from Cuba, from the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay.

The main state agencies involved in resettlement are the Asylum and Migration Policies Department of the Ministry of Interior (AMPD) and The Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of Interior (RFA). With decreasing asylum figures as a result of its altered position in the European Union (i.e. no longer having any “external” EU borders) the Government of the Czech Republic is considering expanding resettlement in the future. Government representatives have also underlined the importance of resettlement as a tool of foreign policy and international human rights policy. A complex national plan for future resettlement activity is now in preparation by AMPD. To prepare for resettlement, the Czech Republic participates in a twinning programme with the Dutch Reception Agency COA, in order to become acquainted with all the phases of the Dutch resettlement process. Finally, both NGO and government representatives from the Czech Republic participated in the ICMC–UNHCR training in El Escorial, Spain in June 2007, and it was one of the countries targeted by the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) project ‘*Broadening the Basis*’, together with participants from Hungary and Romania.

*Italy: Piano Dante—Slowly Forward*

Italy has a history of resettling refugees on an ad hoc basis, in particular after the coup in Chile in 1973, when 609 people asked for protection from the Italian embassy

in Santiago. In 1979 a group of about 900 Vietnamese “boat people” were saved by the Italian forces in the Chinese Sea and transferred to Italy for resettlement. In 1986 and 1986-87, Vietnamese and Chaldean Iraqis were transferred to Italy for resettlement. The Italian Refugee Council (CIR) has taken a leading role in advocating for resettlement in Italy. In cooperation with the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, CIR conducted a feasibility study on resettlement in Italy, outlining a potential Italian programme with the working title “Piano Dante”. In the summer of 2007, a draft law on asylum, which includes an Article on resettlement, was under discussion in the Italian Parliament. The Government expressed interest and a desire to start implementing resettlement in Italy, to offer an alternative, secure and protected way of arrival to asylum seekers. Hundreds of people deemed in need of international protection put their lives at risk in their attempt to reach Italian coasts each year and resettlement is being considered in that context. It must be noted that some Italian NGOs continue to express hesitancy regarding resettlement, expressing concern that the measure could serve as a means to “externalise” the response to asylum seekers.

**Spain:** *waiting until the elections*

For some time now, Spain has been looked upon as one of the countries ready to engage in a formal resettlement programme. While a Spanish resettlement programme has not been established to date, Spain has responded favourably to recent UNHCR appeals: 1,426 Kosovo Albanians arrived in 1999 under UNHCR’s Humanitarian Evacuation Programme, and in February 2000 a group of 17 Afghans from Uzbekistan were resettled. The legal basis to provide protection to certain cases (being labelled as resettlement) is the Spanish Asylum Law (Art. 4.2 of the Royal Decree 203/1995), which allows responses to urgent requests from the UNHCR representative to the Spanish Government for the admission of a refugee under his mandate.

The two leading Spanish ministries involved in resettlement matters are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. NGOs involved in resettlement efforts include the Spanish Red Cross, Rescate, CEAR and ACCEM, all of which have advocated for the establishment of a national resettlement programme. Both the Government and NGOs have participated in twinning projects (MOST) and advocacy and capacity-building programmes (with CCME and ICMC). Ministerial officials have indicated that Spain would be—based on their experience with ad hoc settlement—in a position to start a resettlement programme at very short notice. It is

expected that the next Spanish Asylum Law will contain a special provision for resettlement. In its absence, the Ministry of Interior as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs currently lack a political mandate to establish a programme. Due to a heated political debate on all questions related to immigration, the resettlement discussion is not expected to move before the national elections in Spring 2008.

**Belgium, France and Germany:** *entering the debate*

**Belgium** has a history of resettling refugees on an ad hoc basis, receiving Hungarian refugees in 1956, Asians fleeing Uganda, Chileans following the Pinochet Coup, 25,000 boat people from Vietnam in 1975 and 1,200 Kosovans in 1999. Recently the Belgian Government and NGOs have engaged in discussion of further involvement in resettlement, through debates and seminars and the participation in a Belgian-Dutch government resettlement twinning project. In the 2007 national election campaign, most political parties signalled support for starting a resettlement programme. The Belgian Director General for Refugees indicated that Belgium could easily manage a resettlement quota. However, an unprecedented political-institutional deadlock on the formation of a new government following the 2007 election has blocked any further developments until at least late 2007.

**France** has a history of resettling refugees on an ad hoc basis, beginning with the Hungarian crisis in 1957, when France welcomed 12,700 Hungarian refugees. In 1975, France resettled over 15,000 refugees from Vietnam, and in 1999 it welcomed 6,300 refugees from Kosovo. At an international conference in Geneva, in April 2007, the French Government announced that France would be willing to resettle some Iraqi refugees, *provided* the EU would take the initiative and coordinate the operation. In the months following the May 2007 presidential elections, however, there were no further commitments to resettlement. The NGO ‘Forum Réfugié’ will be actively advocating

for resettlement in the period leading up to the French EU Presidency (July-December 2008), during which migration and asylum will be prioritised. As is the case in Italy, some French NGOs remain hesitant about resettlement and have taken strong positions against a *European* resettlement programme, which they consider a new tool of “externalisation”.

**Germany** has responded on an ad hoc basis to UNHCR requests for resettlement of individual refugees and groups, offering protection, for example, to refugees evacuated from Kosovo in 1999. However, in recent years Germany has been

reluctant to offer more than *temporary* protection status to these refugees. The German debate on refugee protection has for a very long time been dominated by the comparatively high figures of asylum seekers in the 1990s and the discussion on its new immigration law, which came into force in 2005. The coalition agreement between the Social Democratic and Green parties in 2002 had foreseen that Germany would establish an annual resettlement quota of up to 500 places. However, this was never enacted. Recent expert discussions between civil society actors, UNHCR, political parties and German Government officials have indicated that the German Government might be willing to re-examine the issue of resettlement and take a more positive approach to it.

**The Eastern European States (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia & Slovenia)** UNHCR is currently engaged in active efforts to establish resettlement programmes in Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. Such efforts involve capacity-building activities and encouragement of established resettlement countries to twin with emerging resettlement countries.

**Romania** has already indicated that it is a resettlement country. A general legal basis for resettlement has been put in place, but further legislation on implementation was still being developed in mid 2007. In addition, Romania is contributing to resettlement efforts through establishment, within the EU, of an Evacuation Transit Facility for resettlement processing of refugees in need of resettlement who cannot safely remain in their country of first asylum. This facility will be based on Romania's experience acting as a transit country for the evacuation of Uzbek refugees in 2005.

In mid-2007, **Hungary** passed new asylum legislation which provides a legislative base for resettlement. Further, in August 2007 Hungary was engaged in efforts to grant asylum to Cubans from the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay.

To date, neither **Slovenia** nor **Slovakia** has undertaken resettlement activities. However, Slovenia is very shortly expected to pass draft legislation which includes provision for resettlement. In addition, Slovenia is participating in twinning arrangements with Denmark.



# Welcome to Europe!

## A Comparative Guide to Resettlement



International Catholic  
Migration Commission  
Europe

Endurbúseta áttaleptís Resettlement Réinstallation Hervestiging Reasentamiento Reinseltjamento  
Umstjólingu Réinstalação Undfleensjöittaminen Gjenbosetting Genbosättning Vidarebosättning  
Přesídlování Genbosætning Hervestiging Endurbúseta Resettlement Vidarebosättning Áttaleptís

Part III of the guide provides updated<sup>1</sup> information on Country Resettlement Programmes in Europe. The content is based primarily on information gathered from interviews with relevant government departments and civil society, in addition to review and analysis of publications and websites focused on resettlement activities. Programme structure and features for each country include:

Resettlement History	&	Legal Framework
Criteria for selection	&	Composition of the quota
Recent policy developments	&	Roles and responsibilities of programme stakeholders
Departure, arrival, reception and integration procedures	&	Future plans for resettlement and other resettlement projects

## **Part III**

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<sup>1</sup> Country Chapters for Part III were updated in 2009.

## Denmark

Denmark has managed refugee resettlement since 1956. In 1978, the Government began funding an official quota programme and in 1983, a special provision was outlined in Section 8 of the Danish Alien's Act. From 1983 to 2005, an annual quota of 500 was established. Beginning in July 2005, Denmark changed to a three-year quota period, totalling 1 500 (maintaining approx. 500 cases per year), allowing for the carryover of quotas in the same period. The first three-year **flexible quota**<sup>2</sup> period ended in December 2007 with only 17 unfilled quota places that were converted to funds managed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	500	554	Myanmarese, Congolese(DRC), Bhutanese
2007	500	472	Myanmarese, Congolese(DRC), Sudanese, Burundians, Rwandese
2006	500	529	Congolese (DRC), Myanmarese, Burundians
2005	500	483	Myanmarese, Iranians
2004	500	508	Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC), Indonesians
2003	500	509	Myanmarese, Indonesians, Congolese, Iranians
2002	500	490	Iranians, Iraqis, Afghans
2001	517	531	Afghans, Iraqis, Sudanese, Myanmarese
2000	500	464	Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians, Myanmarese

Source: DIS (Danish Immigration Service)

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Sweden and Norway chapters for more on flexible quotas.



A flexible annual quota enables some adjustment of places or numbers each year according to the needs presented within the three-year period. It is composed according to three categories: geographic origin, medical cases or the **Ten-Or-More (TOM)** programme, and **urgent and emergency** dossier cases. No official provision for vulnerable groups is defined in Denmark. Emergency and TOM dossier cases are received directly from UNHCR in Geneva. Emergency cases are processed within 2-3 weeks, urgent cases take 1-2 months and all others are processed within 2-3 months. The Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs decides how the quota will be filled and the destination of 2-3 annual selection missions based on recommendations from the Danish Immigration Service (DIS). The recommendations are prepared considering the projected global resettlement needs from UNHCR, Danish municipality recommendations, and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). Generally, 75 places are saved for emergency and urgent cases and 30 for medical or TOM cases (increased from 20 cases in 2008).

The **legal basis** for recognition of refugees in Denmark accords with the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee. **Resettlement criteria** consider the **protection needs** according to the UNHCR Mandate first. In 2005, the Danish Aliens Act extended resettlement to cases based on humanitarian grounds. This means that refugees referred to Denmark by UNHCR may be accepted if they could have obtained a residence permit in Denmark on other grounds had they entered the country as an asylum-seeker. **Humanitarian grounds** refers to medical cases and certain groups of women-at-risk, unaccompanied minors (who do not otherwise qualify for refugee status), persons who cannot for other reasons return to their home country and exceptionally, persons who qualify as professionals or specialists needed in Denmark. Another important change to the Act was the addition of **integration potential** [Section 8(4)] as the second criterion (after protection) for resettlement. The integration criterion (which takes into account educational and language background, family size, work experience and age) aims to measure the ability of a refugee to take advantage of the possibilities and opportunities available in Denmark. The integration criterion is not applied to emergency, urgent or TOM cases.

**Selection missions** are carried out by the DIS and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) through a partnership documented in a written agreement. The DRC receives government funding to assist in the coordination of missions and selection of

refugees. The DRC has been a part of the refugee interviewing process since the start of the resettlement programme and it contributes with its expertise on refugee issues in Denmark. In 2005, however, the DRC's participation was limited to selection missions, which means it is no longer involved in the selection process of dossier cases (TOM and urgent/emergency). The involvement of the DRC in selection missions is a unique feature of the Danish programme and is elaborated on in *NGO Involvement in Selection*, Part IV of the 2007 version of this guide. Municipalities have participated in a few selection missions thus far and their participation is considered highly by the DIS.

Prior to being interviewed, refugees participate in group sessions providing information on resettlement to Denmark and an explanation of the Integration Declaration. In an effort to manage expectations, after an individual's case for resettlement has been prepared he or she must sign the **Integration Declaration** that details the conditions for resettlement in Denmark. Conditions include willingness to find work, accepting the importance of learning the Danish language and participation in the integration programme. Individuals who request resettlement are informed that their medical documents and personal data (excluding the refugee claim) will be forwarded to receiving municipalities in Denmark. Upon return from missions, **final decisions** on resettlement cases are made by the DIS, taking into consideration the recommendations from the delegation. Processing of cases from in-country selection missions can take up to three months.

After initial decisions are made, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is requested to complete a **health examination** before the final decision on resettlement is made by the DIS. In June 2005, medical screening prior to departure from the refugee camp became mandatory for all quota refugees; however, for cases prioritised as urgent and emergency, the medical screenings and signature of the Integration Declaration can be waived. The DIS, accompanied occasionally by municipal authorities, returns to the refugee camp to deliver a one-week **pre-departure cultural orientation (CO)** including language classes, to refugees selected for resettlement. The IOM subsequently organises **travel** to Denmark, sponsored by the Danish Government.

Refugees are initially given a **temporary residence permit** under 'convention', 'protection', or 'other' status according to the Aliens Act Section (8) 1-3. The maximum duration of this permit is seven years for all refugees, after which they are

eligible to apply for permanent residence.

Municipal authorities and the DIS receive refugees at the airport and accompany them directly to **municipalities**, where temporary or permanent housing has been arranged in a private flat or home. All Danish municipalities should be prepared to receive refugees (both quota and non-quota). The DIS decides where refugees will be placed while considering the availability of services and the number of immigrants and refugees already living in each municipality. Permanent housing is usually arranged within three months of refugees' arrival. Refugees are advised to stay in the municipality where they are placed for the first three years.

The Integration Act of 1999 provides guidelines for integration for all third country residents (refugees and immigrants). The Ministry for Immigration, Integration and Refugee Affairs is responsible for overseeing activities carried out under the act, while municipalities are in charge of their execution. The three-year **integration programme** is funded by the Government and includes the following components: three years of free Danish language classes, assistance with building qualifications for employment, and a course on Danish society. Courses should be offered for at least 20 hours per week. The DRC, the Danish Red Cross and the Church Integration Service (KIT) are the principal NGOs that assist refugees with the integration process. The DRC reaches out to municipalities through a country-wide network of **volunteers**. Sometimes, the DRC is also requested by the municipalities to implement specific projects for resettled refugees (financed by the municipality).

The DIS takes into consideration the participation of individual refugees in the integration programme when reviewing applications for prolongation of the residence permit. Those who do not attend courses may have their financial allowance reduced. Like Danish citizens, resettled refugees are entitled to free public education and public healthcare services. After 8 or 9 years (depending on the kind of residence permit issued) of permanent residence in Denmark, refugees may apply for Danish **citizenship**.

In September 2008, Denmark carried out its first selection mission to Nepal. During this mission, the DIS (accompanied by a representative from the DRC and the municipality) decided to resettle a group of 159 Bhutanese refugees under a **strategic resettlement scheme** arranged with the UNHCR. Though this is the first time that strategic resettlement has been used by Denmark, it is mentioned in the law governing resettlement. The law allows for integration potential to be exceptionally

dismissed in strategic resettlement schemes. This group included refugees who, for example, were illiterate and therefore would not normally meet the integration potential criterion. Without this 'exception to the rule', the use of strategic resettlement to resettle large groups of Bhutanese would not have been possible.

In 2009, Denmark planned for resettlement of approximately 150 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal and approximately 150 Congolese (DRC) refugees from Rwanda. For the remaining quota, a selection mission to Malaysia to interview Myanmar refugees was planned.



*DRC volunteer assisting refugees with reception and integration (Photo: DRC)*

## Finland

Finland started its refugee resettlement programme in 1979. The refugee quota is allotted funding in the State budget that is approved by the Finnish Parliament. **Quota** planning is carried out on the basis of the resettlement needs presented by UNHCR. Since 2001, it has been fixed at 750 persons a year. The **main actors** involved in the refugee resettlement programme are the Ministry of the Interior, the Finnish Immigration Service (MIGRI), regional Employment and Economic Development centres, municipal authorities and the Finnish Red Cross. In early 2008, an administrative change took place in which migration and refugee affairs were concentrated in the Ministry of Interior<sup>3</sup>.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	750	749	Myanmarese, Iraqis, Palestinians, Congolese (DRC)
2007	750	657	Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC), Somalis, Iranians
2006	750	547	Myanmarese, Iranians, Somalis
2005	750	766	Myanmarese, Iranians, Iraqis
2004	750	735	Iranians, Somalis, Iraqis
2003	750	562	Sudanese, Afghans, Iranians, Eritreans
2002	750	569	Afghans, Sudanese, Iraqis, Iranians (Kurds)
2001	750	739	Sudanese, Iranians, Iraqis (Kurds), Former-Yugoslavs, Afghans
2000	700	756	Iranians, Iraqis (Kurds)

Source: Finnish Ministry of Interior, Finnish Immigration Service (MIGRI)

<sup>3</sup> In 2008, the Ministry of Interior replaced the Ministry of Labour in administrating the refugee resettlement programme. Integration programmes were also newly delegated to municipalities rather than being run by the Ministry.

The 2004 Finnish Aliens Act defines the ‘refugee quota’ along with admission requirements. Persons admitted for resettlement under the refugee quota are persons considered refugees by UNHCR or other aliens in need of international protection (Aliens Act section 90, subsection 1). Persons considered as refugees by UNHCR do not always meet the criteria for granting asylum according to the Aliens Act, Section 87 (see criteria below).

UNHCR presents cases for resettlement to Finland. On an exceptional basis, persons other than those presented by UNHCR may be granted a residence permit, based on the need for protection, instead of granting them convention/refugee status. The following **resettlement criteria** are applied when considering an individual for resettlement (Section 92 of the Finnish Alien’s Act):

- The person’s need for international protection vis-à-vis the country of origin;
- The person’s need for international protection vis-à-vis the first country of asylum (in accordance with UNHCR resettlement criteria);
- Assessment of the conditions of reception and integration in Finland. An assessment of the municipalities is carried out including the available services to respond to the need of refugees, the presence of similar communities and existing social networks. The group of refugees to be resettled is also taken into consideration, looking especially at the presence of support or ‘resource’ persons, motivation to integrate and presence of family members or relatives;
- Issues of public order and security, public health and Finland’s international relations are evaluated.

The Finnish resettlement programme gives consideration to special categories or **vulnerable groups** with specific needs: refugees with medical needs, survivors and victims of torture, women-at-risk, unaccompanied children and the elderly. No separate or fixed quotas are allocated for these special categories; they are included in the general yearly quota. Resettled refugees or ‘quota’ refugees who are identified under these special categories will be provided with the appropriate support during the integration programme. No medical examinations are required before admittance.

Finland accepts **urgent and emergency** cases, which are selected on the basis of the UNHCR Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) or ‘dossier selection’. In medical emergencies, acceptance depends on the availability of appropriate treatment in Finland. The number of urgent and emergency cases in the total annual quota was fixed at 100 cases for 2008 (99 cases were accepted); with the same quota in 2007

(94 cases were accepted). Emergency cases are handled in five working days and urgent cases are decided as quickly as possible.

The normal method used for selecting refugees is through personal interviews conducted during **selection missions** undertaken by MIGRI officials, Employment and Economical Development Centres/municipalities and, if necessary, security police officers. In 2008, municipalities also participated in selection missions, a practice which will continue in 2009. During the selection mission the delegation presents a briefing with basic information to provide refugees with a first impression of Finland. Within two months after the selection mission, a decision is made on the cases. **Dossier selection** in cases other than those prioritised as urgent and emergency is an option but is not commonplace.

A **pre-departure cultural orientation (CO)** and country orientation for refugees accepted for resettlement to Finland is arranged and implemented by IOM. The course takes three days which includes basic information about Finland, reception procedures in municipalities, rights and duties of refugees, practical use of public services and some basic phrases in Finnish. In 2009, the Finnish Immigration Service will open up a call for proposals for the design and implementation of a cultural orientation programme due to the foreseen contract termination with IOM. One issue that should be looked at is the fact that dossier/emergency and urgent cases do not receive a pre-departure cultural orientation although they do receive some form of orientation after their arrival in Finland.

IOM handles the practical **travel** arrangements for accepted refugees. Refugees admitted to Finland under the refugee quota on UNHCR proposals are granted a **permanent residence permit** under 'convention/refugee' status. The refugees are met at the airport by representatives of the Finnish Red Cross at which point they travel on to the municipalities where they will be settled (mostly outside of the capital city of Helsinki). Though refugees are settled in municipalities chosen for them by governmental officials, they have the same freedom of movement inside the country as nationals. Occasionally, with urgent or emergency cases, temporary accommodation has to be arranged in a reception centre but generally the refugees are housed in private flats following their arrival.

In principle, **municipalities** are responsible for the initial **reception and integration** of refugees. An agreement is signed between the Ministry and local authorities to arrange the resettlement. Refugees are spread over municipalities and cities in

groups of about 25 to 50 people. The municipal and city authorities agree on receiving resettled refugees on a voluntary basis and fix yearly quotas accordingly – in some cities the yearly quota ranges from 100 to 120 places that are filled by resettled refugees, accepted asylum seekers and family reunification cases. Over 140 municipalities have received refugees in Finland. Placement of refugees in municipalities or cities is usually arranged before their arrival and is based on a set of considerations such as the presence of relatives or social networks, similar ethnic groups or nationalities, and the availability of interpreters.

In order to encourage the municipalities to receive refugees, municipal authorities are provided with financial resources for the implementation of the integration programmes and for staff training. A lump sum is received per refugee and per year to cover the three-year integration, in 2009 these sums totalled: EUR 6.222,95 for children under seven years and EUR 1.900,50 for children over seven years and adults. In special cases, such as serious medical cases, the municipality can receive additional financial support for a longer period of time. In regards to the resettlement programme, it is emphasised that a refugee can be a resource instead of a burden for the municipality and that Finland has an international and humanitarian responsibility to assist refugees.

The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers has been in effect since 1999 and details the **integration process** for all third country residents, including refugees. In practice, it is implemented through integration programmes managed by municipalities. After arriving in the municipality, the refugee will discuss his/her potential and needs with programme officers, leading to the creation of an individual ‘integration plan’ that represents the agreement between the local authority, an employment office and the refugee. The plan has a projection of three years and covers language and literacy training for adults, preparatory instruction for children, professional skills and employment training, and civic skills training. Refugees are allowed to work during this period and an integration allowance is provided. All integration activities are to be recorded in an ‘integration book’; if the integration plan is not followed, the allowance may be reduced. Housing is arranged for the refugees along with access to the municipal health and mental healthcare services. The regional Employment and Economic Centres ensure constant communication and information-sharing with local authorities.





*Finnish language classes organised by Red Cross volunteers (Photo: Finnish Red Cross)*

In addition to the municipal authorities, the **voluntary sector** is also involved in the integration process. In most cases, the voluntary sector implements social support activities that compliment municipal services. The Finnish Red Cross network, for example, trains volunteers to become support persons and befriend refugees to assist them in building social networks. Voluntary agencies might organise informal conversation classes as well, complimenting the language classes and other free-time activities in order to build a bridge between refugees and the host community. In limited cases, NGOs are contracted by the municipalities to implement a portion of the integration services.

The quota for 2009 is composed of 350 Iraqis (including 50 Palestinians from Iraq), 150 Congolese, 120 Myanmarese and urban refugees as well as 30 refugees from the **Emergency Transit Centre (ETC)**<sup>4</sup> in Romania and 100 places for

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to Section I, UNHCR Framework, for more information on the ETC in Romania.

urgent/emergency cases. Selection missions in the same year are organised to Rwanda, Syria, Jordan, Thailand and Romania.

### *Projects to promote resettlement*

From 2003 to 2005, the Finnish Ministry of Labour managed the **MORE** - *Modelling of National Resettlement Process and Implementation of Emergency Measures*- project along with Ireland. The goal of the project was to develop models for resettlement, which could be followed by the new EU countries considering joining the resettlement programme.

From December 2006 to January 2008, the Finnish Ministry of Labour also directed the **MOST** -*Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training Related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees* –project, in partnership with Spain, Ireland and Sweden. The project was funded by the ERF and carried out in cooperation with the UNHCR, ECRE and the IOM. The purpose of MOST activities and seminars was to improve the integration of resettled refugees in Europe from the beginning of the resettlement process (selection) to the establishment of refugees in their host society (labour market and social integration, language acquisition etc.).

Apart from leading this international project, Finland carried out ‘*The Work-Based Training Model*’, a component addressing the challenge of integration by piloting a programme of direct inclusion into the labour market. Language classes were carried out simultaneously with work training experience. The activities were organised by the Ministry of Labour and implemented immediately after the arrival of the 35 Myanmarese refugees who agreed to participate in the project. A summary can be found in the MOST Project publication ‘*Promoting Independence in Resettlement*’, published in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See [www.mostproject.fi](http://www.mostproject.fi)

## Iceland



*"Welcome to Siglufjörður!"*

*Refugees from Former Yugoslavia arriving in Iceland (Photo: Icelandic Red Cross)*

In 1996, the Government of Iceland started accepting refugees as part of the UNHCR Resettlement Programme. Until 2001, Iceland accepted a certain number of cases each year on the basis of the UNHCR assessment of overall resettlement needs. The Government began accepting 20-25 refugees for resettlement every two years in 2001. Beginning in 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Social Affairs announced the official establishment of an *annual quota* of 25 to 30 refugees.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	25 to 30	31	Palestinians from Iraq(29), Sri Lankans(2)
2007	20 to 25	31	Columbians
2006	-	-	
2005	20 to 25	31	Columbians, Kosovo Roma
2004	-	-	

2003	20 to 25	24	Croats and Serbs
2002	-	-	
2001	20 to 25	23	Croats and Serbs
2000	20 to 25	24	Croats and Serbs

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security

The Government of Iceland recognises refugees according to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol (section 44 of the Icelandic Act on Foreigners 96/2002), in addition to regional instruments. Resettlement eligibility is guided by the following **resettlement criteria**: legal or physical protection needs, refugee victims of torture and/or violence, women-at-risk, and refugees without local integration prospects in the first country of asylum. A refugee's medical history does not hinder his/her acceptance as there are no medical requirements under the Icelandic programme. Iceland often accepts urgent cases, however due to quota limitations; the programme is unable to accommodate emergency cases.

Considering the positive results achieved by the resettlement programme thus far, there is potential for a progressive diversification of the quota. For the quota 2005-2006, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, the refugees selected were considered to be women-at-risk and most of them were urgent cases.

The main body responsible for the coordination of resettlement is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security while the actual implementation is done through the Icelandic Refugee Committee, the Icelandic Red Cross and municipalities. The Icelandic Refugee Committee is the main national resettlement committee. Its responsibilities include the selection, admission and integration of refugees. It brings together representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Icelandic Red Cross.

Cases for resettlement are decided upon during **selection missions**. Each mission is headed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security and consists of representatives from the Directorate of Immigration and the Icelandic Red Cross. As a result, the Icelandic Red Cross occupies a unique position in Europe in that it is a non-governmental organisation that actively participates in the decision-making on refugee cases. Only the Danish Refugee Council operates in a similar capacity. **Decisions** are made after the return of the delegation to Iceland and they must be

approved by the Icelandic Refugee Committee. UNHCR is formally notified of the selection within two weeks. **Dossier cases** are not considered for resettlement.

A **Cultural Orientation (CO) session** is organised for refugees who will be interviewed for resettlement to Iceland by the delegation. The programme is prepared and implemented by the Icelandic Red Cross in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security. The orientation session lasts approximately one hour and attempts to give refugees an idea about life in Iceland with information on public assistance available to refugees, rights and obligations, and family reunification. The reason for holding the cultural orientation session before the actual selection of the refugees is to ensure they all are fully aware of what Iceland has to offer and can therefore make an informed decision.

Once the refugees are accepted, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) arranges their **travel** in cooperation with UNHCR field offices, the Icelandic Red Cross and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security. A delegation from the Icelandic Red Cross and the municipality awaits the refugees in the transit airport and they accompany them on the last leg of the flight to Iceland, after which they are taken directly to the receiving municipality. The municipalities agree to receive resettled refugees on a voluntary basis upon agreement on financial resources provided by the government. Thus far, the entire group of annual quota refugees is settled in the same single municipality.

The Ministry of Social Affairs signs agreements with the local authorities of the receiving municipalities and the Icelandic Red Cross, which mandates their involvement in the **integration** of resettled refugees. These agreements stipulate the financial resources that municipalities and the Icelandic Red Cross receive from the Government for the settlement of refugees. The resources are used by the municipalities to finance most of the costs of the one-year **support programme**. It includes financial support, housing, health services, schooling for children and young people, Icelandic language lessons and other social services. The language training lasts for nine months (five days a week). Additional money is budgeted for long-term psycho-social care since problems or illnesses frequently become evident only after a significant period of time has passed (sometimes up to three years). The municipality appoints a project manager who is responsible for the implementation and follow-up of the integration programme with the refugees. The amount of the lump sum depends on the needs presented by the composition of the group of refugees the

municipality will receive and settle.

To ensure **cooperation** between various actors, two working groups were created. At the central level the Coordination Group includes members from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security, two representatives from the municipality and representatives from the Icelandic Red Cross and the local Red Cross. They receive updates and ensure the smooth development and coordination of the programme. At the local level, an Action Group is established in order to facilitate cooperation between the Red Cross and local authorities in receiving communities. The group meets on a regular basis to share relevant information in order to improve the programme and avoid potential problems.

Besides the material support provided by the municipality, the project manager from the local Red Cross branch chooses a 'support family' to assist the refugees in their daily life. These families are Red Cross **volunteers** who have been trained to provide individual support and follow-up for refugees. A third project manager involved in the resettlement process is based at the headquarters of the Icelandic Red Cross and is responsible for the general coordination of the integration programme at the local level. This person is usually someone who participates in the selection missions and because of this, forms one of the direct links between the selection and integration processes. Resettled refugees receive a **temporary residence permit** for three years and a **permanent work permit** upon arrival. However, refugees are not expected to start working during the first six months as it is considered very important to begin with language classes. During these initial six months, they also receive vocational training and information about Iceland as well as job training that provides an introduction to workplaces before official employment. After this period, the refugees are assisted to find work that matches their skills and interests. Thus far, separate integration programmes exist for resettled refugees and persons who have been granted asylum. The Government has considered providing similar services to those who have been granted asylum in Iceland.

At the end of the first year refugees are expected to become self-sufficient and they receive the same level of social assistance as other Icelandic residents. Entitlements to social assistance continue to be received from municipalities as well as assistance from the Icelandic Red Cross. After four years the refugees can apply for permanent residence and after five years of continued residence in Iceland, they are eligible to apply for **citizenship**.

It should be noted that the receiving communities prepare for the arrival of resettled refugees through information sessions on the general background of the group of resettled refugees. In practice, this is only possible in smaller communities, where a public meeting is organised. In larger communities or cities, preparation of the host population may be restricted to an article in the newspaper. Both are ways of involving the community in the integration process of refugees, especially when considering integration as a ‘two-way street’.

Since 1996 a total of 11 local authorities have received groups of quota refugees. The group of Palestinians who arrived in Iceland in 2008 has been settled in Akranes, a community 50 km outside of the capital Reykjavík. At the time of writing, no decisions had been made regarding resettlement in 2009 as the programme has been temporarily put on hold.

## Norway

The Norwegian Resettlement Programme is one of the oldest in Europe, functioning since 1946 with the resettlement of 600 Jewish refugees. In 1992, in order to respond to the changing needs for resettlement and capacities to process referrals, the Norwegian Government decided that the **annual quota** (currently 1 200) may be filled in advance or be carried over to a subsequent financial year within a **three-year period** with a total of 3 600 places per period. This method has been viewed positively as it allows for quota flexibility, gives additional time to calculate actual arrivals and enables better planning with municipalities regarding placement.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	1 200	910	Iraqis, Eritreans, Bhutanese, Myanmarese
2007	1 200	1 398	Myanmarese, Congolese, Iraqis
2006	1 000	924	Congolese, Burundians, Myanmarese
2005	1 000	942	Congolese, Myanmarese
2004	750	758	Liberians, Myanmarese, Iranians, Sudanese
2003	750	1 149	Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Rwandese/Burundians, Afghans, Iranians
2002	1 500	1 355	Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Rwandese/Burundians, Afghans, Iranians
2001	1 500	1 269	Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Rwandese/Burundians, Afghans, Iranians
2000	1 500	1 481	Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Rwandese/Burundians, Afghans, Iranians

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID)

Parliament determines the annual quota based on UNHCR need assessments for resettlement, including allotments for geographical regions, emergency and medical cases, unallocated places and places for **alternative resettlement activities** (see examples under *Projects to Promote Resettlement* below). Norway includes medical or **Ten-or-More (TOM)** cases in its quota as well, reserving 20 dossier cases for



special medical cases submitted by UNHCR Geneva. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) determines the composition of the quota and the **guidelines for selection**. Based on these guidelines the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) adjudicates the single cases referred by UNHCR Resettlement Services in Geneva. The Directorate for Integration and Diversity (IMDI) facilitates the placement of the refugees and their introduction to Norwegian society.

The **legal basis** for recognition of all refugees is the Norway Immigration Act, whose definition of a refugee is taken from Article 1A of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. The most important **selection criterion** is a refugee's need for protection along with ensuring that no other durable solutions are available for the individual. Integration potential was formerly evaluated; however as of 2008, the second selection criterion is now to ascertain that municipalities can provide appropriate services for refugee needs. The programme has a particular focus on vulnerable groups (women-at-risk, unaccompanied minors and medical cases). Medical conditions are never grounds for exclusion, although it must be apparent that services are available in Norway where special treatment is required. **Emergency** and ordinary **dossiers** are submitted by UNHCR Geneva. Ordinary dossiers may also be submitted by UNHCR Regional Hubs and occasionally by organisations (inter-governmental and NGOs) such as the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Norway Poets, Essayists and Novelists (PEN), or Norwegian Embassies.

The UDI is responsible for **in-country selection** and decision-making, a process lasting two weeks. The selection process was shortened (from four weeks) in 2008 in order to make selection missions more efficient and expedite the resettlement process. Prior to departure, refugees selected for resettlement (dossier and in-country selection cases) are issued entry visas and residence and work permits by the Norwegian Embassy. Generally upon arrival, refugees may be granted asylum and Convention **refugee status** for one year at a time. After three years, refugees can apply for a permanent residence permit (allowing them to live two years abroad without losing their status) and after seven years they may apply for **citizenship**. The same criteria are applied when determining the status of asylum seekers.

Average time for processing **decisions** on dossier cases is 3-4 weeks, while emergency cases are processed within 48 hours. For refugees accepted on selection missions the time period between acceptance of a case for resettlement and arrival in Norway is 4-6 months.

Quota refugees are settled directly in **municipalities**. Once the receiving municipality has been identified, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) organises **travel** to Norway, paid for by the Norwegian Government. On behalf of the IMDI, IOM delivers four days of **pre-departure cultural orientation (CO)** covering practical information for living in Norway and understanding Norwegian society. As directed by IMDI, the CO Programme also provides the receiving Norwegian municipalities with relevant and current information about the refugees to be resettled and their situation prior to arrival in Norway. The information to municipalities is provided through Country Information Seminars and Country Profiles.

Settlement and integration of refugees in **municipalities** is managed by the IMDI. There are six regional offices that choose areas of settlement in over 100 different municipalities. The number of places available in municipalities is determined by the number of 'positive responses' received from local authorities to requests for resettlement submitted by the IMDI. According to the policy of the IMDI, the main goal for settlement of refugees in Norway is for refugees to be self-reliant as soon as possible. Usually refugees from one ethnic group are settled in the same or in neighbouring municipalities in order to reduce the number of secondary moves. Municipalities sometimes specify which groups of refugees they will accommodate based on origin and/or family composition.

Though the decision to accommodate refugees is voluntary, once an agreement to accept a group for resettlement is made the Government holds municipalities responsible for integration. After placement of refugees is confirmed, local authorities receive an **integration subsidy** per refugee to provide for benefits (housing, education, healthcare and welfare) in the five-year integration period. The integration subsidy for receiving municipalities for 2008 was NOK 551.500 (or EUR 69.045) total for the five-year period for each refugee 18 years of age or older.



*Hiking activity for refugees, to Norway's highest mountain (Photo: IMDI)*

Upon arrival, refugees are received by municipal officials and are immediately accompanied to an arranged home or apartment. The IMDI manages the 2004 Introductory Act for Newly Arrived Refugees and works in cooperation with actors and partners on an international and national level (including state, municipal, voluntary sector or private organisations). The IMDI has six regional offices responsible for the resettlement of a certain number of refugees in each region and for managing the **two-year introductory programme** outlined in the Act. This programme focuses on individual needs and includes a programme allowance, Norwegian language instruction, employment preparation and access to higher or specialised education programmes. Attendance of 250 hours of language training and 50 hours of Icelandic culture and society lessons is mandatory for all refugees between the ages of 18 and 55. Although, Refugees are granted a general work permit, if they become employed they can lose some or all of the income support they receive to attend the introduction programme. Many refugees start working full or part-time towards the end of the two-year programme.

Norwegian **NGOs** do not have a central role in resettlement but they have collaborated with municipalities on projects to increase social integration such as the Refugee Guide Project in cooperation with the Red Cross. Norwegian **volunteers**

serve as 'guides' in the community, providing refugees with practical information about living in Norway and the opportunity to practice speaking Norwegian. The project has received positive feedback from refugees and guides. The objective is that both volunteers and refugees learn from the one-year guide programme. Through the help of 'guides', refugees are able to make friends and contacts more easily and learn the language at a faster rate. Currently 100 municipalities make use of the Red Cross Refugee Guide programme to assist the integration of refugees with the largest programme located in Bergen.

The arrivals from 2008 have been placed in 70 different municipalities with the main nationalities being Myanmar, Iraqis, and Palestinians. Norway has established a quota of 1 200 for 2009 and the main nationalities to be resettled are Iraqis, Palestinians (from Iraq), Eritreans, Bhutanese and Myanmar.

### **Projects to Promote Resettlement**

Norway is a member of the **UNHCR Trust Fund** for Enhancing Resettlement Activities, a fund designated for the enhancement of resettlement capacities and activities in emerging countries (see *Chapter 3.5 on Sweden*). Between 2001 and 2005, Norway contributed by converting between 50 and 100 quota places annually into financial support.

Norway is a donor for **regional resettlement** and protection programmes of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Latin America through the **Mexico Plan of Action**. The financial support that Norway provides is a way of converting any unallocated quota places into resettlement activities, thereby making funds available to the UNHCR for supporting projects of regional resettlement, especially for Colombian refugees and IDPs. Norway's involvement began with the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) co-hosting of a conference in Mexico City where plans were drafted to improve the protection of refugees and IDPs. In February 2006, Norway sponsored the Regional Resettlement Meeting within the framework of the Mexico Plan of Action in Quito, Ecuador.

In March 2007, the UNHCR project focused on building capacity for resettlement in Chile, Brazil and Argentina. To do this, Norway participated in **twining exercises** with representatives and NGOs from Brazil and Argentina. First, a Brazilian representative accompanied the Norwegian Government to Zambia on a selection mission. Then, representatives from Brazil and Argentina went to Norway to learn

about the process of resettlement from pre-departure CO to integration programmes. In October 2007, Norwegian UDI and IMDI representatives accompanied Argentina's mission to Ecuador to select Colombian refugees. The final portion of the project was a Twinning Meeting in Sao Paolo, Brazil in November 2007 where experiences were presented and exchanged. The main challenge for Latin American partners in resettlement is finding housing and work for refugees however the experience and knowledge gained from twinning practices with Norway engendered ideas and strategies for improving resettlement. In March 2009 a Norwegian delegation will be sent to Uruguay for a follow-up meeting with twinning partners in Latin America.

## Sweden

Sweden's involvement in refugee resettlement began with a special quota programme in 1950. The quota and the general guidelines for its application are annually approved by the Swedish Parliament and are planned primarily on the basis of UNHCR's resettlement needs assessment. The annual refugee **quota** ranges between 1 000 and 1 900 persons. In matters of overall policy, the Governments of the Nordic countries meet for regular consultations within the framework of the Nordic Council for Refugee Affairs (NSHF), which is a cooperative body of five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and their autonomous territories. The cases for resettlement consideration are referred by the UNHCR. On an exceptional basis only, Swedish embassies may propose cases for resettlement.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	1 900	1 880	Palestinians, Afghans, Myanmarese
2007	1 800	1 799	Iraqis, Myanmarese, Afghans
2006	1 700	1 653	Colombians, Afghans, Iranians
2005	1 700	1 242	Afghans, Colombians, Myanmarese
2004	1 700	1 656	Iraqis, Iranians, Myanmarese
2003	1 000	890	Afghans, Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Iraqis, Iranians
2002	1 000	1 015	Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans
2001	1 285	1 279	Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans
2000	1 380	1 162	Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, Former Yugoslavs

Source: Swedish Migration Board (SMB)

The **funds** allocated for the resettlement programme may be used for direct resettlement to Sweden or as a contribution to projects designed to help resolve refugee problems outside Sweden, which takes on different forms (see *Projects to Promote Resettlement* below). The **main actors** are the Swedish Migration Board (SMB), Sweden's central government authority on Aliens Affairs (working under the

Ministry of Justice) and municipal authorities.

The **definition** of a refugee stated in the Aliens Act is almost identical to the refugee definition of the 1951 Convention, omitting any territorial and temporal limitations. The Aliens Act considers persons in need of international protection on subsidiary grounds for protection, as well as others in particularly vulnerable situations (for example persons who are at risk of execution or torture, who flee armed conflict or who face gender-related persecution); humanitarian grounds are not taken into consideration. The Swedish programme does not specify **resettlement criteria** or special categories. It considers primarily the need for international protection and issues of exclusion -which are broader than the exclusion clauses contained in the 1951 Convention.

Unlike Denmark and Norway, Sweden does not have a **medical programme**. Selection on medical grounds is only permitted on an exceptional basis although, generally speaking, illness is not in itself considered an obstacle to the selection of persons in need of protection and for this reason **medical examinations** are not required before departure. The SMB emphasises that information on special medical needs or treatment should be mentioned in the Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) in order to be better prepared for the refugees' reception and integration.

The Swedish programme allocates a significant number of places for **urgent and emergency** cases each year. For 2008, this number was set at 300 and subsequently increased to 350 places in 2009. Emergency cases can take up to five days from the receipt of the dossier to arrival in Sweden and urgent cases should not take more than ten days. Both emergency and urgent cases are usually dealt with on a dossier basis. The selection criteria for urgent and emergency cases are the same as for non-priority resettlement cases.

The SMB is responsible for the selection and relocation of quota refugees to Sweden. The SMB delegation selects cases for resettlement based on in-country **selection missions** and on a dossier basis. Selection missions normally last two to four weeks. The delegation of SMB members interviews the candidates and their families for resettlement in the country of asylum. The decisions are usually made at the end of the selection mission. It should be noted that the SMB is open to reviewing cases that have been rejected for resettlement by other countries.

**Dossier** submission consists primarily of a RRF prepared by UNHCR. The decision

is made based on the information provided in the RRF. In cases where the information is insufficient or unreliable, more details are requested from UNHCR or from another suitable source (the embassy or NGOs). The **decision** is normally made within three weeks. For the fiscal year of 2008, roughly 950 places were allocated for cases selected through missions; the remaining 800 cases were accepted through dossier selection. After the decision has been made, it takes between two and three months to prepare the trip to Sweden for normal cases depending on the arrangement of accommodation as well as other factors such as the issuing of exit visas and the presence of a Swedish embassy.

During selection missions, accepted quota refugees receive a brief information session on Swedish society. Depending on practical logistics and financial resources, a delegation consisting of municipality and SMB personnel travels to the country of asylum to organise a more detailed **pre-departure cultural orientation (CO)** lasting one week. Refugees accepted on a dossier basis receive only a printed brochure with information on Sweden. In practice, only a minority of the refugees bound for Sweden are able to attend a CO. The SMB is currently looking into ways of providing its pre-departure CO programme to more accepted refugees, especially those who are accepted on a dossier basis.

**Travel** for accepted quota refugees is handled by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as instructed by the Migration Board; travel costs are covered by the Swedish Government. All resettled refugees are given a **permanent residence permit** prior to departure. Refugees accepted on convention grounds are eligible to apply for Swedish **citizenship** after four years (other refugees may apply after five years).

Upon arrival, the refugees are met at the airport by municipal staff and are taken directly to the **municipality** where they are to be settled. The decision to receive refugees is made by the municipalities on a voluntary basis with a signing of agreement before the arrival of quota refugees in Sweden. Currently, around 130 of the approximately 290 total municipalities in Sweden receive resettled refugees. With the dissolution of the Swedish Integration Board in July 2007, the County Administrative Boards now arrange the written agreements and placement of both quota and non-quota refugees in municipalities. The SMB consults the County Administrative Boards and local municipalities prior to final decisions on placement of caseloads to gather considerations that are then used in discussions with the



UNHCR.

The SMB distributes financial resources to the municipalities, who are then responsible for the organisation and implementation of introduction programmes. Once the quota refugees have arrived, the municipality is fully responsible for their settlement and integration. Figures from the 2009 budget show that municipalities receive a state grant of SEK 189.400 (around EUR 17.200) for each adult refugee, SEK 116.300 (around EUR 10.550) for a refugee child (under the age of 16) and SEK 69.900 (EUR 6.450) for adults 65 and older for the entire introductory period.

The municipality then creates an individual introduction plan for each refugee in cooperation with the local employment office. On average, the introduction or **integration** plan lasts for two years however this may vary depending upon the refugee as each plan is adapted to the individual. During this time quota refugees are provided with permanent or subsidised accommodation (temporary accommodation is provided when housing is not immediately available) and have access to income support, language training and employment assistance. Refugees enjoy the same right to financial assistance and access to healthcare and education facilities as Swedish citizens. In principle, refugees are free to settle in the municipality of their choice but state-sponsored accommodation is only granted if they stay in the municipality where they are initially placed. Sweden plans to modify its integration programme towards a more rapid introduction into the labour market. The programme proposed involves individual employment coaches for refugees however no formal changes will be decided upon until spring 2009.

In Sweden, the municipal authorities are the main actors in ensuring integration for refugees. Nevertheless, in some municipalities **NGOs** also assist with the integration process. NGOs may be sub-contracted by municipal authorities to implement a portion of the introduction programme and they occasionally organise activities complimenting the services provided by municipalities, such as language training, computer classes and recreational or social activities.

The Swedish quota for **2008** was 1 900 (individual cases). The SMB completed five selection missions in Iran (for Iraqis and Afghans), Thailand (for Myanmarese), India (mixed nationalities), Congo Brazzaville (mixed nationalities) and Syria (for Iraqis and Palestinians), approving resettlement for 950 refugees. The Migration Board has been looking into a flexible quota which would allow a carry-over of unused quota places to following years. Almost half of the caseload for 2009 (or 800 places) is

reserved for Iraqi refugees, with a selection mission to Syria in March 2009 and to Jordan in May 2009. Sweden has been a leader in efforts to promote an EU response to the Iraqi crisis and in working with the UNHCR to find durable solutions for Iraqis and Palestinians in countries neighbouring Iraq. In June 2009, Sweden will host the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR)<sup>6</sup> in Geneva.



*Burmese refugees arriving in Hallsberg Municipality, Sweden (Photo: Carina Larsson)*

### **Projects to Promote Resettlement**

Sweden has opted to use part of its resettlement fund to contribute to projects aimed at supporting refugees and promoting resettlement in third countries through 'Regional Resettlement' initiatives such as:

- The **Colombian Project** was implemented annually from 2000-2002. It promoted regional resettlement in Latin America through the conversion of a certain number of quota places into resettlement places within the region of origin of refugees. Colombian refugees were provided with the possibility to stay for one year in a Latin American country with this project. It was agreed that if the

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a2cd39e6.html>

refugees were not able to repatriate after one year they would be resettled to Sweden. Most of the Colombian refugees involved did not return after one year. The majority were granted asylum in hosting Latin American countries and only a few refugees opted to be resettled to Sweden.

- The **UNHCR Trust Fund for Enhancing Resettlement Activities**, a Nordic initiative piloting regional resettlement in Burkina Faso and Benin (also referred to in Chapter 3.4 on Norway).

The SMB hopes to participate more actively in the **Mexico Plan of Action** with UNHCR to support the ‘Resettlement in Solidarity’ programme, which offers regional resettlement opportunities. Norway, the Netherlands and the US are among the countries that already contribute to the Mexico Plan of Action (*see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.4 on Norway*). In 2009, Sweden will most likely convert 30 quota places to support the Mexico Plan of Action; other possibilities for further participation have not been confirmed by the Ministry.

The Swedish Government supports the **Emergency Transit Centre (ETC)** in Romania and accepts refugees for resettlement from the ETC. Approximately 25 cases were accepted from the ETC in 2008 and a caseload was considered for resettlement in 2009 as well.

As a follow-up to the 2007 ICMC Resettlement Training, Sweden launched a **National Resettlement Network** project with funding from the ERF. This network aims to enhance knowledge about resettlement in Sweden and strengthen cooperation among all members/actors involved including the SMB, UNHCR, municipalities, County Administrative Boards and NGOs. The steering committee meets every other month to discuss membership, manage an electronic newsletter and organise seminars.

Sweden has been involved in a range of **twinning arrangements**. Most recently, resettlement actors participated in the **MOST** (*Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees*) project from 2006–2008. In an effort to improve introduction programmes and allow refugee voices be heard, Sweden completed a report on 12 refugees’ experiences in resettlement. The stories gathered highlighted how closely linked and consequential each step of resettlement is in regards to the refugee’s eventual independence and integration in the host country. Project conclusions outlined the need to improve introduction

programmes through a holistic approach looking first at improving pre-departure CO and then at the process of refugee integration following their arrival in Sweden (*refer to MOST project in Finland section of Chapter 1*).

**Part III**

**Chapter 2 – Western Europe**

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## Ireland

Ireland has been resettling refugees since 1956 under country-specific agreements. In 1998, it became involved in the UNHCR Resettlement Quota Programme in response to requests from UNHCR. Initially, the Irish Government agreed to accept an annual **quota** of 10 cases plus immediate family members. An average of 37 refugees per year was admitted under the programme between 1999 and 2004. The total number admitted under the resettlement programme by the end of 2008 was 737 persons. Two thirds of this total was reached between 2005 and 2008 following an increase in the annual quota in 2005 to 200 persons per year.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	200	101	Sudanese, Cubans, Myanmar's Rohingya
2007	200	114	Myanmar's Karen, Sudanese
2006	200	184	Iranian Kurds
2005	200	115	Iranian Kurds, Congolese (DRC), Somalis
2004	10 cases plus family members	58	Chechens, Ethiopians, Somalis
2003	10 cases plus family members	50	Iranian Kurds, Congolese (DRC), Chechens
2002	10 cases plus family members	28	Iranian Kurds, Congolese (DRC)
2001	10 cases plus family members	52	Iranian Kurds, Congolese (DRC)
2000	10 cases plus family members	35	Afghans

\* The new quota of 200 persons includes nuclear family members i.e. spouse, dependent children under 18 yrs., dependent unmarried children over 18 yrs. and dependent parents.

\*\* Accepted cases do not always arrive during the year they are accepted. For example, in 2008, 198 persons were accepted for resettlement in Ireland but for logistical reasons they will not arrive until early 2009.

Source: The Office of the Minister for Integration

A refugee admitted for resettlement has the **status** of "programme refugee". The **legal framework** for the resettlement programme is stated in Section 24 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended). Section 24 states that "a programme refugee" is a person to whom *leave to enter and remain* for temporary protection or resettlement as part of a group of persons has been given by the Government. The individual's name is entered in a register established and maintained by the Minister for Foreign Affairs; whether or not such a person is a refugee within the meaning of the definition of "refugee" (this definition is in keeping with the 1951 Convention definition). Following a governmental decision in 2005, responsibility for maintaining the register of programme refugees was transferred to the Office of the Minister for Integration. The Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) provides that a person admitted as a programme refugee has in general the same rights and entitlements as a person granted refugee status.

The Government decides on the annual quota and the broad terms of the resettlement programme. Ireland's resettlement programme is based on a mainstream model of service provision and **funding** where each service provider or Government Department (Ministry) funds services from within their own resources. It is recognised that targeted initiatives may be required to add value in certain circumstances. Funding special targeted initiatives comes from various avenues such as community development, Social Welfare, the Health Service Executive, philanthropic organisations, the Office of the Minister for Integration and the European Refugee Fund (ERF). The Office of the Minister for Integration coordinates the resettlement programme nationally and provision is made in the aforementioned office's budget for the selection, pre-departure and orientation elements of the resettlement programme. The 2008 ERF is used strategically to increase capacity at a local level. Funding is used for special short-term targeted initiatives to increase participation in the local community and to improve access to services for refugees in the short term.

**Selection criteria** are based on UNHCR standards for protection and durable solutions. The country of origin and country of refuge for refugees resettled under the annual programme is decided following consultation between the Minister for Integration, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Decisions are informed by priorities presented by UNHCR during the Resettlement Working Group meetings and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on

Resettlement (ATCR). The majority of cases are accepted based on legal and physical protection needs, women and children at risk and medical cases. Family reunification is not considered a ground for resettlement and Ireland does not accept unaccompanied minors or emergency cases.

In general, Ireland reserves 20 percent of the quota for **dossier** based referrals that can include medical cases or women and children at risk. Individual dossiers, generally submitted by the UNHCR, are examined in the Office of the Minister for Integration by the resettlement team. Medical or special needs cases are referred to the relevant Government Departments (Ministries) or to a service provider such as the Health Service Executive to ensure that the needs of the applicant are met. All **final decisions** are made by the Ministry generally within two months of receiving the dossier.

Since 2006, Ireland has carried out face-to-face interviews during **selection missions** for the balance of the quota (approx.160 persons). Selection missions are a useful tool not only to interview the applicant and confirm their background and identity but to gain invaluable information on the issues associated with each group. The information gathered assists with planning resettlement and informs the receiving community on the services required to meet refugees' short and long-term needs. Personnel from the Office of the Minister for Integration and the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) participate in selection missions and the former makes recommendations to the Minister.

Selection missions for **2008** were sent to interview Rohingya Myanmarese refugees in Bangladesh and Congolese (DRC) refugees in Tanzania. At the time of writing, the Ministry had not announced selection missions or other resettlement plans for 2009.





*Iranians Kurdish children playing in the Family Resource Centre in Ballyhaunis  
(Photo: Stephen Grogan, Director of the Family Resource Centre, Ballyhaunis)*

Ireland's **pre-departure orientation** programme is a one to two day briefing on resettlement in Ireland presented during the selection mission. The objective is to give a realistic description of the rights and responsibilities of resettled refugees and to reduce unrealistic expectations. The pre-departure orientation presentation includes separate Q & A sessions with both the male and female adults. This approach ensures that the applicant and family can make an informed decision on their resettlement options and discuss particular issues of concern to them.

Upon arrival in Ireland, refugees are given the **status** of 'programme refugee'. They are issued with a one-year residence visa renewable annually. They may apply for citizenship after three years (subject to normal naturalisation procedures). Programme refugees may apply for a travel document and may leave and enter the state (subject to normal immigration procedures); however resettled refugees are not allowed to travel to their country of origin. Resettled refugees have the same rights as those granted refugee status in Ireland as stated in Section 3 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended).

Refugees admitted under the resettlement programme are received at the airport by a member of the resettlement team of the Office of the Minister for Integration. In 2006, Ireland introduced a new **reception and orientation programme**. Under this programme, refugees admitted for resettlement are initially placed in the national **orientation and training centre** for a period of eight weeks. The new arrivals have the opportunity to adjust to life in Ireland before living independently in the community. The orientation programme is designed to provide basic information about life in Ireland, civic rights and responsibilities, cultural information and language training.

Approximately nine months before the arrival of a new group under the resettlement programme, the resettlement team from the Office of the Minister for Integration begins the process of identifying the **resettlement location**. Locations are selected based on refugees' needs and the services available in a local community. In general, approximately 10 families are settled in bigger towns and, to avoid isolation, no less than five families are settled in any one location. There are currently 10 localities involved in resettlement

Ireland has a **mainstream model** of service provision. Although integration is coordinated by the local authority in the area, the resettlement team assists the local authority in creating a Resettlement Steering Group, which plans for local settlement and integration. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from all service providers and NGOs in the locality. The resettlement team assists with planning and provides training and information to the Steering Group in relation to resettlement in general and also provides information specific to the particular group being resettled.

The intensive **integration programme** lasts for approximately 18 months after arrival in Ireland. During the first three to four months support is provided by the resettlement team through liaison with the local service providers and home visits (where necessary). The Resettlement Officer ensures that all services are in place, cultural orientation is delivered, children are placed in schools and language courses are arranged. Ireland has an active **voluntary sector** that works closely with service providers at a local level to support and befriend resettled refugees.

On arrival in Ireland a resettled refugee may apply for social welfare support in the same manner as an Irish citizen. Adults attending language training receive a job-seekers allowance on the basis that they are improving their skills and foresee

eventual employment. **Language and socialisation** training of up to 20 hours per week for one year is provided at a local level by the relevant Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The language and socialisation programme builds on the orientation and training programme presented during the first eight weeks post arrival. Persons who are unable to attend language training may apply for other alternatives. During the course of the language and socialisation programme the training coordinator works with the student to develop a pathway to employment or further training.

### **Projects to promote resettlement**

In an effort to improve resettlement practices and learn from international experiences, Ireland participated in two EU funded trans-national projects from 2004 -2007. The **MORE** (Modelling of National Resettlement Process and Implementation of Emergency Measures) and **MOST** (Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training related to Resettlement and Reception of Refugees) projects examined various aspects of resettlement and developed models of good practice.

Ireland's activities in the MOST project focused on the reception and settlement of refugees. Activities involved interviewing refugees concerning the CO programme in Ireland. Refugee participation in identifying best practices and recommendations for improvement was central to this portion of the MOST project, in addition to meetings with agency and NGO actors. As a result of this study, Ireland has extended the post-arrival CO programme from four weeks to eight weeks and is currently restructuring the language programme.

Ireland is currently involved in a **trans-national project** funded under the Community Actions Strand of the ERF, Transnational Resettlement UK and Ireland (TRUKI). The Government of the United Kingdom is a leading partner, with Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia as observing members. This new initiative is designed to examine the feasibility, advantages and disadvantages of joint resettlement missions and resettlement programmes involving two or more Member States in 2008 and 2009. The project will jointly develop a practical and cost-effective approach to carry out cross-border resettlement. TRUKI aims to enable positive settlement outcomes for refugees involved and develop a practical support mechanism for emerging resettlement countries.

# The Netherlands



Arrival of Myanmarese refugees at Schiphol Airport (Photo: Nicolien Rengers, COA)

In 1977, the Netherlands decided to establish an annual resettlement quota of 250 refugees after many years of an ad-hoc policy on resettlement. This quota increased in 1987 to 500. The current **quota** of 2 000 cases is set for a **four-year period** (2008-2011) allowing for more flexibility in the allocation of places. It should be noted that the quota is filled by date of selection. Only cases referred by UNHCR are considered under the quota programme. The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (COA) (an independent institution under the Ministry of Justice), and the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCFR) are the **main actors** in resettlement.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008	500	544	Iraqis, Ethiopians
2007	500	569	Congolese (DRC), Ethiopians, Iraqis, Myanmarese
2006	500	497	Myanmarese, Ethiopians
2005	500	452	Liberians, Burundians, Columbians
2004	500	347	Congolese (DRC), Sudanese
2003	500	189	Afghans, Columbians
2002	500	155	Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC), Rwanda
2001	500	223	Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC)
2000	500	215	Myanmarese, Sudanese, Croats

Source: Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and the Ministry of Justice

\*It should be noted that for years 2000 to 2004, cases were selected on dossier basis from a number of different locations.

Refugees can be accepted for resettlement according to the following **legal grounds**: the 1951 Convention, the European Convention for Human Rights, protection for humanitarian reasons and family reunification. Since 2005, the **capacity for integration** is considered as a criterion for cases in which there is no need for international protection, i.e. cases accepted on humanitarian grounds. A case can be rejected due to lack of capacity for integration when signs or behaviour are deemed to be extremely non-conformist or if intent to cause social unrest is expressed. For refugees who are at-risk and (medical) emergency cases, the integration potential criterion is waived. Since 2005, only two cases have been rejected on this criterion.

The resettlement quota includes various categories. A sub-quota for medical cases ensures a certain number of places are reserved for medical or **Ten-Or-More (TOM)** cases. This annual sub-quota has been set at 30 cases. To be eligible, medical cases must demonstrate that refugees cannot receive medical treatment in their countries of asylum and that treatment in the Netherlands would lead to substantial improvement of the health condition. The Dutch Government prefers submission of medical cases as part of a selection mission because of the possibility of carrying out

a **physical examination**. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that this is not always feasible and will occasionally accept medical cases on a dossier basis.

Under the Dutch programme **vulnerable categories** of refugees, such as women-at-risk and survivors of violence and torture are given special consideration in addition to urgent and emergency cases. In 2008, 145 vulnerable category cases were accepted yet there is no determined number of places in the quota reserved for these categories. In the Netherlands, the composition of the group of refugees is important. Officials want to ensure that the group of refugees is not composed entirely of vulnerable cases so that there is a balance with those who are able to give support or who can act as leaders.

Since 1999, partners and children (who are not adults) of resettled adult refugees who entered the Netherlands in the context of **family reunification** are included in the resettlement quota where partners/family members have been communicated to the authorities during selection missions. This applies only to nuclear family members (parents, their children and dependent adults).

The Dutch Government has changed the method of selection over the years. Initially, cases were selected by means of personal interviews during **selection missions**. Then, from 1999 to 2004, the government considered cases for resettlement through dossier selection only. In 2005, when it appeared difficult to fill the quota merely via dossier selection, selection missions were re-introduced. Today, refugees are mainly accepted through selection missions in the country of asylum, of which a maximum of four are organised each year. Around 100 places are allocated for **dossier selection** including emergency (medical) cases, requests for family reunification following a mission and cases from countries of asylum not addressed during selection missions. In the case of selection missions, the **final decision** for cases is made at the end of the selection mission. For dossier submissions, it takes about six weeks to two months to make a decision.

The delegation conducting the selection mission consists of a medical doctor and representatives from the IND, COA, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A medical check-up is conducted; however the result does not influence the decision-making process. The role of the COA during the selection mission is to conduct '**social intake**' interviews during which specific information on the refugees is gathered to develop a social file. The COA uses this information to prepare the cultural orientation, reception and introduction programmes in the Netherlands. The social file

is shared with the medical organisation in the reception centre and with the DCFR who uses it to support resettled refugees' applications for family reunification. The IND has access to the social file but this information would only be considered in decision-making on very rare occasions. During the social intake interview, the refugees also receive basic information on social and cultural aspects of the Netherlands in order to 'manage expectations'. This interview is the first opportunity for the refugees to become familiar with the COA, who will be their guide until they are settled in a municipality in the Netherlands.

Approximately one month after the selection mission, a **pre-departure cultural orientation (CO)** is organised for refugees by the COA. The cultural orientation programme lasts for four days and is specifically tailored to each group of refugees with the help of the social files. In order to create a realistic picture of the Netherlands, the refugees are given pertinent information on the reception centre and Dutch society, in addition to an introduction to the Dutch language. Orientations also serve to create a social network between the refugees in the group; an important element as refugees will remain in their group throughout the rest of the process. Groups are composed of a maximum of 30 persons whom are a mixture of so-called 'leader-types' and vulnerable refugees.

For normal cases, it takes about one to three months following the decision before refugees are able to **travel** to the Netherlands. Travel arrangements are made by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and all travel-related expenses are covered by the Dutch Government. Refugees receive a revocable **residence permit** for asylum (Aliens Act 2000) and after five years they can apply for a permanent residence permit. Only in exceptional cases are resettled refugees not granted a permanent residence permit. In the near future, refugees will have to pass an exam to demonstrate their knowledge of Dutch society and Dutch language in order to obtain a permanent residence permit. Refugees are eligible to apply for **citizenship** after five years as a permanent resident.

The Netherlands has traditionally opted for a centralised form of reception for resettled refugees followed by '**group settlement**' (between 1999 and 2005 this method was interrupted). Since 2005, all resettled refugees are taken from the airport to a **single reception centre** in Amersfoort, specifically for resettled refugees, where they are provided with temporary accommodation. The reception centre is managed by the COA. Refugees stay in the reception centre for three to six months after which



they are moved out in groups of approximately 20 persons and settled in the municipalities. These groups have already been together since the Cultural Orientation session and have moved through the process together. Refugees who have been selected on a dossier basis are placed individually and generally have to wait longer for housing as they have to pass through the general refugee system (rather than that for resettled refugees). It takes more time to find suitable housing for refugees in need of special accommodation due to medical conditions and for large families.

During the refugees' stay in the reception centre, the COA offers a short **introduction programme**, composed of Dutch language classes, basic knowledge about the Netherlands and a course on participating in society. The introduction programme aims at preparing refugees for settlement in the municipalities. During their stay in the centre contacts are made with the municipalities in order to facilitate the transition later on. The refugees receive financial aid to cover personal expenses and are insured for medical treatment if required. The refugees are entitled to the same medical treatment and services as Dutch citizens and have the same access to social security and the labour market (refugees may start working immediately after arrival). A local department of the DCFR in the centre provides information, advice and support on family reunification procedures for the refugees.

Once the introduction period has passed and housing is found, the refugees move to a **municipality**. In the Netherlands, municipalities are obliged to receive refugees and refugees cannot choose where they want to live if they want to make use of social housing. In matching refugees and municipalities the COA looks at availability of housing, presence of similar nationalities or ethnic groups and the labour supply/demand in the area. Agreements with municipalities regarding group placement of refugees are made before their arrival in the Netherlands.

The municipal authorities offer a one to two-year **introduction programme**, funded by the central authorities. In 2009, the Dutch Government introduced the 'Wet Participatiebudget'; a law regarding budgetary participation that offers more flexibility to local authorities to combine different sources of funding for introduction and integration. The amount each municipality receives for the implementation of the introduction programme for third country nationals now varies but is approximately EUR 4.000 per person for the entire introduction programme. Local authorities are obliged to offer an introduction programme which must include social guidance to all



refugees, whereas it is optional for other groups of third country nationals. The programme is tailored to fit individual needs and skills. It consists of Dutch language classes, information on Dutch society and vocational training. Since 2008, programmes must include a work-learning component to foster interaction with Dutch society. It is generally carried out by the DCFR and funded by the municipalities to impart practical information and support to refugees. Once the refugees move to their own housing they are entitled to social security (like Dutch citizens) until they find employment.

The work of the municipal authorities is complemented by the DCFR through a system of trained **volunteers** to assist resettled refugees with integration by focusing on social guidance and family reunification. DCFR advises municipal authorities and institutions and attempts to sensitise the general public on refugee issues through the publication of articles and general information. The local departments receive funding from municipalities for their activities, while the DCFR receives funding from the central Government to support their local departments with advice and training.

In 2008, four missions were carried out to the following destinations (nationality of refugees is in parentheses): Jordan (Iraqis), Thailand (Myanmarese), Tanzania (Congoese and Burundians) and Nepal (Bhutanese). Selection missions for **2009** were planned for Kenya (mainly Ethiopians and Eritreans), Syria (Iraqis), Thailand (Myanmarese) and Nepal (Bhutanese). The selection mission to Kenya carried out in January 2009 involved Belgian and Luxembourg participants.

### **Projects to promote resettlement**

The Netherlands has made the strengthening of refugee protection in the region of origin a priority in its refugee policy and wants to ensure strategic use of its resettlement places in the future. In this context, the Netherlands, along with Ireland and the UK, supports and promotes the concept of the '**Regional Protection Programmes**' (see details in Part II, *European Dimension*).

In 2007 and 2008, COA was responsible for the **twinning project** 'Durable Solutions in Practice'. This twinning exercise offered an extensive 'learning by doing' programme with the Czech Republic, Belgium, Poland and Romania. As an outcome of the twinning programmes, the Czech Republic began resettling refugees in 2008. The Dutch Minister for Integration invited twinning partners from Luxembourg and Belgium to join a resettlement selection mission to Thailand during 2008. Following

the mission, both Luxembourg and Belgium announced that they would resettle refugees in 2009.

**Research** carried out by the Dutch Ministry of Justice's scientific research and documentation centre (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatie Centrum or WODC), evaluated Dutch policy and the social position of resettled refugees throughout the history of resettlement in the Netherlands and in comparison to other resettlement countries. The study found that resettled refugees (often independent of their background and education), are more likely to be unemployed or employed in lower segments of the labour market, rarely moving on to other sectors. Findings also highlighted that Dutch policy changes throughout the years have not had a significant effect on labour integration yet the fact remains that resettlement is carried out for humanitarian rather than economic reasons. The WODC report<sup>7</sup> has not subsequently affected policy regarding resettlement, but it enables examination of reception and integration practices. Language courses, for example, are currently being re-evaluated for improvement.

The University Assistance Fund (UAF) is currently implementing a project aimed at improving the integration of resettled **refugee students** (with significant secondary education) by improving access to higher education/employment opportunities. Activities include information sessions on opportunities for work and study in the Netherlands, a series of preparatory courses and individual coaching. The project runs from 2009 to 2012 and is funded by the ERF in cooperation with COA, the IND and UNHCR (see [www.uaf.nl](http://www.uaf.nl) for more information).

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<sup>7</sup> Full report summary: [http://english.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/longitudinaal-onderzoek-naar-de-integratie-van-uitgenodigde-vluchtelingen.aspx?nav=ra&l=migratie\\_en\\_integratie&l=vluchtelingen](http://english.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/longitudinaal-onderzoek-naar-de-integratie-van-uitgenodigde-vluchtelingen.aspx?nav=ra&l=migratie_en_integratie&l=vluchtelingen)

# The United Kingdom

The main refugee resettlement programme in the UK, the Gateway Protection Programme (GPP), began in March 2004. The programme is funded by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) of the Home Office in accordance with Section 59 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and the European Commission under the 2008 European Refugee Fund. The GPP is made possible by the UKBA working in partnership with the UNHCR, international organisations, local authorities, the voluntary sector and NGOs.

Year	Quota	Number of Accepted Refugees	Largest Groups
2008-2009	750	520	Ethiopians, Iraqis, Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC)
2007-2008	500	416	Ethiopians, Myanmarese, Congolese (DRC)
2006-2007	500	545	Congolese (DRC), Ethiopians, Myanmarese, Mauritians
2005-2006	500	247	Congolese (DRC), Sudanese, Myanmarese
2004-2005	500	150	Liberians, Congolese (DRC), Sierra Leoneans

Source: The UK Home Office, UK Border Agency

\* Figures are available only for arrivals in the UK as acceptance and arrival numbers are generally congruent

\*\* Number of arrivals as of January 2009

Each year the **quota** is determined by UK Ministers depending on the global need, the resources available for the programme and the predicted impact on local services. Funding for the programme is provided based on estimates submitted to the Home Office by agencies and organisations working in resettlement. Guidelines for the integration programme (detailed below) have been developed by the Home Office based on the feedback and experiences of various agencies working in resettlement.

**Voluntary sector** refugee agencies have played a key role in the development of the programme. The major agencies involved co-operate as the RIAP (Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership) that is formed by five members: the British Red Cross (BRC), Migrant Helpline (MHL), Refugee Action (RA), Refugee Council (RC) and the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC). Its main purpose is to co-ordinate the refugee voluntary sector in post-arrival resettlement services. RIAP agencies meet every two months to discuss operational and strategic issues, share expertise and communicate concerns or suggestions to the UKBA. The UKBA Chairs the GPP steering group which is composed of representatives from the Local Authorities receiving refugees, RIAP agencies, UNHCR and other governmental departments and agencies. It meets quarterly to discuss objectives, evaluate progress of GPP, share *best practices* (referred to as 'skills share days') and identify problems and solutions. *The Gateway Protection Programme Good Practices Guide* was recently published (September 2008) by RA and the RC, with contributions from the GPP.<sup>8</sup>

Applications for resettlement are reviewed only as referred by UNHCR to the UKBA. The latter conducts **selection missions** to interview applicants thereby supplementing the Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) provided by UNHCR. Up to six selection missions are planned with UNHCR for each fiscal year. Housing is a mix of private rentals, housing associations and public or local authority housing. **Legal recognition** of refugees follows the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee. **Selection criteria** are based on refugee status, protection needs and lack of local integration in asylum country. **Vulnerable case** applications such as women-at-risk, elderly persons, and victims of torture and trauma are given special consideration.

All individuals applying for resettlement must undergo **security checks** and **health screening**. The health screening is carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and must be completed before a decision is made (processing can take up to three months). Treatment for contagious or other serious health conditions must be administered prior to departure. Applicants diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, established renal failure or Multi-Drug-Resistant TB may qualify for resettlement but only with ministerial consent due to the financial cost and possible implications for public health. In addition, applicants must not be in a polygamous marriage or have

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<sup>8</sup> For the online edition:

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/researchreports/Gateway\\_good\\_practice\\_guide\\_sept\\_2008.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/researchreports/Gateway_good_practice_guide_sept_2008.pdf)

an active application for the Ten-Or-More (TOM) Programme or the Mandate Refugee Scheme (see *Other Programmes/Projects* below). The GPP does not have the capacity to place **emergency cases** or unaccompanied children. Final **decisions** on resettlement cases are made by UKBA resettlement caseworkers in the UK. The total period of time between approval for resettlement of refugees and their arrival in the UK is generally between six and twelve weeks.



*A national volunteer award for a volunteer run homework club for refugee children called SHARE  
(Photo: UK Refugee Council)*

According to the GPP, resettled refugees are given **permanent refugee status** and indefinite leave-to-enter (ILE) upon arrival, meaning they can stay in the UK indefinitely and also travel abroad to countries outside of the one they are seeking refuge from once they have applied for a travel document. After five years, application for British **citizenship** is permissible. This is an important distinction from refugee status for those who are not part of resettlement schemes- they are granted only five years of refugee status after which their protection needs are reassessed.

IOM arranges **travel** (sponsored by the UKBA) to the UK and also delivers a **pre-departure orientation** on British culture. The length of the orientation varies according to caseload with some caseloads also receiving English language training for about two and a half weeks. Six weeks prior to arrival, the profiles of cases to be resettled are given to local authorities and service providers in order to finalise

preparations and appropriate support services in the UK.

Typically refugees **arrive** in groups of 20 including families and individual cases. Some groups travel directly to their resettlement location and are met by the organisation providing integration support. Other groups land in London Heathrow and stay overnight before resuming travel to their resettlement location the next day. Where possible, refugees who arrive in groups are housed in the same neighbourhood or within walking distance of at least one other refugee family. This proximity provides them with the security of having others they know close by while at the same time they have the possibility of meeting new people in their neighbourhood. The following local authorities have hosted refugees through the GPP: Bolton, Bradford, Brighton, Bromley, Bury, Colchester, Hull, Middlesbrough, Norwich, Norfolk, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sheffield, Stockport, Tameside and North Lanarkshire in Scotland.

**Local authorities**, voluntary sector organisations and other refugee community organisations with long-standing experience provide resettlement services in the areas of housing, healthcare and education. Financial assistance and **integration support** are offered to resettled refugees for the first 12 months, sponsored by the GPP. For refugees who do not wish to receive support, the available funding is re-allocated. In this initial year, immediate to long-term needs and an exit strategy from the programme are planned and assessed periodically. Support services are provided by way of home visits, drop-in centres, group sessions, housing support, counselling and preparation for employment. RIAP agencies and other agencies providing support services for Gateway refugees are required to provide financial and activity reports to the Home Office on a quarterly basis and participate in periodic evaluations.

From April 2009-March 2010, the GPP will maintain a quota of 750 including Iraqis from Jordan, Palestinians from the Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) in Romania, Rohingya Myanmarese from Bangladesh and a caseload reserved for DRC refugees coming from East Africa.

### ***Other Programmes/ Projects***

The GPP is a substantial addition to two earlier programmes; the **Mandate Refugee Scheme** and the **Ten-Or-More (TOM)** Programme (currently suspended), both administered by the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) since 1994. Under the

Mandate Refugee Scheme the BRCS receives resettlement cases from UNHCR Field Offices. After assessing the cases, verifying the status of the family in the UK and confirming that the family is willing to have the refugee join them, the BRCS submits the case to the resettlement team at the UKBA. A case for resettlement is referred by a British post abroad only when there is no UNHCR presence in the country of refuge. In such cases, a resettlement caseworker from the UKBA will consider the case after receiving confirmation from the UNHCR in London that the applicant has been recognised as a mandate refugee.

Under the **Mandate Scheme**, the applicant for resettlement must have clear ties to the UK through close family or historical links. The family members in the UK do not need to have been accepted as refugees, but must be settled there or have limited leave in a category leading to settlement. Students and asylum seekers do not qualify as permanent residents. The UNHCR covers all costs involved with arranging resettlement including preparation and travel. On their arrival in the UK, applicants are recognised as Convention refugees and granted Indefinite Leave to Enter. The number of Mandate Refugees resettled each year depends on the number of submissions and the discretion of UKBA. In 2005-2006, 81 refugees were resettled in the UK through the Mandate Refugee Scheme and 20 more in 2006-2007. In 2008, this number rose to 120 refugees. Relatives of resettled Mandate Refugees are responsible for their integration and guiding them through the process of applying for assistance, welfare and education programmes.

The UK's **TOM Programme** resettled medical cases according to the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook criteria for medical cases.<sup>9</sup> The BRCS acted as the intermediary between the UNHCR and the Home Office to screen and process cases, in addition to selecting appropriate agencies to assist refugees with post-arrival resettlement. In 2005-2006, 24 refugees were resettled through the TOM programme. The programme was suspended on 31 July, 2006 and at the time of writing there is no information on its resumption.

In 2008, the UK piloted the use of Action in Communities, a church-based organisation, to provide private **group sponsorship** to small numbers of refugees. The support delivered by the 'New Neighbourhood Programme' is delivered by volunteers.

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<sup>9</sup>UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: UNHCR Criteria for Determining Resettlement as the Appropriate Solution, Chapter 4.4, available online at [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).

Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom are leading partners, with Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia as observing members, of a **trans-national project** called Transnational Resettlement UK and Ireland (TRUKI). This project is funded by the Community Actions strand of the ERF. More information can be found by referring to the section on Ireland in Part III, Chapter 2 of this guide.



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<b>MT</b>	Relocation from Malta (coming in 2010)-	

## Belgium

Belgium has carried out several ad-hoc resettlement schemes since WWII, however no official resettlement of refugees has taken place since 1999. The first steps towards renewed efforts began in 2007 and 2008 when representatives from the *Commissariat général aux réfugiés et aux apatrides* (CGRA – Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons) and the *Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile* (Fedasil - Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) participated as observers on selection missions organised by British and Dutch resettlement programmes to Thailand (CGRA & Fedasil) and Tanzania (CGRA). Following the November 2008 Council Conclusions<sup>1</sup>, Belgium decided to resettle 50 Iraqis on 13 February 2009. The CGRA, Fedasil, *Office des étrangers* (OE-Office for Foreigners), Belgian embassies in Jordan and Syria, UNHCR and IOM are the main actors in this pilot resettlement programme, in addition to national NGOs who assist with integration.

Selection of refugees is made following the general criteria outlined in the 1951 Convention with a focus on vulnerable groups. Belgium reserved places for women-at-risk (with or without children) from Syria and Jordan and for 10 Palestinians from the Syrian border. Dossiers were referred to the CGRA by the UNHCR for consideration and pre-selection. Once the Belgian government examined the dossiers and ran a security check on each individual, it decided which refugees would be interviewed for resettlement. The CGRA and Fedasil conducted selection missions to Syria and Jordan to interview pre-selected refugees. Selection missions were sponsored by the Temporary Iraq Desk (TID) under the European Refugee Fund. At the end of this mission, 47 persons (all vulnerable cases) were selected for resettlement. Belgium followed the recommendations of the November 2008 Conclusions for selection criteria and by making use of the ERF Art.13, which was applied to all cases.

IOM organised travel arrangements for the first group of 36 Iraqis who arrived on 2

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<sup>1</sup> The November 2008 Council Conclusions called for increased EU participation in resettlement efforts as a solution to the Iraqi refugee crisis. The Conclusions encouraged resettlement especially for vulnerable refugees displaced in Syria and Jordan, in addition to Palestinians (ex-Iraqis) along the Iraq-Syria border. For full text see: *Council Conclusions on the reception of Iraqi refugees, Justice and Home Affairs Council, November 27-28, 2008.*

September 2009 and 11 Palestinians arriving in Belgium later the same month. When refugees arrived, they were met by the CGRA and Fedasil. Though already accepted for resettlement, each refugee was required to apply to the OE for asylum in Belgium upon arrival. Refugee status has been awarded to all refugees arriving through this programme within one month of application. Throughout the initial reception and orientation period (1-3 months) they live in the two different reception centres, one in Sint Truiden (Flanders) and the other in Ponderôme (Wallonia) whereby special assistance and a separate communal living space (from groups of asylum seekers) are provided. In the centre, refugees begin language and social orientation classes to learn French or Dutch and to acquire practical information about life in Belgium. A social worker is assigned to each refugee to assist them throughout their stay in the centre and the initial orientation and administrative processes. Once refugee status is granted, a permanent residence card is issued and all social programmes/assistance may be accessed.

After leaving the reception centre, independent housing and allocation of resources for integration are arranged by regional NGOs (*Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen*, *Caritas International*, *le Service Social de Solidarité Socialiste* and *CAW De Terp Protestants Sociaal Centrum Vluchtelingenwerk*) involved in the integration process that continues after refugees leave the reception centre and arrive in a municipality. Refugees arriving in this pilot programme will be resettled in various municipalities/regions depending on the refugees' preference and the availability of housing. The integration programme varies depending on the region, for example, in Flanders the integration programme (including language instruction) is obligatory, in Brussels it is optional and in Wallonia there is no integration programme (although language classes are usually available).

Each NGO is responsible for a certain number of refugees and assists them individually for the first 18 months. Social workers help refugees through the administrative processes of registering for schools, healthcare coverage and applying for social aid programmes including monthly financial assistance. NGOs must identify special needs of refugees, especially related to psychological health, and provide guidance for finding work. For NGOs, the identification of needs has been made difficult by the delayed reception of refugee dossiers prior to the arrival of refugees. Overall, coordination of services and funding was carried out at a late stage, making the resettlement processes more difficult for service providers and refugees.

Though future resettlement schemes could be feasible, this pilot programme has highlighted several areas for improvement, namely: managing expectations by establishing clear policies and providing consistent information, improving coordination between actors in resettlement, defining programmes and agreements with municipalities hosting refugees and better management of funding for reception and integration processes. Belgium is also facing serious difficulties with the system of asylum, whose capacity has not sufficiently grown to meet the demand. An annual resettlement programme may not be foreseeable until Belgium is better equipped to meet the current demands of asylum-seekers (especially in regards to reception centre capacity).

## France

France first began resettling refugees after the WWII in order to rebuild the post-war economy. The first humanitarian resettlement to France took place following the Hungarian revolt in 1957 when approximately 12 700 Hungarian revolutionaries were resettled. Ad-hoc humanitarian resettlement continued in the late 1970's with the arrival of around 15 000 'boat people' from Vietnam. In 1999, in response to the conflict in the Balkans, 6 300 refugees from Kosovo were given temporary protection in France.

To-date there is still no formal law regarding resettlement in France; however in 2008 two events promised that ad-hoc resettlement would be replaced by a more formal commitment to annual resettlement. Firstly, on 10 June 2008, a resettlement operation for Iraqis or 'Irak 500' was implemented whereby 500 Iraqis would be accepted in 2008 and 2009 (later changed to 1 200 Iraqis total over the 2 years). Secondly, an agreement between the UNHCR and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs was signed on 4 February 2008 laying out the structure for creating a national resettlement programme to resettle 100 refugee cases per year.

**Legal grounds** for resettlement under the agreement between the UNHCR and France (referred to as the national resettlement programme in this text) are based on French legislation on international protection and recognition of the 1951 Convention on Refugees and the UNHCR Mandate. Irak 500 bases resettlement on humanitarian grounds for those representing minorities and vulnerable cases, however there is no direct link to the Geneva Convention. Many of the Iraqis coming to France through this programme were selected and transferred directly from Baghdad and not from a country of asylum such as Jordan or Syria. This aspect of the Irak 500 programme diverges from the definition of resettlement as stated by the UNHCR (see Part I of this guide).

The **quota** is determined under the agreements between the UNHCR and the French Ministry of Immigration. It is based on the general global need and the sharing of responsibility for resettlement among European countries. The UNHCR submits 100 dossier cases per year under the national resettlement programme which could represent 300 to 400 people. In 2008 and 2009, the Iraqi Operation will resettle about

1 200 people. It is important to note that refugees included in this number may come directly from Iraq under protection entry procedures, in addition to those being resettled from camps in Jordan, Syria and Turkey.

The **main actors** involved in the national resettlement scheme include first and foremost, the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development in Solidarity, the French embassies, the Ministry of Foreign affairs, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, government agencies involved in determining refugee status, reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees, and NGOs in first countries of asylum and in France.

France does not yet have a **selection mission** programme in-place; instead it relies on submission of **dossier cases** from the UNHCR. Dossiers for the national programme are sent to the UN French Representation in Geneva and are then examined by the Ministry of Immigration. The Ministry of Immigration considers the selected dossiers which fulfil **eligibility criteria** based on the UNHCR Mandate and the French Legislation regarding the granting of international protection. Refugees arriving in France through Irak 500 are identified by UNHCR branches in asylum countries (Jordan, Syria & Lebanon), by the Association of Mutual Aid to Eastern Minorities (AEMO) or by French embassies. All dossiers are then submitted to the Ministry of Immigration who will make the final decision. In practice, in both resettlement schema, France accepts **urgent, emergency** and **vulnerable cases**, however there is no official legislation regarding their place in the quota.

**Travel** and **medical exams** are organised for all refugees accepted (under the national resettlement programme and the Iraqi Operation) for resettlement by IOM under a framework of cooperation with the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII). For the Irak 500 programme in Syria and Jordan, IOM delivers a half-day pre-departure orientation to prepare refugees (14 years of age and older) for travel to France. The orientation also provides an introduction to reception procedures, administrative processes, public assistance, education systems and other practical information about life in France. For the national resettlement agreement, there is no pre-departure CO. IOM and Forum Réfugiés have developed a booklet of information regarding conditions of resettlement and practical information for living in France. The booklet will be given to selected refugees under the national programme prior to their departure.

NGO's involved directly with the resettlement programme include Forum Réfugiés and France Terre d'Asile. Their work with the UNHCR is coordinated by the Ministry of Immigration's Asylum Service. Meetings are held each trimester to evaluate and discuss the progress of resettlement activities in France. These meetings have been a useful way to increase communication between stakeholders and better accommodate the needs of refugees. Under the authority of the Ministry of immigration, the OFII, IOM, France Terre d'Asile, Forum Réfugiés, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) participate in resettlement meetings.

Refugees arriving in the national resettlement scheme are issued a **temporary residence permit** (six months renewable). They are given **refugee status** after a process of protection transfer where the OFPRA verifies and recognises their previous protection status, a process taking a maximum of three months. Iraqis arriving under Irak 500 initially receive a three month, renewable temporary residence permit. It is important to note that refugees arriving through this programme who wish to have refugee status in France need to reapply for asylum upon their arrival in France. Applications are expedited however and have the same general processing time as protection transfer application (see above). Under both regimes, once refugee status is attained a long-term residence permit is granted for a period of 10 years. Immigrants in France who wish to attain **citizenship** may do so after living in the territory for at least 5 years. Refugees however, may apply for citizenship upon receiving their refugee status (or transfer of status) in France.

**Refugees arriving** in France through the Irak 500 usually welcomed by the OFII at the airport and are transferred to the transit reception centre managed by France Terre d'Asile in Senlis, Créteil (Parisian region) or to the centre in Villeurbanne-Lyon (Rhône region) that is managed by Forum Réfugiés. Within 10 days, they are transferred to one of the 271 reception centres throughout France specialised in asylum. The centres aid refugees in the administrative process for access to financial assistance, education and healthcare. For example, in the Rhône region, the NGO Forum Réfugiés receives refugees and processes their demand for housing, legal assistance, social and psychological support in France. There is no specialised integration programme for resettled refugees. Like all refugees in France **placement**

in municipalities depends on openings for government-assisted housing. Those refugees who wish to access social housing once they leave reception centres may apply in the same fashion as all other individuals in France. Assistance in filling out applications is provided in refugee and asylum centres.

The **integration process** can officially begin once refugee status has been granted in France. Refugees first must sign a reception and integration contract (CAI) where they commit to take language courses as needed and participate in a half-day civic training provided by OFII to become familiar with institutions, laws and principles of the Republic. Free language courses are arranged according to individual needs, in addition to an employment and capacities evaluation. Forum Réfugiés and France Terre d'Asile, along with many other organisations, have developed projects related to housing in order to expedite the process of finding permanent housing. Availability of housing is more challenging in large cities, namely Paris. A recent project (RELOREF) funded by the ERF and managed by France Terre d'Asile provides 'bridging accommodation' for resettled refugees. This project arranges for adequate individual/family housing to bridge the gap between leaving the reception centre and finding more permanent accommodation. Beginning in 2002, Accelair is another example of an integration project that is managed by Forum Réfugiés. With new funding from the ERF in 2008, Accelair continues its mission to open up opportunities for training and employment, along with making significant improvements in availability of housing for refugees.

France is still in the first stages of managing a resettlement quota; however proposals for the ERF allotment for resettlement include initiatives towards integration and pre-departure CO programmes, and solutions for improving reception and housing. In addition to the aforementioned resettlement programmes, France decided to resettle 96 people (Somalis, Eritreans, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Sri Lankans, Cote Ivoirians and Iraqis) who had been granted refugee or subsidiary protection status from Malta. The first group of 92 persons from this operation arrived in July 2009.

### **Other Programmes/ Projects**

In early 2010, France Terre d'Asile's *Observatoire de l'Intégration de Réfugiés* (or Observatory on the Refugee Integration), will be releasing results of research funded by the ERF on the integration of Iraqi refugees resettled through the ad-hoc resettlement programme for Iraqis (Iraq 500) in 2008 and 2009.



## Germany

Germany has practiced ad-hoc resettlement for many years, but does not manage a official annual quota for resettlement. Germany was the only country who formally responded to the call for EU Member States to resettle Iraqis in the November 2008 Council Conclusions, committing to resettle 2 500 Iraqis (2 000 from Syria and 500 from Jordan) in 2009<sup>2</sup>. Diverging slightly from the definition of resettlement (see Section I of this guide), this ad-hoc programme gives refugees a temporary residence permit with the option of renewal after three years versus a permanent residency permit that is often given to refugees resettled in other countries.

The first Iraqi refugees resettled to Germany arrived in March 2009. Priority was given to persecuted minorities (mostly Christians), vulnerable cases with specific medical needs (including traumatized victims of persecution) and female-headed households who have family in Germany. Additional, integration capacity is considered, that is the individual's level of education, work experience, language skills or family ties.

Refugees were accepted for resettlement during selection missions: UNHCR submitted dossiers to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees –*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* (BAMF) under the Ministry of Interior in Nuremberg. On the basis of the UNHCR dossiers, refugees were invited for interviews which were conducted by two teams of BAMF staff in Jordan and Syria.

As stated earlier, a temporary status for three years is given to Iraqi refugees, with which they can legally work. After eight years refugees may apply for German citizenship upon passing a citizenship test and providing proof of employment. Iraqis spend the first two weeks following their arrival in a reception centre (*Grenzdurchgangslager*) located in Friedland, Niedersachsen. During this period, they will be referred to a state or Länder according to the same quota system which is used to allocate asylum seekers in Germany based on the size of Länder and number of refugees already living there. Post-arrival cultural orientation is given at the reception centre, including a presentation of NGOs and other services that will assist refugees after they leave the centre.

Each Länder has a different integration programme; however all refugees can attend

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<sup>2</sup> Final groups of Iraqis are now set to arrive in February 2010.

integration and language courses, in addition to receiving an allowance and housing assistance for a period defined by individual need. There is a strong level of NGO involvement to implement said programmes, including the following actors: Caritas Germany *Deutscher Caritasverband*, the German Red Cross *Deutscher Rotes Kreuz*, Diakonisches Werk, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Jüdische Wohlfahrt and Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband.

Germany has been very careful to avoid a build-up of large communities of refugees from the same country or situation. This may be due to the notion that opportunities for finding housing and receiving adequate services are higher when refugees are dispersed or that refugees are not as inclined to integrate in their new country when they are surrounded by their compatriots. Intentions to disperse refugees may not be completely unfounded. As a result of receiving a large number of asylum seekers from Iraq (over 6 800 applications in 2008), Germany already hosts a large Iraqi refugee community. Nevertheless, the lack of flexibility in this policy has been problematic for persons who wish to live near family members or friends and for others who are sent to small towns or rural locations where transport is less reliable and where the possibility for finding work may be significantly reduced. The resettlement scheme is too new to be able to determine whether this policy will be effective, however it could be assessed in the future for its impact on the integration levels of Iraqi refugees.

## Italy

Italy began resettling refugees originating from Iraq after its participation in the EU Fact-Finding Mission to Syria and Jordan that preceded the aforementioned November 2008 Conclusions. The Italian government accepted an ad-hoc agreement to resettle approximately 180 Palestinians from the Al Tanf border camp in Syria in 2009. The Italian Ministry of Interior later returned to Syria to conduct personal interviews with refugees referred for resettlement by the UNHCR. Under this special resettlement programme, 173 refugees have resettled to Italy. Travel to the Rome is organised by IOM. Groups are greeted at the airport by government representatives, IOM and UNHCR. Refugees immediately apply for asylum in Italy with the Commission for the Recognition of Refugee Status who, upon acceptance of their application, will grant refugee status. For beneficiaries of this programme, the recognition of refugee status takes approximately one or two months. Once status is granted, a renewable five-year residence permit is issued. After ten years of residency in Italy, refugees may apply for citizenship.

Following the application for asylum, refugees are taken to Calabria the same day. They are accompanied to independent housing in one of two towns, Riace or Caulonia. Calabria has a regional repopulation law which permits resettlement of refugees in towns which have experienced significant losses in population. Integration is funded and coordinated by the Ministry of Interior though projects are implemented by local municipalities. At the time of writing, no NGOs were involved; however a local union has been concerned with the defence of refugees' rights.

Italy's ad-hoc resettlement scheme followed the guidelines for selection criteria outlined in the November 2008 Conclusions. Al-Tanf, along the Iraq-Syria border is considered one of the most untenable camps for Iraqis and Iraqi Palestinians. Palestinian refugees accepted for resettlement to Italy are not just in need of protection because of the situation in camps, they also represent particularly vulnerable groups including elderly, women-at-risk and medical cases.

Calabria has voluntarily chosen to resettle refugees but the prospects for integration are not clear. In a region of Italy which has experienced economic difficulties and high unemployment, the need for repopulating is evident. Close monitoring will be required to determine the capability of structures to facilitate the long-term integration of refugees. Resettlement of these groups is still in the early stages; therefore no

conclusions can be made about the level of integration or the possibility of engagement in future resettlement schemes.

## Luxembourg

Luxembourg has no official resettlement programme however it has occasionally carried out ad-hoc resettlement. The decision by the Luxembourg Government in June 2009 to resettle 28 Iraqi refugees, made following the November 2008 Council Conclusions (see 'Belgium' in this chapter), demonstrated the country's interest in taking part in the EU effort to find a durable solution for Iraqi refugees. In mid-October 2009, the first arrivals were met at the airport by members of Luxembourg's Red Cross, the organisation responsible for reception and integration procedures for the Sunni Muslims accepted for resettlement (seven persons). Caritas is responsible for the other 21 persons whom are Christians and arrived in November 2009. Luxembourg didn't specify criteria for cases but rather agreed to consider the dossiers referred by UNHCR.

All Iraqis arriving through this agreement must apply for refugee status in Luxembourg, a process which is expedited, lasting less than a week for the first arrivals. Refugee status allows one to register at the municipal town hall and receive a permanent residence permit with the possibility of applying for citizenship after seven years of residency. Refugees assisted by the Red Cross are immediately taken to independent housing which is provided for by the Luxembourg Office Luxembourgeois pour l'Accueil et l'Intégration (OAFI-Office of Reception and Integration) until tenants have the means to pay for their housing expenses. Those whom Caritas assists stay initially with a family sponsor for two months during which time the OAFI administration finds appropriate independent housing. Social workers from both Caritas and the Red Cross assist refugees in finding schools for their children, applying for financial assistance and arranging healthcare coverage. The OAFI covers 100% of medical expenses upon arrival. Eventually, refugees will need to choose a health insurance provider, however the government will continue to reimburse the majority of healthcare costs. Iraqis are placed in housing generally close to or in the largest cities, Luxembourg City and Esch-sur-Alzette. At the time of writing, there are no future plans to resettle Iraqis or any other group in 2010.

## Portugal

Resettlement in Portugal began under an ad-hoc programme in 2006 when two groups of refugees were resettled. Firstly, twelve persons of various nationalities (DRC, Ivory Coast and Liberia) from the Moroccan border with Algeria who had been repeatedly refouled by Moroccan authorities to the desert, followed by a smaller group of five persons (Ethiopian and Eritrean) who were found in very severe conditions aboard a boat in the Mediterranean Sea near Malta. All 17 persons were recognised as refugees by the Portuguese government and accordingly were issued refugee cards. As a result, in 2007, the Portuguese government became an official resettlement country by establishing an annual quota of a minimum of 30 refugees to be resettled in the country through a Resolution of the Council of Ministers.

The law that presently governs resettlement is the Asylum Law 27/2008. The definition of a refugee in Portuguese law is in keeping with the 1951 Convention definition and by law; all refugees under the UNHCR mandate are considered for resettlement. Refugees are identified by UNHCR, who sends the dossiers to the Portuguese authorities, namely the Ministry of Interior and the Aliens and Borders Services. Upon arrival, persons resettled to Portugal are given either refugee or humanitarian protection status, depending on their case. The aforementioned groups resettled in 2006 from Malta and Morocco were given residence permits based on humanitarian protection needs (see Article 6 of the Portuguese Asylum Law). Refugees arriving through the resettlement programme are given a refugee card and are granted permanent residence. After a period of six years resettled refugees may apply for citizenship.

There are no restrictions on acceptance of vulnerable refugees for resettlement. Portugal is also prepared to accept emergency cases however, to-date no emergency cases have been submitted. In general, the policy surrounding resettlement allows consideration for a diverse group of nationalities and vulnerable cases (medical cases, WAR and emergency, for example). When vulnerable cases can be anticipated, Portugal plans to utilise the ERF funds designated for assisting such cases in the arrival, reception and integration processes.

The main actors involved in resettlement are the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Aliens and Border Service, UNHCR and the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR). Article 35 of the Asylum Law (27/2008) outlines each actor's role in

resettlement. The UNHCR submits all cases to the Ministry of Interior and the Portuguese Immigration Service (Aliens and Border Service) and ensures the processing of and the decision-making on applications are made within two weeks. The CPR is informed regarding pending resettlement applications and has five days to render consultative input upon said applications. The Government member responsible from the Ministry of Interior makes a final decision within 15 days.

The role of CPR in the resettlement process concerns two phases: reception (first six months) and integration. Cooperation and liaising between the two major national actors implicated in integration, the Social Security Service and Santa Casa da Misericórdia (Portuguese Catholic Church General Office for Charity), is deeply promoted by the CPR. Due to Portugal's centralised political system, municipalities are not involved in resettlement decision-making or reception and integration programmes. Nevertheless, they are considered an important partner in operational meetings to encourage cooperation and awareness of the presence and needs of refugees, and involvement in aspects of integration such as access to employment possibilities.

Portugal does not carry out selection missions but rather considers cases submitted on a dossier basis by the UNHCR. There is no pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) set in place. Travel is organised by the UNHCR who relays the details of departure and arrival to Portuguese authorities. Representatives from the Immigration Service and the CPR receive refugees at the airport and accompany them to CPR's centralised reception centre in Lisbon where lodging is provided for six months (asylum-seekers are allowed a two month stay). The centre provides legal and social assistance along with employment training.

Once they have settled in, refugees receive a three-hour CO programme informing them of the history and geography of Portugal and the EU, along with practical information on culture, society and social services which they can access. Resettlement experts need to be capable of exerting technical, social and emotional skills, so that socio-cultural orientations can be adequately delivered to resettled refugees. Portuguese language classes are not obligatory but are greatly emphasised and made available the week after refugees' arrival with the option of being continued after they have left the reception centre. A 'Life Project' is created for each individual resettled including references and advice for integration and social inclusion with an outward look on the future. The CRP emphasises the importance of

getting to know the host society to enable integration. Current integration projects such as Starting Again (funded by the European Economic Area –EEA and managed by the Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality), compliment the work of national employment agencies (the Portuguese Institute for Employment and Training and the Cabinet of Professional Inclusion) by helping refugees in their search for training and employment. Starting Again creates a direct relationship with companies which provides more opportunities for refugees and facilitates the process of hiring.

The CRP's social department assists in finding adequate housing for refugees to prepare for their departure from the reception centre. Most refugees find housing close to the city centre in Lisbon or in its environs. The cost of housing is covered by Santa Casa da Misericórdia until refugees have secure means to pay for housing (usually about 2 years). After leaving the reception centre refugees are able to consult social services and can see their social worker once a week if necessary. The Government's Social Security programme covers the cost of time spent in the reception centre (usually 6-8 months) and provides general financial assistance until the refugee's income reaches a determined level. Due to the fact that the integration process is assisted by various actors and projects, there is no specific integration sum applied to resettled refugee cases.

In 2009, Portugal has received 12 Congolese (DRC) refugees identified in June 2008 under UNHCR's Regional Protection Programme (RPP) scheme. The government hopes to fill the quota of 30 persons by December 2009. At the time of writing, UNHCR is preparing dossiers to present 18 more persons for resettlement before the end of year.



## Part III

### Chapter 4 – Central Europe

<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic	(coming in 2010)
<b>RO</b>	Romania	(coming in 2010)
<b>OTHER INITIATIVES</b>	Other Initiatives	(coming in 2010)

**Table I – Main Features of European Resettlement Programmes** (Updated in 2009)

The table below provides an overview of the resettlement programmes in Europe discussed in Part III.

## Nordic Countries

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Start of official programme	1978	1979	1996	1992	1950
Quota	11 500 /three-year period	750 /year	25-30 /year	1 200 /year	1 900 /year
Legal Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> <li>- Humanitarian grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> <li>- Persons in need of protection who do not fall under the 1951 Convention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> <li>- Persons in need of protection who do not fall under the 1951 Convention (risk of execution, corporal punishment, torture, armed conflict)</li> </ul>

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Resettlement Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> <li>- Integration potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> <li>- UNHCR criteria for RST</li> <li>- Conditions to receive and integrate in FI</li> </ul>	- UNHCR criteria for RST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> <li>- Service capacity</li> </ul>	- Protection needs
Special Categories	TOM (30)	VOT, medical, WAR, UAC, elderly	WAR	Medical (20 cases), UAC, WAR	No specific formulation of special categories
In-country selection	Approx. 400 /year	650	25-30 /year	Remaining quota places	Approx. 950 /year
Dossier selection	Approx. 100 /year	100 (urgent & emergency)	No	100	Remaining quota places
Urgent & Emergency	75	100	No emergency	90 emergency No urgent	350
Pre-departure Cultural Orientation	1 week; Gov (occas. with municipality)	3 days; IOM	<u>Before selection;</u> Gov & Red Cross	4 days; IOM	1 week; Gov & municipality (not implemented on regular basis)

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Status upon arrival	Convention, subsidiary protection or humanitarian status (TRP)	Convention refugee status (PRP)	Convention refugee status (TRP)	Convention refugee status (TRP)	Application for refugee status after arrival (PRP)

## Western Countries

	Ireland	The Netherlands	United Kingdom
Start of official programme	1998	1977	2003
Quota	200 /year	2 000 /four-year period	750 /year
Legal Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> <li>- Humanitarian grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> <li>- Humanitarian grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1951 refugee definition</li> </ul>
Resettlement Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> <li>- Majority on legal &amp; physical protection grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> <li>- Humanitarian considerations</li> <li>- Integration potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection needs</li> </ul>
Special Categories	WAR, elderly, medical, VOT (20% of quota)	TOM (30), VOT, WAR	Elderly, WAR, VOT
In-country selection	Approx.160	400 /year	750

	Ireland	The Netherlands	United Kingdom
Dossier selection	Vulnerable cases or 20% of quota	100 /year	Approx. 100 under Mandate Programme
Urgent & Emergency	No emergency	Yes (no fixed number)	No
Pre-departure Cultural Orientation	1-2 days, Gov	4 days; COA	3 days; IOM, Occas. language inst. 2,5 weeks
Status upon arrival	Programme refugee status (TRP)	Revocable asylum permit (TRP)	Convention refugee status (PRP)

Sources: *Ministries of Immigration, Integration and Foreign Affairs and other Government bodies involved in decision-making, services and oversight of annual quotas for resettlement.*

## Abbreviations and acronyms:

**TOM:** Twenty-Or-More or Ten-Or-More (medical programme)

**VOT:** Victim of Torture or violence

**WAR:** Women at Risk

**UAC:** Unaccompanied Children

**Gov:** Government

**RST:** Resettlement

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commission for Refugees

**IOM:** International Organisation for Migration

**COA:** Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

**PRP:** Permanent Residence Permit

**TRP:** Temporary Residence Permit

**Table II– Main Features of European Resettlement Programmes**

Main features of introduction and integration programmes in the European resettlement countries discussed in Part III.

Country	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Ireland	The Netherlands	United Kingdom
Pre-Arrival Cultural Orientation (CO)	1 week (DIS)	3 days (IOM) (until end 2009)	Approx. 1 hour	1-2 days (Gov)	4 days (COA)	4 days (IOM)	Occasionally (SMB, Municipality)	3 days (IOM), Occas. language inst. 2,5 weeks
Reception/ services on Arrival	DIS, Municipality	Finnish Red Cross, Municipality	Icelandic Red Cross, Municipality	Resettlement Team	COA	Municipality	Municipality	Varies depending on location/group
Centralised Reception	No	No	No	8 weeks orientation programme (resettled refugees only)	3-6 months orientation programme (resettled refugees only)	No	No	No
Municipal Commitment to place refugees	Required	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Required	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary
Group Placement Policy	Factor of consideration	25–50 persons (all refugees)	25-30 (resettled refugees)	5–15 families (resettled refugees)	20–25 persons (resettled refugees)	Factor of consideration	Factor of consideration	Factor of consideration



Country	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Ireland	The Netherlands	United Kingdom
Integration/ Support Programme for refugees	3 years Language and Danish culture courses, employment training	3 years (Individual plan) Language and Finnish culture courses, employment training	1 year Language and Icelandic culture courses, employment training	18 months, home visits (where necessary) Language courses, employment training	1-2 years (Individual plan) Language and Dutch culture courses, employment training	2 years Language and Norwegian culture courses, five-year social assistance programme	2 years average (Individual plan) Language and Swedish culture courses, employment training	1 year (Individual plan), support and assistance programme
Government contribution to municipalities	NA	€ 6.223 < 7 years, € 1.952 > 7 years (lump sum pp)	NA	NA	€ 4.000 (lump sum pp)	€69.045 adult refugee (lump sum pp)	€ 17.200 adult refugee, € 10.550 for a refugee child, € 6.450 +65 years (lump sum pp)	€ 15.000 in 2007 updated amt. NA
NGO Assistance to Refugees	Service contracts with local authorities (DRC) Countrywide volunteers (3 000)	Service contracts with local authorities Volunteers act as support persons (Finnish Red Cross trained)	Service contracts with Gov., Icelandic Red Cross trains volunteers for 'support family' programme	Resettlement Steering Committee, supports and provides services to local authorities	Service contracts with local authorities DCFR implements Social Guidance programme, Countrywide volunteers (7 200)	Social integration projects, Norwegian Red Cross volunteer guides	Service contracts with municipalities (occasional) Volunteer Services (complement)	RIAP has service contracts with Home Office, Volunteer Services (complement RIAP services)

**DIS:** Danish Immigration Service; **IOM:** International Organisation for Migration; **COA:** Central Agency for Asylum seekers and Refugees; **SMB:** Swedish Migration Board; **Gov:** Government bodies; **DRC:** Danish Refugee Council; **DCFR:** Dutch Council for Refugees; **RIAP:** Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership; **N/A:** Not applicable



# Welcome to Europe!

## A Comparative Guide to Resettlement



Endurnýsata áttlegrís Resettlement Réinstalláttón Hervestigg Reasettamento Reinsettiameto  
Umsíttlung Reinslataðáttó Undirfensjóttamíren Gíentossertigg Genbosettigg Vidarebosettíng  
Presfíttvánt Genbosettíng Hervestígg Endurnýsata Resettlement Vidarebosettíng Áttlegrís



*Refugee Camp in Tanzania (Photo: Monique Hendricks, IND)*

The first section in this chapter provides an overview of UNHCR resettlement operations, including a description of the fundamental components of resettlement operations and basic considerations for processing and management of resettlement cases. Official UNHCR policies, guidelines and procedures on resettlement can be found in the *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*. The second section in Chapter 5 describes the UNHCR–ICMC Deployment Scheme which was initiated by UNHCR in 1997 to respond to the resettlement needs of refugees through enhanced cooperation among actors involved in resettlement.

## 5.1 Resettlement Operations: the process

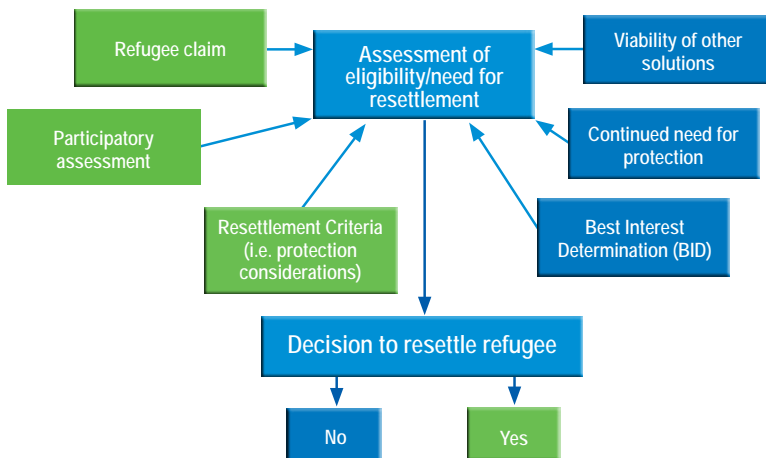
Resettlement is a coordinated activity undertaken in partnership with resettlement countries, UNHCR, NGOs and other actors. It includes a variety of specific processes, from the identification in the field of refugees in need of resettlement, to screening, processing and reception and integration of the refugees in the country offering resettlement as the durable solution to their plight.

In 2002, UNHCR re-organised its resettlement operations in Africa on a regional basis. Resettlement operations are now centralised through **Regional Resettlement Hubs** in Nairobi, Kenya and Accra, Ghana (soon to be relocated to Dakar, Senegal). The hubs provide coordination, support and monitoring of all resettlement activities in their respective regions. More recently, UNHCR established a Resettlement Hub in Beirut, Lebanon, to respond to the resettlement needs of Iraqi and other refugees in the region. The Iraqi refugee operation in the Middle East and the operation in Thailand for Burmese refugees are among the largest resettlement operations in 2007.

### *UNHCR Criteria for Determining Resettlement as the Appropriate Solution*

Flow Chart A demonstrates the process that is carried out—assuming refugee status has been granted—in order to identify refugees in need of resettlement. The application of resettlement criteria and related considerations forms the basis for identification and the pursuance of resettlement as the appropriate solution.

*Flow Chart A: Identification of Refugees in Need of Resettlement*



The **identification of refugees at risk and those with specific needs** among the refugee population is established through interviews with refugees and their families and assessment of background and country of origin information. Identification is one of the most critical tasks in the resettlement process; therefore, several techniques have been developed to facilitate this process:

- **Protection profiling** involves using the UNHCR central database and identifying the characteristics which put individuals at high risk.
- **Participatory assessments** help officers identify what refugees want and need by organising group sessions to discuss problems, solutions and aspirations, ensuring age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.
- Utilising effective **referral systems**, including individuals, networks and NGOs in the referral process.
- New **Heightened Risk Identification Tool** (still in pilot period as of June 2007), which links individuals and participatory assessments to improve the identification process by identifying the level of risk to protection (high, medium or low) presented by the situation in which the refugee is living. This tool also helps to indicate the projected resettlement needs within a given refugee population.
- Thorough **assessment for special needs** and individuals at high risk, including BID and psycho-social assessments.

Once refugees potentially in need of resettlement have been identified, an **assessment of the refugees' eligibility for resettlement** is made. This involves verification of the refugee claims and continued need for protection, assessing the prospects for other durable solutions and identifying the appropriate resettlement criteria.

Resettlement under the auspices of UNHCR is limited to **mandate refugees** who have a continued **need for international protection**. A decision on the refugee status of an individual should already have been made, normally before resettlement is considered. However, there may be a need to review and clarify this decision before resettlement is pursued.

The absence of **another durable solution** is also a key component in determining whether resettlement should be pursued. Thus, before a decision is taken to pursue resettlement, the possibility of voluntary repatriation in the foreseeable future should be evaluated, as well as a realistic assessment of whether any opportunities for local integration exist in the country of asylum.

Resettlement should be considered when refugees face protection risks in their country of refuge or have other particular needs, as detailed under the various **resettlement criteria** listed below. The resettlement criteria assist field officers not only in identifying the resettlement needs of refugees but also in targeting a suitable country for resettlement in the event that the case is submitted. Resettlement criteria for resettlement countries are distinct from those used by UNHCR.

## UNHCR Resettlement Criteria

### ***Legal protection and physical protection***

- *Concern:* A real or direct threat of *refoulement* and threat to physical safety, human rights or liberty
- *Considerations:* Short- and long-term availability of protection

### ***Survivors of violence and torture***

- *Concern:* Survivors are identified according to the interpretation of the 1984 Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- *Considerations:* Treatment and counselling needs

### ***Women at risk***

- *Concern:* Threat to safety of refugee women and girls (married and unmarried), particularly sexual and gender-based violence
- *Considerations:* Specialised care and psychosocial support and counselling needs

### ***Medical needs—urgent and emergency***

- *Concern:* Life-threatening medical condition and/or irreversible loss of functions and/or disability which present an obstacle to normal life and cannot be treated in country of refuge, presence in country of refuge has created or worsened medical condition
- *Considerations:* Prognosis and availability of appropriate treatment

### ***Family reunification (decision made according to the principle of 'Family Unity')***

- *Concern:* Involuntary separation of family
- *Considerations:* Socio-economic and emotional dependency, genuine composition of family, location of family in countries of origin, refuge and settlement

### ***Refugees without local integration prospects***

- *Concern:* Sometimes overlaps with other criteria. Quality of basic rights and livelihood in country of refuge is inadequate, socio-economic and/or psycho-social conditions are insufficient
- *Considerations:* Universal imperative,\* adverse effects on individual

### ***Children and adolescents***

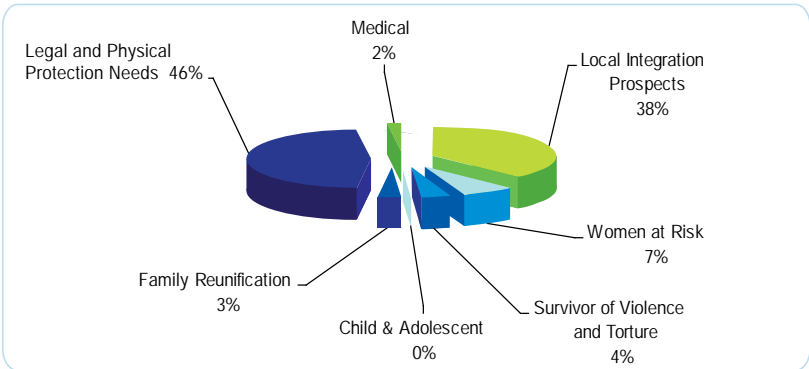
- *Concern:* Overlaps with other criteria, therefore considerations are most important
- *Considerations:* Evaluation of Best Interest Determination (BID) based on guidelines (updated UNHCR BID guidelines are expected end-2007) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, socio-economic and emotional needs of unaccompanied children

### ***Elderly refugees***

- *Concern:* Overlaps with other criteria, therefore considerations are most important
- *Considerations:* Potential for family reunification, physical and psychological health needs, best interests of elderly person

\* *The universal imperative essentially means that if one case has been submitted for resettlement, all cases with a similar profile should also be considered for submission.*

The chart below provides an indication of the **selection criteria** used for **resettlement submissions in 2006**. As the chart illustrates, the majority of resettlement cases were submitted by UNHCR under the criteria of 'Legal and Physical Protection Needs'.



Source: UNHCR, calendar year 2006

The identification of refugees potentially in need of resettlement and the assessment of cases should be an active and systematic process within any UNHCR field operation. Close cooperation between all concerned UNHCR staff across units and with operational partners is very important.

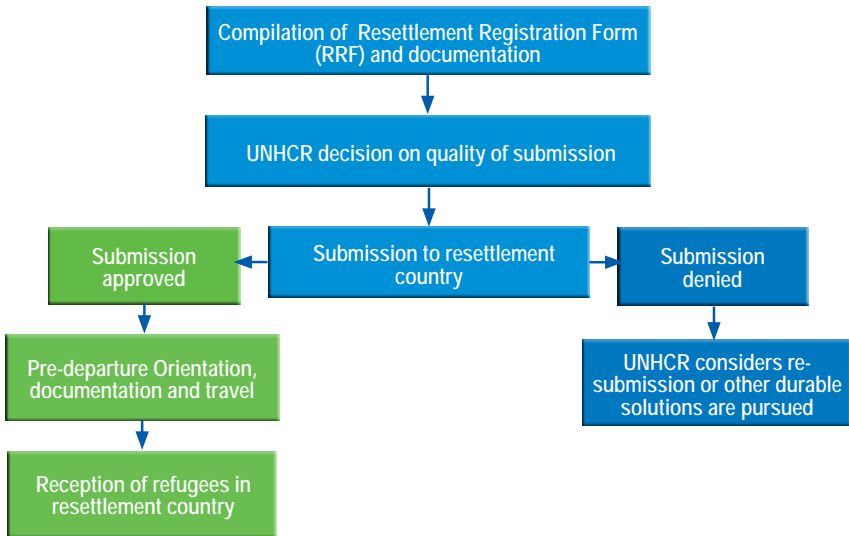
### *Preparation of a Resettlement Submission*

When the needs assessment concludes that resettlement is the appropriate solution for the refugee, the refugee and her/his family are invited for a resettlement interview. The Resettlement Case Submission chart (Flow Chart B) below demonstrates the resettlement process, which commences with compilation of information on the **Resettlement Registration Form (RRF)**. If the submission is approved, the refugee and his/her family travel as accepted refugees to the resettlement country.

During the **resettlement interview**, bio-data as well as information on family members and **family composition** is collected. This information is checked against existing registration data and, once confirmed, forms the basis for identifying resettlement needs, making assessments and providing recommendations to resettlement countries. As indicated above, this information is compiled by the Resettlement Officer on the RRF for each individual case when preparing the submission. Extra documentation such as medical, birth, or school records of the refugee or his/her family should be added to the submission. UNHCR developed a *Step-by-Step User Guide* for completing the RRF in 2001, which has recently been updated to provide objective standards for the preparation

of individual submissions and to increase their quality. RRFs are generated on UNHCR's new registration software program, ProGres.

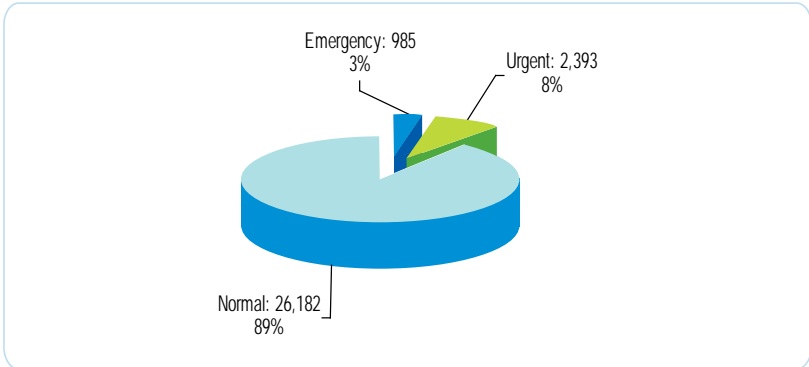
*Flow Chart B: Resettlement Case Submission*



The RRF is signed by the refugee interviewed, the responsible UNHCR Officer and the interpreter (in the event that interpretation was required for the interview). As a safeguard, and for reasons of quality control, resettlement submissions need to be cleared by the UNHCR Representative or the responsible officer before being assessed at the Regional Resettlement Hub for final approval on the **submission decision**. The decision to submit a refugee for the consideration of a resettlement country should be made in a transparent way, according to objective criteria. At this stage, a case can still be withdrawn from resettlement submission if, for example, it is found out that the procedures for preparation have not been followed.

During the completion of the RRF, the **priority of the submission** is also determined. According to the results of the needs assessment, cases submitted are labelled as normal priority or prioritised as urgent or emergency cases. Emergency cases are those where the refugee's immediate safety or health is threatened and may require immediate removal or evacuation within a matter of hours or days. For emergency cases, UNHCR requests acceptance for resettlement of the refugee case within 6 weeks; however, processing by some resettlement States can be cumbersome and can take up to several months. The chart below shows referrals and departures by priority for 2006.





Source: UNHCR, calendar year 2006

It must be pointed out that dealing with **urgent and emergency cases** remains a challenge for UNHCR as relatively few resettlement States accept such cases. As refugees in need of emergency resettlement usually do not pass through the interviewing process, due to the urgency of the case, some States can bar them from consideration for resettlement according to their selection procedures. Globally, only a few States have the necessary flexibility to make decisions expeditiously based on the paperwork alone, i.e. without the requirement for a selection mission or face-to-face interview by the decision-making authority. UNHCR has repeatedly appealed to States to make their programmes more flexible to allow for more effective responses to protect refugees who are most at risk.

Once a decision to submit a case for resettlement has been made, UNHCR makes an assessment as to which **resettlement country** the case will be submitted to, based on the following considerations:

#### Considerations in determining the country of submission

- Selection criteria of resettlement countries (sometimes involving integration potential, medical restrictions and restrictive policies on character and security concerns)
- Status of country's annual quota
- Admissions prioritised by countries
- Family links and related considerations
- Health requirements
- Language, culture and nationality
- Education and/or skills
- Proximity to home country

Submissions are usually made on the basis of indications received from States and occasionally, especially where resettlement is being pursued as a matter of priority, in the light of current or upcoming selection missions. UNHCR emphasises the importance of preserving the **unity of the family** in the course of resettlement operations and encourages resettlement countries to admit refugees who already have relatives in or other personal ties to the country.

Once a resettlement country has been selected, the **submissions** are generally referred by UNHCR Field Offices to the Branch Office/Regional Hub prior to submission to a resettlement country. In certain cases (e.g. emergency medical cases), the Resettlement Service at UNHCR Headquarters will receive and review a case prior to submission to a resettlement State. It is incumbent on UNHCR staff to keep refugees well informed at all stages of the submission process.

The responsibility to ensure transparency and effective communication with the refugees also applies to States making decisions on UNHCR resettlement submissions. Each **resettlement country decides** upon submissions on the basis of its own regulations and procedures in respect to the resettlement of refugees (*see Part II of this guide*). Resettlement countries consider cases submitted by UNHCR on a **dossier basis** and/or on the basis of **in-country selection missions**, usually carried out by government officials or a combination of government officials and NGO or other agency representatives (as is the case for Iceland and Denmark—*see Chapters 3.3 and 3.1*).

Where submissions are accepted, **departure arrangements** need to be made for the refugees concerned. Time frames range widely but most refugees selected for resettlement will have travelled to the country of resettlement within six months of a country's decision to accept the case. **Travel** is usually organised by the **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**, UNHCR Officials, embassies, and/or government officials from resettlement countries (*see country chapters*). **Pre-departure Cultural Orientation (CO)** is provided by governments, IOM or NGOs. These COs are designed to prepare refugees for the new lifestyle and the culture in which they will be living and also to manage the expectations of refugees. When refugees arrive in resettlement countries, they are often received by representatives from immigration services, receiving municipalities or other organisations and NGOs active in resettlement and/or integration activities targeting refugees. Selection and pre-departure CO are discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of this guide, and reception models are examined in Chapter 8.

### **Management of the Resettlement Process**

**Accountability** for resettlement activities rests with the UNHCR representative and senior UNHCR staff in charge of protection. The key person with responsibility for all

resettlement activities is a UNHCR Resettlement Officer. It is essential for UNHCR to ensure that resettlement staff are equipped with the tools necessary to identify and submit refugees for resettlement, in addition to ensuring the efficacy and professional management of the resettlement process.

All UNHCR resettlement operations follow **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** to ensure the quality, credibility and efficiency of the processing of resettlement cases. Because SOPs vary depending on the location of the Field Office and the particular situation of the refugees, a set of baseline SOPs was established and is scheduled to come into effect by the last quarter of 2007. The baseline SOPs are to be followed in all Field Offices as the basis against which all assessments, submissions and office-specific procedures must be measured. These global baseline SOPs set out the procedures expected of offices and allow offices to indicate their compliance by using a simple tick-box system. Depending on the size and complexity of particular operations, Field Offices can apply additional standards, updates or amendments to the baseline SOPs, which are subject to regular review and oversight. All UNHCR Field Offices send SOP documents to UNHCR headquarters, where they are examined not just to ensure that field operations comply with the SOP guidelines but also in order to identify areas of improvement. Interviewing and identification of needs is a demanding task for officers and the tick-box system helps officers track measures taken in the identification process and notes any inconsistencies. One section of the baseline SOPs is designed to ensure that **safeguards** are implemented in order to prevent fraud. Safeguards are put into place to ensure that cases submitted by UNHCR to resettlement countries are credible and transparent.

#### **Safeguards to ensure transparency and credibility:**

- Thorough documentation and confidentiality
- Maintenance of the central database of resettlement cases to guarantee protection of documentation/files and monitoring of cases
- Authorisation and accountability when a case is submitted to a resettlement country
- Oversight and quality assurance, including periodic random checks and oversight from external officers

In addition to the safeguards to ensure transparency and credibility in the resettlement process, **anti-fraud measures** must also be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk of fraud as much as possible. These measures include:

### Anti-fraud measures:

- Appropriate authentication methods for documents to avoid fake documentation (Important: presentation of documentation in itself is not a way to verify data and does not necessarily strengthen resettlement case)
- Important to register refugees thoroughly and continue to record family information outside of context
- Biometrics are used to avoid fraud in registration and family reunification
- Information campaigns to inform the public that payment, preferential treatment and sexual exploitation for resettlement is abuse of power and constitutes fraud
- Counselling of refugees on the implications of fraud
- All actions should be signed and dated by accountable officer
- Staff members who are found guilty of fraud or corruption can be dismissed by High Commissioner and legal action can be taken to prosecute those involved in the fraud
- Identification of fraudulent UNHCR websites

Finally, the effective **management of refugee expectations** is vital for a successful resettlement programme. The most important consideration in managing refugees' expectations for resettlement is to provide them with clear and consistent information on the limitations and possibilities of resettlement. UNHCR staff must clearly explain that UNHCR does not have the authority to make decisions regarding resettlement but can only make submissions/recommendations to resettlement countries. As refugees might have unrealistic expectations in terms of both the ease of obtaining resettlement and the opportunities awaiting them in the country of resettlement, staff involved in resettlement should be as realistic as possible in explaining the challenges of resettlement. Resettlement messages can be channelled through individual counselling, meetings and consultations with refugees, and through public information campaigns. The responsibility to manage refugee expectations also rests with resettlement States, NGOs, refugees and other partners in the process. This responsibility includes taking steps to ensure accurate information sharing, fairness, transparency and programme integrity.

## 5.2 Increasing UNHCR's Capacity: UNHCR–ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme

*"The UNHCR–ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme is a practical application to coordinate the co-operation between UNHCR, governments of resettlement countries and NGOs, whereby qualified personnel from NGOs are identified to reinforce and enhance the capacity of UNHCR's operations in the field and resettlement activities."\**

### *Programme Goals*

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) initiated the Resettlement Deployment Scheme in 1997 as a means to increase the capacity of UNHCR to refer refugees for resettlement, while strengthening its relationship with NGO resettlement partners. In pursuit of this goal, UNHCR partnered with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) in 1998 to administer the Scheme. Since that time, the programme has continued to provide operational support to UNHCR offices in meeting the needs of refugees worldwide.

### *Administration*

The Deployment Scheme is managed through a partnership agreement between UNHCR and ICMC. The Resettlement Section in the Division of International Protection, UNHCR Geneva, oversees funding and manages donor relations for the Scheme. ICMC is responsible for the maintenance of a roster of resettlement experts, from which UNHCR selects candidates to work at UNHCR offices in the field (deployees).

### *Resettlement Deployment Scheme—NGO Partnership*

During the past ten years, the Resettlement Deployment Scheme has placed over 400 skilled people, from a variety of backgrounds, in refugee protection operations in the field; a large number of these were recruited from NGO resettlement integration networks. Their temporary placement in a UNHCR office provides deployees with an **increased understanding of UNHCR policies** and procedures and **first-hand knowledge of resettlement operations** in the field. In turn, UNHCR benefits from the experience of people grounded in reception, integration and advocacy activities in refugee-receiving countries.

\* *Framework Agreement between UNHCR and ICMC regarding the UNHCR–ICMC Resettlement Deployment Scheme*

## Outcomes

- Since 1998, deployees have **referred over 70,000 individuals** for resettlement
- In 2006, Resettlement Deployees working with UNHCR assessed over 14,000 refugees for resettlement; UNHCR Resettlement operations as a whole **submitted approximately 54,000 individuals**.
- Approximately 45% of the individuals currently on the roster are associated with an NGO as either current or former employer.
- Deployees have been instrumental in **bringing expertise to resettlement** field operations in areas such as child welfare, psycho-social care, refugee status determination, refugee women and group processing.
- Effective participation has **expanded to include NGO partners** and other actors from first countries of asylum, as well as potential resettlement countries (including EU States).

### *The Deployment Scheme and the ERN Project: complementary goals*

The Resettlement Deployment Scheme is fundamentally a **tool for providing refugee protection** through operational capacity-building; the 70,000 plus refugee individuals assisted to date are a testimony to this. However, it has also been a powerful tool for advancing resettlement as a durable solution and as a key component in States' protection regimes.

ICMC Geneva has worked closely with ICMC Europe in the planning and implementation of the 'Practical Cooperation for a European Resettlement Network' Project (ERN). As part of the project, the Scheme has been presented to European partners, both from potential and established resettlement countries, as an example of how **NGOs can play an important role in resettlement operations**, from identification and assessment to pre-departure and through to resettlement integration services. Moreover this is not limited solely to partnerships with UNHCR—NGO involvement in resettlement is being considered by some country programmes and in a few cases is already being practised by European governments.

*Thirty individuals from a range of European NGOs and government offices involved in refugee service provision attended the European Resettlement Training in June 2007. A number of these individuals will participate in resettlement field operations in 2008 as roster members with the Resettlement Deployment Scheme.*

ICMC seeks to support this process by **actively engaging European NGOs** as well as **government officials** in the Deployment Scheme. The Deployment Scheme and ICMC Europe have made a concerted effort to link the European Resettlement Training to resettlement deployments in the field. For NGOs and government officials of European countries, especially emerging resettlement countries such as the Czech Republic, France, Italy and Spain, deployments offer a unique way to gain resettlement experience in countries of first asylum.

In addition to increasing UNHCR's resettlement capacity, deployments are an important tool for fostering the **transfer of information between resettlement field operations and refugee-receiving countries**. The experience of deployee Bertrand Blanc, on leave from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, illustrates the significance of deployments in creating awareness regarding resettlement as an essential tool for protection, as well as a durable solution and a key component to increasing asylum and refugee rights overall.

### ***Congratulations! You have been admitted to America...***

*My mission as a resettlement expert for UNHCR brought me to Mtabila, a refugee camp in the amazing and fascinating north-west of Tanzania, where I worked on the group resettlement processing of the so-called '72 Burundians Group' for referral to the United States Refugee Program. The '72 Burundians Group' consists of Burundian refugees who fled Burundi in 1972 to Tanzania or other countries in the Great Lakes Region. They are primarily of Hutu ethnicity and fled the widespread ethnic violence and government-sponsored ethnic cleansing that took place in Burundi between May and August 1972. Often called the first genocide in the Great Lakes Region, the events of 1972 killed some 200,000 Burundians and caused approximately 150,000 refugees to flee to Rwanda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly known as Zaire.*

*They have been given a "group" determination because almost all of the individual refugees share four major characteristics: they all fled the widespread ethnic killings largely perpetrated by the Tutsi-dominated Government against the Hutu population in 1972; many of them have been subject to multiple displacements in the Great Lakes Region (flight from Rwanda during the 1993 genocide and from DRC in 1996-7 during the ethnic conflict there) and sought refuge in Tanzania for a second time; a large majority of the refugees have spent their entire life in exile and many of these have never lived in Burundi; and they are unwilling and unable to return to Burundi and cannot settle permanently in Tanzania.*

*The 1972 Burundians represent one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world and resettlement has been determined the only durable solution for the great majority of them. At present, the group is dispersed mainly over three refugee camps*

in the north-west of Tanzania: Ngara, in the north close to Rwanda, and Kibondo and Kasulu, approaching the area of Lake Tanganyika.

### *From Paris to Kasulu: a European perspective*

*Before my departure to Tanzania in June 2007, I had been working as a protection officer for four years in the 'Office Français de Protection de Réfugiés et Apatrides' (OFPRA) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which is the public institution responsible for the individual determination of refugee status for asylum seekers in France. OFPRA operations are based primarily in Paris, and include several overseas missions in America and Africa. Working with this agency offers a great human and professional satisfaction but raises at the same time a number of questions on refugee affairs. Working in such an exceptional resettlement operation is a totally new experience for me, which places into perspective my past professional experience. And if the French Government decides to establish a resettlement programme, I would definitely be willing to join such an effort! But for now, I am enjoying work and life in the field and soaking up whatever I can...*

*It is certainly true that European countries have hosted thousands of refugees. Nevertheless, the majority of them still remain in refugee camps or urban settings in countries of first asylum on the African or Asian continent, far from Europe... The '72 Burundians Group' is emblematic of Europe's absence regarding the issue of group resettlement. I wonder why it is that such a group with close historical and developed links to Europe, and more specifically to countries such as France and Belgium, is only resettled to the US? These refugees know about France and Belgium. They know more about the French language than the English language. Coming from France myself, I have been asked many times directly in French by Burundian refugees: "Can we go to Europe?"; "Is the US like Europe and France?"; "Do you think I could study French there?" The US's attraction for the refugees here in Tanzania is certain and real but Europe's is too.*

*Last July, a special meeting was organised in a pleasant but deprived secondary school of Mtabila refugee camp with 300 heads of family, all belonging to the '72 Burundians Group', who represent more than 1,300 refugees. My coordinator gave me the opportunity to announce officially to all these refugees that they have been successfully admitted by the US Government. Just one second after this magic sentence, "Congratulations! You have been accepted to the US!" the audience started to applaud, cry and laugh. At last, some happiness and hope in the refugee camp! I will definitely keep in my mind this day in July. I just hope that one day, I will have the opportunity to call another such meeting and declare to the refugees gathered, who have suffered greatly for decades, suffered too much: "**Bienvenus en Europe!**"*



## Chapter 6—Selection of Refugees by European Resettlement Countries

Chapter 5 provided a review of UNHCR processes for identification of cases in need of resettlement, preparation of submissions and case referral to resettlement countries. This chapter will look in closer detail at the selection process by resettlement countries, focusing on the methods used and the unique feature of involvement by non-governmental agencies in the selection process in some European resettlement countries.

### 6.1 Selection Methods

Each of the resettlement countries determines their eligibility criteria for resettlement and applies this to UNHCR submissions—since we are talking about resettlement in Europe, this guide does not deal with the issue of direct or NGO referrals. States typically travel with a delegation of government officials to the country of asylum from which they have planned to resettle refugees, to conduct individual interviews with refugees and their dependants, on the basis of which a decision of acceptance or refusal is made. This is called **in-country selection**. The delegation looks into the basis of the refugee claim and other specific issues in accordance with the respective country's eligibility criteria for resettlement.



*Selection interview during Swedish mission to Lebanon (Photo: Hans Fagerlin, SMB)*

The second selection method is **dossier selection**. In this instance, the case of the refugee is reviewed in the same manner as during a selection mission but no individual interview with the refugee takes place. The decision is thus taken solely based on a paper submission by UNHCR that consists primarily of the Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) (as explained in the previous chapter).

### *In-country Selection vs. Dossier Selection*

Currently, most resettlement countries in Europe prefer to carry out selection missions or in-country selection to identify refugees for resettlement: out of a total of over 5,500 quota places, less than 1,500 places are reserved for dossier selection (see *overview table at the end of Part II*). Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway all have a relatively small number of places reserved for dossier cases. Sweden is the exception in that it fills more than half of its resettlement quota through dossier selection. The Swedish programme resettles more than half of the dossier cases admitted to Europe on an annual basis.

**Dossier selection** is, in general, **less resource-intensive and time-consuming** than in-country selection, for both the resettlement country and UNHCR. A selection mission involves significantly more human and financial resources. Interviewing resettlement cases in-country is time-intensive. All refugee candidates considered for resettlement will be interviewed; selection missions can last from two to four weeks. For UNHCR, the preparation of a selection mission also involves complicated and often challenging logistics (from finding suitable interview rooms, to gathering refugees at a single location for the interviews). Due to these logistical constraints, dossier selection can be seen to allow for greater **flexibility** in terms of caseloads considered. In light of the resource-intensive nature of selection missions, they are typically organised only when large groups of refugees are to be considered, while dossier selection allows for consideration of smaller groups and individual cases, from diverse locations globally, as well as large groups of refugees.

Many resettlement countries prefer to conduct **selection missions** as a way of ensuring control over the **selection process**. The fact that refugees have to pass through yet another interview process can be seen as either an opportunity for self-advocacy, or an additional hurdle to resettlement. Such an interview certainly provides the chance to clarify aspects of the case that are not clear on paper or to elaborate on facts, which is to the benefit of the refugee. On the other hand, undergoing further interviewing can cause more anxiety and stress that can have a negative effect on the performance of the refugee during an interview, adversely affecting the decision on the case.

Another issue for resettlement countries in considering dossier cases is the **quality** of submissions. Rejection rates by European resettlement countries for dossier submissions are significantly higher than for cases interviewed by missions. Several reasons are put forward by governments for this. Resettlement countries contend that information on the RRF is frequently missing, insufficient or even incorrect. Other concerns involve the refugee claim, which is at times assessed differently by governments or does not meet the resettlement country criteria. Security concerns are a further reason cited for rejection of dossier cases.\* It should be noted that Sweden has not reported significant obstacles to considering dossier submissions. Nevertheless, UNHCR has invested significant effort in improving the quality of the RRF through setting up a system of checks and balances and developing baseline Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (see *Chapter 5*).

With the exception of securing information lacking on the RRF itself, in-country selection missions face many of the same challenges mentioned above with regard to the decision-making on cases. In fact, a lack of information should not automatically lead to a rejection: additional information can be requested from UNHCR in order to decide on a case.

Questions may also be raised regarding the number of dossier submissions requested and calculations of rejection rates. All governments request that they receive more dossier submissions from UNHCR than the number of places available. Although governments make it clear, when rejecting the surplus cases, that they are not being rejected on the basis of the claim, a lot of submissions are necessarily rejected in this way. How do these cases figure in rejection rates? How are they accounted for?

UNHCR views dossier submissions as an effective approach resource-wise for countries considering a first venture into resettlement, particularly where a small number of resettlement places is being considered. Most recently, during the ATCR in June 2007, UNHCR once more encouraged resettlement countries to keep available a limited number of dossier places, not only for urgent and emergency cases but also for normal priority submissions.

### **Importance of Dossier Cases**

In the case of **emergency resettlement**, selection of candidates is almost invariably done 'on paper', as time constraints and safety reasons may not allow for a selection mission. Unfortunately, few countries provide for this important protection mechanism and refugees in need of such assistance may wait months for such a solution. Emergency cases may involve extreme risk to physical and legal safety, where timely interventions can save a life.

\* *Finland only accepts urgent and emergency cases on a dossier basis and stipulates that reasons for rejection are lack of availability of timely medical treatment and lack of interpreters, in addition to security concerns.*

The Iraqi refugee crisis provides a stark example of how an emergency/dossier submission programme can have a significant impact on resettlement in general. As UNHCR struggles to find resettlement places for urgent and emergency cases, acceptance of dossier cases has been vital to the resettlement operation in Syria. Iraqi refugees are primarily referred to the larger resettlement countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia, which do not accept cases on a dossier basis. In this context, smaller resettlement countries that do accept dossier cases, such as Sweden, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands, play a significant role.

**Urgent medical cases** form an even bigger challenge for UNHCR. The few countries that do accept such cases—Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway—have an extremely limited number of spaces. The quota allocations are very small and are not adequate to meet the needs. Further compounding this is the fact that governments prefer to take medical cases during selection missions rather than on a dossier basis.

In response to the challenge posed by urgent and emergency cases, the concept of Evacuation Transit Facilities has been developed. As noted in Chapter 2, UNHCR expects to pilot the ETF model within the next six months.

### *Country Resettlement Criteria*

Governments select refugees for resettlement according to selection criteria defined in their national legislation, which can be distinct from or supplemental to those criteria used by UNHCR, which are outlined in Part II of this guide.

## 6.2 NGO Involvement in Selection

Increasingly, the pre-departure phase—including identification, interviewing, decision-making and pre-departure orientation—in countries of refuge has attracted the interest and attention of non-governmental agencies. NGO involvement in the identification of refugees in need of resettlement in the field, for example, is becoming an increasingly common practice. Selection of refugees, as part of this phase, is usually limited to government delegations headed by officials from departments of immigration but there are some cases in which non-governmental actors participate as well. Participation of additional actors at the selection phase can be beneficial for two reasons: to **streamline the transfer of information** (explained in Chapter 7) and for **participating in/monitoring of decision-making**.

Denmark and Iceland are two countries with resettlement programmes that feature NGO participation in selection missions and specifically in the decision-making process. Iceland is an example of equal partner involvement in decision-making. The **Icelandic**

**Red Cross** makes decisions together with the government, which allows them to play a primary role throughout the process and to contribute their expertise in refugee services during selection. Decisions are based on the consensus of the refugee board, which is made up of Ministry representatives and the Icelandic Red Cross, in order to select the quota of 25-30 places. In addition to the Icelandic model of “good practice” in NGO partnership, Denmark’s resettlement programme has a long history of NGO involvement on relatively large-scale missions. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the Danish model of NGO involvement in selection missions.

### *Selection Mission Process*

The **Danish Refugee Council** (DRC) participates in missions together with the government agency responsible for selection missions, the Danish Immigration Services (DIS). A written contract between the two partners outlines the DRC’s roles, including preparation of missions, participation in missions, assistance with pre-departure orientation and transfer of information to municipalities. A preparatory meeting is held once a group for resettlement has been identified. Upon arrival in the refugee host country, the delegation participates in a briefing with UNHCR regarding the situation of the refugees in their country of origin as well as the country of asylum.

Before interviews are held, the DIS, together with the DRC, holds an informational session with the refugee group. This session provides refugees with information about resettlement to Denmark and a general idea of Danish society and expectations of citizens in Denmark. Written information describing rights and obligations in Denmark is distributed to refugees in their own language. Finally, the Integration Declaration (see *Chapter 3.1 on Denmark*) is explained to refugees.

Interviews are facilitated by two or three teams from the Danish delegation, composed of representatives from the DRC and the DIS. The delegation is headed by the DIS. At the end of the interview, refugees are required to sign the Integration Declaration. Following the interviews, each team presents their cases and discusses whether resettlement to Denmark is appropriate and what status would be granted. The DRC is thus considered a ‘**hearing partner**’, whereas the DIS makes the final decision. To conclude the mission, the delegation debriefs UNHCR. The debriefing will involve an evaluation of the mission, including an overview of each case and RRF, country information and protection challenges.

### *Monitoring the Decision-Making*

Recommendations by DRC are made to the DIS, including consideration for expansion of the selection criteria in particular cases as appropriate. Given DRC’s expertise with

refugees in Denmark regarding provision of social services for particularly vulnerable groups, the NGO delegates can identify ways in which integration goals can be achieved. As an umbrella organisation for a large number of organisations working with refugee issues, unions and community interest groups, the DRC **represents civil society** in the selection process. Through this involvement in selection missions, civil society plays a clear role in the implementation of refugee protection. As mentioned previously, during the discussions held on cases the DRC acts as the hearing partner, i.e. it participates in discussions, listens to the arguments put forward by the DIS, and in the case of disagreement presents arguments for a particular case before a final decision is made by the DIS. According to Danish immigration legislation, **protection and integration potential** are the two main considerations for any given case.

The DIS makes final decisions on all cases; however, recommendations made by the DRC have been successful in advocating for cases that were questioned on the grounds of 'lack of integration potential'. The DRC has, for example, successfully argued that an illiterate refugee couple with children does, in fact, satisfy the integration potential criterion. This is based on the fact that their children will be educated in Denmark and will be able to work, thereby compensating for the limitations implied by the illiteracy of their parents.

While the DRC does not have decision-making power in this arrangement, it has the ability to **publicly contest** decisions it believes are based on faulty reasoning. In this manner, though they are a partner in resettlement with the government, they are also free to advocate on behalf of cases, which may involve criticism of government decisions. Thus, the selection process becomes more transparent and the NGO is able to advocate protection needs as being paramount in the consideration of cases.

### **Integration Potential**

Integration potential is the subject of much debate among actors in resettlement. The concept of 'integration potential' introduces into the selection of refugees for resettlement consideration of a variety of factors such as age, education, work experience, foreign language experience, networks in the resettlement country, and motivation for integration, in order to attempt to assess a refugee's capacity for successful resettlement. Though most countries uphold protection as the fundamental criterion for resettlement consideration, some have established integration potential as an additional criterion.\* Refugee advocates fear that countries may be cherry-picking so-called 'good' refugees. Governments argue that it is necessary to establish criteria based on the capacity of

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\* While a number of resettlement countries also consider 'integration potential', Denmark is the only country that has adopted this in its legislation.

reception and integration services available and the individual's ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The central objective of offering resettlement as a durable solution will be best achieved by an appropriate balance between the UNHCR Resettlement Criteria (see *Chapter 5*) and the criteria which have been established by the government of the resettlement countries.

The primary goal of resettlement is protection, therefore the needs of the most vulnerable (for example, survivors of torture and violence) must be evaluated in order to best prepare services in the resettlement country, but not as grounds for exclusion. When governments insist on measuring integration potential, credibility and transparency must be ensured. Civil society should question whether national legislation has established provisions for officers to make decisions by examining the basis for those decisions. Interview methods need to be evaluated for discretion and transparency. Finally, governments interested in ensuring the integration of refugees could do so by improving services and capacity for integration services, including pre-departure and post-arrival cultural orientation programmes, use of social capital (civil society, volunteer networks) and by strengthening partnerships between government agencies, the NGO or voluntary sector and UNHCR in resettlement activities. To date, there are no published statistics that associate the application of the integration potential criterion with higher degrees of integration of resettled refugees.

## Chapter 7—Preparing Reception through Selection and Cultural Orientation

Increasingly, greater emphasis is placed on the value of pre-departure Cultural Orientation (CO) programmes, both by NGO refugee advocates and resettlement countries. This development is a recognition of the fact that pre-departure CO constitutes the beginning of the integration process for refugees and is a key ingredient in the **continuum** of resettlement services that begins with refugee identification and care services, and extends over an often prolonged processing period where refugees are in need of accurate information regarding the nature and reality of resettlement.

All resettlement countries in Europe, with the exception of Ireland, offer a pre-departure CO programme for refugees as an integral part of the pre-departure process (see *overview table at the end of Part II*). CO programmes prepare refugees psychologically as well as practically for the transition to a new life in a resettlement country. They can also serve as valuable tools for addressing the sometimes ill-informed expectations refugees have of the resettlement experience. In addition, Finland and the Netherlands use selection missions as an opportunity to collect information to improve reception services upon the

refugees' arrival in their new home. This chapter will discuss these aspects of European CO programmes, as well as looking at how data collected during selection missions is transferred to and utilised by service providers in the resettlement country.

## 7.1 Preparing Reception through Selection

### *Selection and 'Social Intake': the Dutch model*

The **Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers and Refugees** (COA) is the sole organisation in the Netherlands responsible for the reception and housing of asylum seekers and resettled refugees. Formerly, resettled refugees would stay in reception centres along with asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers, while awaiting supported housing services; historically, the waiting time for these services has been lengthy. In response, a working group was formed to find ways to **improve the situation of quota refugees** with regard to reception and housing. The working group concluded that by collecting biographical and social information about anticipated refugee arrivals, service providers could make better preparation for their arrival and reception. Similarly, the working group concluded that improving the quality of pre-departure information provided to refugees regarding integration services was fundamental to create positive resettlement experiences upon arrival. The working group envisioned using the **selection missions** as an opportunity to meet refugees being considered for resettlement and to gather information that would help resettlement programmes decide on the appropriate integration services. Specifically, the working group proposed organising **cultural orientation** for refugees **prior to their arrival**, **centralising the reception of quota refugees** in order to provide more **targeted services**, and initiating **housing arrangements** earlier in the resettlement process using the specific data collected on the refugees during selection missions.

As a result, in 2004 the COA began participating in delegations of the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) during **selection missions**. Today, selection missions include two COA case managers who conduct interviews with all of the refugees under consideration for resettlement. Information collected includes the educational background of refugees, their work experience, language knowledge and hobbies. This information is then compiled in a **social file** for each refugee or refugee family, which is shared with colleagues providing integration services, schools and the medical services in the reception centre. During the interview, **information on the Netherlands** and the reception centre in Amersfoort is also provided by means of a presentation and a fact sheet in the language of the refugees. While this practice represents an attempt to provide clear information and promote informed decision-making amongst refugees,



some NGOs have criticised the process for the fact that not all refugees receiving this briefing will be accepted for admission to the refugee programme.



*Social intake interview in Kenya (Photo: Nicolien Rengers, COA)*

The **objectives** of the ‘social intake’ interview are twofold:

- To establish an inventory of the skills and needs of the refugees under resettlement consideration in order to inform the CO programme, the reception centre in Amersfoort, and service providers making housing arrangements, as in the case of (un)accompanied minors; and
- To manage the expectations of refugees by providing realistic information on reception services and life in the Netherlands.

This interview represents the refugees’ first contact with the service providers who will guide them through the reception process until their final settlement in municipalities. This is what the COA calls the **‘Red Line Approach’**, which is a way of describing the continuous process of pre-departure orientation and reception. Having the service providers directly involved in the collection of social data on resettled refugees ensures that no information gets lost in the process (an issue which will be discussed later in this chapter) and allows for pro-active decision-making in terms of reception and housing services.

The Netherlands is not the only resettlement country attempting to provide refugees with a **realistic image** of the country during selection missions. Iceland, for example, offers the CO session before the actual selection interviews. In this way, the programme seeks to ensure that refugees have some understanding of the country so that they may make an informed decision about their prospective resettlement to Iceland. Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden also provide some informative briefings on culture in their respective countries. In addition to this briefing, the resettlement countries provide a full CO programme for accepted refugees (with the exception of Ireland).

### *Grasping Refugee Reality: Finnish municipalities joining selection missions*

Another example of better linking of the selection to the reception phase is an initiative by the Directorate of Immigrant Services in Finland to include municipal staff in the selection delegation. In November 2006, the Director of Immigrant Services of Jyväskylä municipality in Finland joined a delegation from the Directorate of Immigration on a selection mission to Thailand. This was only the second time that a municipal staff member had joined a selection mission—two years previously someone from the Vantaa municipality also joined a selection mission to Thailand.

Participation by municipalities in selection missions is not standard practice for the Finnish Programme. The above initiative was conducted as a **pilot**, and was based on feedback from municipalities regarding refugee resettlement experiences in the past. Refugees, having explained their history, background and experiences repeatedly to resettlement officers, often assume that municipalities are familiar with their case. The municipal staff responsible for the reception and integration programmes for refugees, however, are not provided with a complete history of refugees' situations prior to their arrival. Due to this gap in communication regarding case histories, the initiative also received support from refugees previously resettled in the various municipalities. They felt that participating in selection missions would give municipal staff a better grasp of the realities faced by refugees on the ground, and would therefore enhance communication of refugee needs at the local level in resettlement countries.

Initially, representatives from the Ministry of Labour (MoL) formed part of the selection delegation gathering social information on the refugees for reception and integration. Over the years, the MoL was more often represented by district officials. During the pilot project, the Director of Immigrant Services of Jyväskylä municipality joined the representatives of the MoL to interview refugees under consideration for resettlement, focusing on social, educational and medical issues. The Jyväskylä municipality and the MoL designed a special **questionnaire** for information collection during the interviews, which has been used by the MoL during selection missions since. This questionnaire has

facilitated the transfer of information on the needs of the resettled refugees to the local service providers.

*Following the pilot project, the Director of Immigrant Services in Jyväskylä Municipality organised a debriefing for refugee service providers, including social workers and psychologists. She feels that this experience has helped her staff to develop a better understanding of the needs of the refugees and to improve the municipal services. Fifteen of the refugees she had interviewed during that selection mission were subsequently settled in the Jyväskylä municipality. The Director reports that it was a warm welcome for them to be received by a familiar face.*

## 7.2 Cultural Orientation

The majority of resettlement countries in Europe organise **pre-departure Cultural Orientation (CO) programmes** for refugees accepted for resettlement. The **content** of the CO programmes varies according to the resettlement country; however, the following are common themes covered by the programmes:

- Travel arrangements and reception process;
- Basic characteristics, systems and resources of the receiving society;
- Socio-cultural orientation;
- Process of integration and problem solving;
- Introduction to the language.

The **length** of the training programme varies from a few hours (Iceland) to one week (Denmark, Great Britain). The **actors** organising the CO training in Denmark, Iceland and the Netherlands are government officials and/or NGOs. In the remaining resettlement countries the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) organises the CO (see *overview table at the end of Part II*). NGOs are involved in most of the resettlement countries in the reception phase/post-arrival orientation process for resettled refugees. This is not the case for pre-departure orientation, except in Iceland and Denmark. Some European NGOs advocate for involvement in this area as well, given the added value their participation would bring to the pre-departure CO due to their expertise in refugee issues, the fact that they represent the host society, and the continuity their presence would bring to the overall integration process. Involving refugees themselves in providing CO is another issue advocated for by NGOs. Refugees know what type of information is needed from personal experience and would therefore play a significant role in providing relevant and targeted information.



*Burmese refugees in Thailand with certificates after CO training (Photo: IOM Finland)*

Orientation programmes in general seek to **facilitate the transition** to a new society and culture and to provide a **realistic image** of conditions in the resettlement country as a means to reduce frustration and uncertainty among refugees during the first weeks after arrival. Experience suggests that resettled refugees who have a better understanding of the receiving society are also less likely to become marginalised and passive and are in a better position to contribute their skills and abilities.

Reference has so far been made to the 'pre-departure' orientation process. **Orientation** can be seen as a process commencing in the country of departure, or sometimes in the immediate post-arrival period, and continuing throughout the reception phase in the resettlement country and the period of settlement (*UNHCR Reception and Integration Handbook*). The orientation process can also be seen as divided into two phases: pre-departure and post-arrival orientation, the latter being discussed in Chapter 8 on reception and integration. Regardless of how these pieces of the 'resettlement continuum' are categorised, all of them are considered to be part of the same **process**. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that at each of the phases in this process of orientation, refugees have **different needs** as well as different capacities to **absorb** and **contextualise information**.

With respect to pre-departure orientation services (post-arrival orientation/reception will be discussed in Chapter 8), resettlement country experience suggests that offering a pre-departure CO programme is useful in assisting resettled refugees to develop a clear picture of conditions in the receiving community and of the expectations placed upon them. The example of the Netherlands is instructive:

*In 2005, the Netherlands started organising a CO training prior to departure. It was found that refugees who received this pre-departure CO training had a better start in the country of resettlement than refugees who did not receive this training; the latter had to concentrate primarily on re-adjusting expectations to adopt a realistic picture of the country of resettlement.*

The extent to which resettled refugees are able to learn and retain information prior to departure is not clear. Preliminary findings from the consultation process with quota refugees in Sweden (see *box on MOST project*) suggest that activities undertaken in the pre-departure period appear to affect the future stages of the resettlement process (reception and integration). On the other hand, it was found that stress in the pre-departure period causes refugees to be less receptive to information inputs; they are desperate to leave their current situation behind and therefore focus mostly on escaping the country of first asylum. Thus, the quality of this information is seen as more important than the quantity provided. In other words, extensive pre-departure orientation seems to be less effective; however, a briefing to provide refugees with basic information is still important.

*As part of their involvement in the MOST project, the Swedish Government is conducting a survey of quota refugees' experiences and expectations following arrival in Sweden and enrolment in integration services. It is significant that initial conclusions from this study are consistent with those of the Irish Government, who are also involved in the MOST project and examining the effect of Reception and Integration services.*

The contrasting experiences of the Netherlands and Sweden should not be seen as contradictory. The Swedish research highlights the questions of not only what information is most helpful to refugees, but also when, and how to offer this information.

The *UNHCR Reception and Integration Handbook* refers to research by psychologist William Glasser which shows that interactive learning methodologies (group discussions, role play, etc.) and the provision of a range of learning experiences (e.g. videos and audio tapes) are the most effective in imparting information.

We learn:

- 5% of what we hear
- 10% of what we see
- 20% of what we see and hear
- 50% of what we discuss with others
- 75% of what we experience
- 95% of what we teach others

*(Source: WMD Glasser, 'Control Theory in the Classroom', Harper and Row, New York, 1986 in UNHCR Reception & Integration Handbook)*

Taking into account the resource-intensive nature of CO programming, careful consideration of the content, length and timing, methodology and approach, and external factors is important in planning such a programme. Employment of professional orientation trainers as well as involvement by former refugees in delivering CO should be seen as two key elements in establishing such a programme. Refugees bring unique skills such as language skills, an appreciation of the resettlement process based on their own experiences, and a capacity to mediate between two world-views.

Almost none of the **dossier-based referrals** for resettlement receive any kind of CO in the resettlement countries in Europe. Pre-departure orientation is difficult to arrange for dossier cases because numbers are smaller and/or they are dispersed in many locations. One solution would be to commence CO training in the immediate post-arrival period; however, refugees selected on a dossier basis do not typically arrive in groups but rather sporadically throughout the year. Therefore, in the case of dossier admissions individual arrangements should be made for CO training upon arrival.

Orientation has so far been understood as a way to familiarise refugees with a new society. **Orientation**, however, like integration, is a **'two-way' street**; it is just as important for receiving communities to understand the culture and backgrounds of resettled refugees as it is for newcomers to understand the cultural norms and customs of the receiving community. Of the resettlement countries in Europe, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway have all made efforts to ensure that receiving municipal authorities and/or communities are provided with some sort of CO. In Iceland, when the receiving entity is a small municipality a CO session is organised for the community as a whole. The CO training in Norway, which is presented by IOM, consists of two parts: orientation for the refugees to be resettled and an orientation on the background and culture of the resettled refugees for staff of the receiving municipalities. The COA in the Netherlands provides a presentation for interested municipal authorities on UNHCR, resettlement, the group placement, and background information on the group of resettled refugees that will settle in the municipality. In Ireland, about six months before the arrival of the resettled refugees the Government starts holding community meetings to prepare the community for the arrival of the refugees, involving the media as well.

## 7.3 Information-transfer to Service Providers

The **Resettlement Registration Form** (RRF) is a UNHCR document used to share information regarding a refugee's social, educational and medical data with resettlement countries when considering cases for resettlement (see *Chapter 5*). In principle, the RRF makes information on the refugees' needs and skills available to resettlement countries' immigration officers. However, this essential information often does not reach the municipal staff or organisations providing services for resettled refugees.

The RRF is a **confidential document** and therefore it cannot be shared with persons other than immigration officers (the RRF actually states "representatives of resettlement countries" and is being expanded to include government-related service providers). The handling of this document is challenging when resettlement countries must find ways to transfer the medical and social data from the RRF to the reception and integration personnel without violating standards of confidentiality. In general, resettlement countries attempt to use the RRF but leave out the confidential data (i.e. the refugee claim), in order to supply service providers with the necessary information. The Danish Immigration Service has responded to this challenge by requesting, during the selection interview, the refugee's consent to share such information with receiving municipalities in Denmark. NGOs have asked that UNHCR consider requesting such consent on the RRF as well so that refugee reception service providers may be better informed. Another difficulty is the fact that municipal authorities distrust the information on the refugees that is handed over to them and therefore start again from zero.

A streamlined system for information-transfer regarding resettlement cases prevents loss of information, facilitates better preparation, and avoids subjecting refugees to repetitive interviews recounting case histories (including past traumas). Including representatives of the receiving municipalities, or organisations responsible for reception and integration, in selection missions provides an effective means of transferring this information. The Netherlands has developed such a model (as described above) where the **COA** participates as part of the selection delegation, specifically to collect such information. During the interview, refugees are asked for permission to share this information with relevant organisations. When refugees are established in the municipality after their stay in the reception centre, COA staff provide the municipality with documentation on the refugees which contains information from the social file as well as a report on the "progress" of the individual's integration.

The **Icelandic Red Cross** provides another example of an organisation that participates in selection missions, and is also a part of the decision-making process (see *Chapter 6*). The reception and integration of resettled refugees is organised through the local Red Cross branches, with the municipal authorities and in collaboration with the Ministry



of Labour. This enables the Ministries to convey information from the RRF and the interviews directly to the service providers, i.e. the municipal authorities and the local Red Cross. The process of transferring information may be easier to facilitate in Iceland, acknowledging the modest number of refugees resettled and the fact that they are all settled in one municipality at a time. Nevertheless, the concept of cooperation on selection missions and coordination of reception and integration services between an NGO, the municipality and the government remains valuable and certainly replicable with larger refugee caseloads.

In the Finnish example, the participation of municipalities in selection missions is not institutionalised. However, the pilot programme has led to the creation of a [questionnaire](#) which includes all social, educational and medical data, which can be directly provided to the municipalities without problems of confidentiality.

In Sweden, the issue of information-sharing with local service providers was addressed through the proposal to create a [common database system](#) to be shared by the Swedish Immigration Board and the Swedish Integration Board; the project was unfortunately halted when the Swedish Integration Board was dissolved.

## Chapter 8—Starting a New Life: Approaches to Reception and Integration in Europe

### 8.1 Introduction

Refugees who have been accepted for resettlement often arrive in their new country directly from crisis situations or prolonged stays in refugee camps. As a sign that they may finally have found a durable solution and the opportunity to restart their lives, refugees who resettle in the European Union are in most cases issued a permanent residence permit.

But what actually happens when the refugees arrive? Having in most cases survived long and difficult journeys and equipped with skills acquired in another life, a world away, how do resettled refugees adapt to new lifestyles, organise housing, employment and education for themselves and their families, find a sense of belonging, develop social contacts and begin to participate in their new communities?

There is as yet [little specific research available in Europe](#) exploring the answers to these important questions which shape, if not define, the overall success of refugee resettlement and integration.



A key resource in this field is the UNHCR publication *“Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration”* published in 2002. The handbook provides examples of “best practice” in a number of countries and is intended as a resource to help in the development of programmes for the integration of resettled refugees. The publication provides information on, for example, initial reception of resettled refugees, ways of preparing receiving communities, language training, education, employment, and the special needs of refugee children.<sup>1</sup>

Noting that the handbook presents best practice largely in the context of resettlement in Australia, Canada and the US, ICMC’s European Resettlement Training turned its attention more specifically to approaches and practices of European resettlement countries in the areas of reception and integration of resettled refugees. These approaches and practices are elaborated in this chapter, including certain points of comparison between the programmes.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, the programmes demonstrate that NGOs and government bodies with **effective reception, integration and community development projects** are instrumental in assisting refugees to establish their new lives. Indeed, the evidence shows that when provided with essential support mechanisms, refugee individuals and families can successfully adapt to their new surroundings, make good use of their many life skills, participate meaningfully in the communities in which they resettle, work gainfully and even send their children to university. As idealistic as this integration path may be, the examples in this project have shown such integration to be plainly achievable.

## 8.2 Approaches to Reception

During the reception phase, refugees being resettled will need to access a range of **resources**, such as housing, income support and healthcare, in addition to learning the language, culture and routines of their new society. All resettlement countries offer

<sup>1</sup> At European level, some references in the area of integration of migrants and refugees include:

- ‘A Common Agenda for Integration—Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union’, COM (2005) 389;
- The Way Forward: Towards the integration of refugees in Europe, ECRE 2005 and Policy briefings on the integration of refugees, ECRE, 2007;
- Note on the Integration of Refugees in the European Union, UNHCR, May 2007.

Research on resettled refugees is also being carried out within the framework of the project *Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training Related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees*, the outcomes of which will be published by the end of 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Given that present resettlement activities in European countries are predominantly implemented at the municipal level, the examples considered at the training were site-specific. Consequently, though it was possible to discern common approaches among them, the subject would benefit from further research, which is beyond the scope of this project.

assistance to refugees in these areas. Moreover, in most cases assistance is tailored to the needs of individual refugees through individualised assessments, though often in the context of services generally offered to immigrants and “newcomers”.

The resettlement programmes in Europe generally take **two approaches** in their reception procedures.<sup>1</sup> Some European countries mainstream refugees into their general framework of services for third-country nationals staying legally in the European Union, while other resettlement countries have developed specific programmes for resettled refugees in an effort to respond to their particular needs better. Specialised programmes depend on additional government funding and are time-limited to periods of one to three years, after which refugees fall within the regular service regime.

Basically, the two methods can be distinguished as follows:

1. Temporary placement of resettled refugees in a reception centre upon arrival, i.e. “centralised reception”; or
2. Direct placement of resettled refugees in a municipality, i.e. “municipal reception”
  - a) Mainstream services for resettled refugees
  - b) Specialised services for resettled refugees

## 8.3 Centralised Reception Offering a Specific Programme for Resettled Refugees

Upon their arrival, **Ireland and the Netherlands** receive resettled refugees in a centralised reception centre. Portugal also receives refugees in a centralised reception centre (see *Chapter 2*).

The orientation programme for resettled refugees at the centralised reception centre in Amersfoort, in the Netherlands, is a recent initiative launched in January 2006. The programme is available only to refugees selected during missions, and focuses on small groups ranging from 20 to a maximum of 30 persons, all of the same ethnic background and/or nationality. Each group will have participated in a pre-departure cultural orientation programme and then travelled together to the Netherlands. The group composition is deliberately maintained throughout the programme to build mutual support structures and to build upon diverse profiles, for example mixing persons with leadership potential with more vulnerable individuals.

<sup>1</sup> The United Kingdom is an exception, not fitting neatly into either of these two approaches. As part of the Gateway Protection Programme, reception and integration have been especially **designed for resettled refugees only**, focusing on the delivery of high-quality frontline services that are helping some of the most vulnerable refugees to successfully integrate into the UK.

Once at the reception centre, children are enrolled in school and the refugees follow a nationally mandated integration programme, consisting of Dutch language classes and an orientation to Dutch society, for 30 hours per week. In addition, the participants participate in an individual coaching and assistance programme in order to establish an “integration map for the future”, outlining a study and work strategy. After three to six months, the group is placed together in the municipality where they will establish residency.

**Ireland** does not offer a cultural orientation programme prior to the refugees' arrival in the country. However, upon arrival a centralised reception programme for resettled refugees provides a comprehensive orientation to Irish society and culture. Following the reception programme, refugees are moved into distinct municipalities, in small groups of five to ten families.

In both Ireland and the Netherlands, municipalities are obliged by law to receive a certain number of refugees per year.

Centralised reception has the **advantage of ensuring that all refugees receive the same information and equal access to resources and social support**. The reception programme of the Netherlands illustrates a coherent approach, engaging refugees from the selection phase until they are established in the municipalities. Centralised systems are not without their own risks, however, for spending extended periods in a reception centre can reinforce dependency developed during prolonged camp stays.

## 8.4 Immediate Reception in Municipalities: the mainstream approach

In **Denmark, Finland and Sweden**, resettled refugees are immediately received by municipalities, where the refugees will access reception and support services and establish residency. In the UK they undergo a three-day orientation programme before leaving for the municipality where they will take up residence. While placement practices vary widely between these programmes, resettled refugees generally do not choose their place of settlement but are assigned to specific communities.

In most cases the decision to settle refugees in a given municipality is taken on a **voluntary basis**. The number and regional diversity of municipalities engaged in reception activities varies by country. As noted earlier with respect to Ireland and the Netherlands, municipalities in Denmark also are obliged by law to receive a certain number of refugees per year. In Sweden, a majority of municipalities are involved; in Finland, only a few cities and towns.

## 8.5 Placement Policies

Placement policies generally aim at achieving a proportionate **geographical distribution** of refugees throughout the resettlement country, in order to avoid the possibility of undue burdens on any given municipality. The availability of appropriate housing, support services and employment opportunities, as well as the presence of relatives, social networks or similar ethnic groups/nationalities, even the availability of interpreters, are mentioned by governments as factors in considering refugee placement. As a general rule, there is a policy of placing refugees in proximity to similar groups and/or ethnic backgrounds. Exceptions to this practice are made where there is a shortage of suitable housing or municipal services are inadequate.

Perceptions of capacity are an important aspect of placement policies; participants in the European Resettlement Training and other stakeholders reported the level of municipal preparedness as increasingly affecting resettlement policy in individual countries. Some governments only accept resettlement submissions when they are certain that they can count on the ability of municipalities to receive them. Building support in municipalities to engage in resettlement is therefore essential to establishing flexible and effective programmes. Additionally, municipalities with the existing resources to assist a greater number of refugees can play a key role in expanding this capacity. The **lack of appropriate housing** is often pointed out as one of the main reasons for lack of engagement of municipalities to host resettled refugees. Other factors, such as the absence of support networks and limited labour possibilities, may also limit a willingness to engage in resettlement activities. In Finland, finding **appropriate housing for large families is posing the biggest challenge to refugee placement**. This has led to the Directorate of Immigration selecting smaller refugee families for resettlement. The UK is similarly hesitant with respect to selecting larger families for resettlement.

As it happens, resettled refugees are often placed in smaller municipalities away from the main economic centres. Several countries seem convinced of the advantages of resettling refugees in **smaller municipalities, particularly those that** have adopted **strategies to develop** their capacity and resources to assist the integration of resettled refugees. Their country resettlement programmes report that placement of refugees in smaller municipalities makes connecting with the new community easier and is more conducive to the building of social networks.

Research by Denmark shows that refugees normally stay in the municipalities where they were placed upon arrival. It should be noted, however, that if refugees leave their assigned municipality during their 1–3 year integration period (*see the table on p. 119*), they may risk losing their entitlements. More research and official statistics are needed

to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of placement policies and their effect on the successful integration of resettled refugees.

## 8.6 Introduction Programmes and NGO Service Provision

All resettlement countries offer introduction programmes as a means to facilitate integration. Such programmes vary in duration from one to three years (*see the table on p. 119*) and include different components, such as language, cultural and labour market orientation.

Integration programmes are shown to be most successful when they are flexible and allow for individual adaptation. Most countries take such an individualised approach. In the Netherlands, the successful completion of such a course is mandated by the ‘Dutch Integration and Newcomers Act’ (the so-called “WIN”) and is linked to the attainment of a permanent residency permit. In all countries municipal authorities receive **funds from central government** to provide integration services for resettled refugees, normally a lump sum per refugee.

In most countries a portion of the support services are provided by NGOs and other community organisations or institutions, such as language schools. Going beyond the provision of services for the reception and integration of refugees, the British, Danish and Dutch Refugee Councils provide professional advisory services to municipalities as well.

The Dutch Refugee Council, for example, is the agency responsible for providing refugees and many other newcomers with social guidance and/or services specifically targeted at assisting them to comply with the requirements of the WIN. In the UK, the role of voluntary agencies is prominent. The programme is fully funded by the Home Office for the first twelve months. Depending on the locality, the Home Office establishes service contracts with either local authorities, voluntary sector organisations or other community organisations that work with refugees. A “Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership” (RIAP), coordinated by the British Refugee Council, consists of eight voluntary organisations, involved in different localities, that provide information, advice and support to refugees both before they arrive and once they are in the UK. The partnership, which includes the British Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, Refugee Arrivals Project (RAP), Refugee Housing Association and the Scottish Refugee Council, is a model of NGO coordination in the provision of services to resettled refugees.

## 8.7 The Contribution of Volunteers

The organisation of activities by volunteers is a vital element of introduction and integration programmes, and complements the other services offered. Volunteers are valuable resources for refugees, outside of the family and refugee networks. Of critical importance, volunteers provide access to existing community networks and help to address the multiple needs of refugees through individualised support. Volunteer services include assisting refugees in navigating administrative procedures and requirements, helping with schoolwork, with informal language training, and creating links to local businesses and municipal resources.

Due perhaps to a well-functioning welfare state, the involvement of the voluntary sector is less elaborate in Scandinavian countries. The Linköping City Mission in Sweden currently runs an ERF-funded project to develop ways of increasing NGO involvement in introductory services and create cooperative links with the public sector and civil society. The insert below describes that effort.

### **An NGO Approach with Volunteers in the Swedish City of Linköping**

Cooperation on services between NGOs and the public sector in Sweden is an exception to the rule, given the tradition of a strong welfare state that provides such services. Generally the area of programmes for the introduction of refugees, including those newly-arrived for resettlement, is no exception. Nonetheless, there are a number of local and regional examples where NGOs have successfully engaged in introduction programming for refugees alongside public institutions. In the municipality of Linköping, the NGO Linköpings Stadsmission (Linköping City Mission), founded by city churches, has a tradition of providing activities and services independently and at the request of the municipal authorities. The Refugee Integration and Employment section of the organisation provides a programme linking language training to labour-market orientation and includes psychosocial and medical care within the introduction programme. Linköping City Mission has obtained very good results: half of their refugee internship placements have led to employment, and the other half to further education. The programme has recently been asked by the municipality to expand.

## 8.8 Refugees as Agents of Integration

Engaging refugee communities in the provision of social support is one way of ensuring refugee involvement in the planning and development of services. Although there is much that could be done to enhance their involvement, members of established

refugee communities themselves are increasingly contributing to the social support of resettled refugees, working as professional staff or volunteers in support services and non-government agencies. Many also serve as volunteers in ‘befriending’ programmes, as mentors, or in ‘refugee guide’ programmes. One example is the ‘Kotopolku’ project of the Finnish Red Cross. The goal of the project is to develop integration models for newcomers and promote cooperation between NGOs and local authorities. All but one of the project’s employees is a former refugee or immigrant, and all come from different backgrounds. Courses and small group activities are organised to strengthen the integration process, offer practical work training and placements and assist in forming associations and groups.

## 8.9 Specialised Resettlement Services at the Municipal Level: the experience in Yorkshire

Although there is great variation in how the UK Home Office manages services to refugees in other parts of the country, the example of the local delivery partnership between the British Refugee Council and local authorities in the Yorkshire region has demonstrated how a flexible, multi-agency collaboration approach can be particularly effective within a short period of time. The programme is a good example of how with the right support, refugees are quite able to re-establish their lives. The programme is identified as one of the few in Europe which offers, at the local level, reception and integration services which have been especially designed for resettled refugees. Since 2005, five groups of refugees, mainly Burmese/Karen and Congolese, have been resettled in the area.

Fostering independence is a key principle of the services: every facet of the programme is designed to assist clients towards independence. Working in partnership with refugees is a guiding principle. As part of their integration services, refugees draft an integration plan detailing immediate, mid-range and long-term needs and goals, including a strategy for becoming independent of the programme. Progress towards the goals is assessed periodically. Support services are provided by way of caseworker home visits; twice-weekly drop-ins for advice; group information sessions on subjects including family reunion and domestic violence; housing support; health services; counselling; assistance in accessing public benefits; school enrolment and employment services.

In the course of these 12 months, refugees engage in job training and/or the labour market and become increasingly self-reliant. The following reflection was offered by a member of the British Refugee Council Resettlement Team during the ICMC resettlement training in Spain:

*Whether we can speak of real integration one year after settlement is not the question. Integration is a process and a very personal one, thus very subjective. How do we characterise the achievements of a severely traumatised refugee woman, who would not utter a word upon her arrival, and who is now managing her life, shopping, making social contacts and greeting her former caseworker on the street with a cheerful smile and a hug?*

The above is an example of how certain aspects of the integration process may not be measurable on a traditional integration index (see table on p. 119).

## 8.10 A Role for the Media in Supporting Refugee Reception and Integration

A challenge identified by many actors involved in resettlement activities is how to create a **positive image** of refugee resettlement in the media. Rising xenophobia is hindering the acceptance of newcomers by promoting fear or hostility towards immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Moreover, many people are unable to differentiate the very specific refugee issue from larger migration concerns.

NGOs are becoming increasingly active in utilising the media as a means of informing the general public on refugee realities. In the UK, national and local media have played an important role in explaining the still largely unknown field of resettlement by publishing articles about the events that caused refugees to flee their countries of origin, compelling them to seek protection in countries of first asylum and beyond (see newspaper article on inside back cover). Positive media coverage of the participation of refugees in community life and events also **encourages** the integration of refugees at local level by making communities aware of the presence of refugees.

The British Refugee Council has reported overall positive responses towards resettled refugees in Yorkshire due to constructive and fair media attention. The Netherlands has used the press to draw attention to resettlement and refugees in general, with articles on specific municipalities celebrating the arrival of resettled refugees.

## 8.11 From Dependency to Economic Self-sufficiency

It is generally acknowledged—and feared—that support arrangements have the potential to foster **dependency** and to impede the refugee from actively participating in and taking control of his or her own integration project. Over the years therefore, great emphasis has been given to the importance of promoting the **economic self-sufficiency** of refugees.



To that end, local networks of civil society, such as voluntary agencies and labour unions, have been a major resource for refugees seeking employment links and opportunities.

The **workplace** is one of the primary points of contact between new arrivals and their new country, providing a means for learning about the culture and practices of the society as well as day-to-day opportunities for communicating in the language of that society. On an individual level, employment generally enables refugees to maintain a positive identity and to realise their personal potential in the labour force. Of course, work offers the refugee a visible, tangible way in which to participate and contribute to the economy of the new land. Altogether, these workplace factors are often considered to be among the strongest of all drivers of integration. Allowing resettled refugees to work as soon as possible by means of providing them with a work or **residence permit** is therefore a fundamental factor in their successful integration.

Collecting information and **statistics on employment** rates for resettled refugees is not always an easy or straightforward task. This is partly due to the fact that there are usually no separate statistics on the situation of resettled refugees, with employment statistics typically aggregating all refugees (quota and non-quota), or even all migrants. The fact that labour markets also differ from country to country and reflect national fluctuations complicates the attempt to make comparisons and to identify 'good practice' with respect to refugee employment.

Operating at a national level, the organisations *Emplooi* and *Job Support* in the Netherlands help refugees find suitable employment. *Emplooi* works in close cooperation with the Dutch Council for Refugees, as well as with *Job Support*, which is part of the University Assistance Fund Foundation for Refugee Students. Other projects undertaken in a number of resettlement countries, such as Finland and Sweden, as well as at international level, show that authorities are also actively exploring new forms of partnership with the private sector in order to open up access to employment for refugees. In January 2007, for example, the Hallsberg municipality in Sweden began a project in which they cooperate with companies to offer trainee places for resettled refugees. A mid-term evaluation revealed that only 39% of the refugees who underwent training found employment afterwards. To encourage such initiatives, the Swedish Government decided to offer extra funds as a reward to municipalities that succeeded in getting resettled refugees either employed within 12 months of their arrival or engaged on a trainee placement at a company for at least six months. In September 2007, UNHCR itself announced an initiative to increase employment of resettled refugees. Partnering with *Manpower*, a major multi-national employment services company, UNHCR committed to a three-year plan to build integration and employment potential for resettled refugees. But more than employment alone, the real test of a refugee's integration is often said to be *economic self-sufficiency*.

The Finnish part in the MOST project is interesting in this regard. It focuses on developing ways of integrating immigrants more efficiently into the labour market and society rather than concentrating on putting in place social services and public services for them, as is more generally the case in Europe at present. Clearly, there is a need for more **academic research** in the field of economic self-sufficiency—and integration in general—as well as for a more concrete **exchange of practices** with respect to specific or vulnerable groups of refugees.

## 8.12 Resettlement and the Potential for Integration

In some parts of Europe and elsewhere, there is much discussion being devoted to whether it is possible, important and proper to try to *anticipate* the ability of refugees to successfully integrate into a new society before that society agrees to accept them for resettlement. Of course, refugees who do resettle have the obligation to learn and abide by the national laws and customs of their adoptive countries. Moreover, like any other resident of the country and community in which they resettle, refugees will need to undertake whatever language and other education and employment can best support them and their families to sustain themselves and integrate successfully.

However, the ability to integrate successfully can equally be seen as a result of the ability of resettlement programmes and related civil society organisations to welcome and offer adequate support to newcomers to Europe. While European programmes can provide their own examples of initial resettlement successes, the example of the large-scale resettlement of Somali Bantus to the United States starting in 2003 (*see insert below*) provides a longer-term perspective on how the level of support provided to refugees post-arrival may be as significant in determining resettlement outcomes as any other quality, circumstance or credential the refugee may already have had when being considered for resettlement selection.

*Historically, the Bantu in Somalia have been treated as second-class citizens by the country's lighter-skinned dominant clan. When civil war erupted in 1991, thousands of Bantu were enslaved, tortured and murdered. The lucky ones managed to flee to the relative safety of refugee camps in Kenya. The US agreed to resettle about 13,500 Bantu, and starting in 2003, the refugees were scattered across the country, from upstate New York and Florida to Idaho and Oregon.*

*(Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2007: "Bourbon, Baseball Bats, and Now the Bantu")*

The city of Louisville, Kentucky initially resettled some 200 Somali Bantu in 2003; however, hundreds more have “migrated” there since. The Somali Bantu could have been considered a particularly difficult group to integrate: many of the families were large, the group was historically marginalised in their home country and had little or no formal education—with most Bantus lacking a written language of their own—and many arrived with limited work skills. And yet this refugee group has found a home and been able to integrate in Louisville. Why?

First, the receptiveness of the community, including the engagement of the private sector in welcoming the refugees, was so important to finding work and promoting self-sufficiency among the refugees. One of the larger employers in the city organised mentoring services for refugee employees and provided financial support for English language instruction. In a regular awards ceremony, the city government formally recognised individuals, companies and organisations working to support refugees and other newcomers. Public services such as child care, after school and summer programmes and Somali cultural programmes further helped this group to become a functioning, contributing part of the city. As a result, despite what many might have said was an impossible integration potential for these Somali Bantu, a majority of the resettled men were employed not long after their arrival.

The city of Louisville’s experience points to several important factors to which other cities and governments might refer in seeking to build support for resettlement programmes:

- The engagement of the private sector in welcoming refugees is key to promoting self-sufficiency among refugee communities.
- Political will and cooperation at the level of local government can set the tone of the larger community in providing support mechanisms to refugee individuals.
- Integration is a “two-way street” and refugees who might otherwise be seen as “vulnerable”, “difficult to integrate”, and/or in need of special services have the ability to become valued members of their communities, given adequate support.

## Main features of introduction and integration programmes in EU resettlement countries

Country	Denmark	Finland	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	UK
Pre-Arrival Cultural Orientation (CO)	One week (DIS)	Three days (IOM) (until end 2007)		Four days (COA)	Occasionally (SIB until July 2007)	Three days (IOM)
Reception/ services on Arrival	Municipality	Finnish Red Cross	Resettlement Team	COA	Municipality	MHL
Centralised Reception	N/A	N/A	4-6 weeks orientation programme (resettled refugees only)	3-6 months orientation programme (resettled refugees only)	N/A	2-3 day orientation programme (MHL) (resettled refugees only)
Municipal Commitment to place refugees	Legal Obligation	Voluntary	Voluntary	Legal Obligation	Voluntary	Voluntary
Group Placement Policy	Factor of consideration	25–50 persons (all refugees)	5–15 families (resettled refugees)	20–25 persons (resettled refugees)	Factor of consideration	20 persons (average) (resettled refugees)
Integration/ Support Programme for refugees	3 years Language training Training for employment Danish culture	3 years (Individual integration plan) Language training Training for employment Finnish culture	18 months, of which 3-4 months home visits programme Language and employment training	1-2 years (Individual introduction programme) Language training Dutch culture Training for employment	2 years average (Individual integration plan) Language training Swedish Culture Training for employment	1 year programme for resettled refugees (no uniform programme) Great variety of social services, accommodation, health, education.
Government contribution to municipalities	Not available	€ 6,223 < 7 years € 1,952 > 7 years (lump sum pp)	Not available	€ 4,000 (lump sum pp)	€ 19,255 adult refugee € 20,373 for a refugee child (lump sum pp)	€ 15,000 per person, per year (estimate)
NGO Assistance to Refugees	Service contracts with local authorities (DRC) Countrywide network of volunteers (3,000)	Service contracts with local authorities Volunteers act as support persons (Finnish Red Cross trained)	No structured role for voluntary sector. Occasional provision of services to local authorities.	Service contracts with local authorities DCFR implements Social Guidance programme. Countrywide network of volunteers (7,200)	Service contracts with municipalities (occasional) Volunteer Services (complementing)	RIAP agencies service contracts with Home Office Volunteers Services (complementing RIAP services)

DIS: Danish Immigration Service; IOM: International Organisation for Migration; COA: Central Agency for Asylum seekers and Refugees; SIB: Swedish Integration Board; MHL: Migrant Helpline; DRC: Danish Refugee Council; DCFR: Dutch Council For Refugees; RIAP: Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership; N/A: Not applicable

## General Conclusions and Recommendations for Follow-Up

### Resettlement Framework and Resettlement Country Programmes

#### *Expand European Resettlement Capacity and Interventions*

- As the EU makes progress with establishing a ‘Common European Asylum System’ (CEAS), more effort will need to be made to expand the external dimension; sharing the responsibility for refugee protection with third countries, which host a majority of the world’s refugees. A tangible gesture of offering additional resettlement places must be considered in this context.
- The number of EU countries involved in resettlement must be increased and existing resettlement efforts expanded. Continued engagement and leadership of the European Commission will be essential to encouraging Member States to offer (or increase) resettlement places, as well as undertaking coordinated actions and initiatives with States to further define and implement joint programmes.
- Consideration could be given to joint EU resettlement selection missions, enabling direct involvement with fewer resources. In this scenario, new resettlement countries could benefit from the logistical arrangements, infrastructure and expertise of other Member States, during the start-up phase of the programme or through long-standing arrangements.
- The incentives included in the European Refugee Fund (ERF) for the resettlement of vulnerable groups, such as women at risk, unaccompanied minors and persons with serious medical needs, are welcomed. However, elderly refugees should also receive special consideration. Given the modest funding levels, it is recommended that the available funding should focus on piloting new and innovative reception and introduction programmes for these groups, with full consultation and participation of the non-governmental sector.
- The Regional Protection Programmes (RPP) are at present the only instrument incorporating comprehensive approaches to attaining durable solutions for refugees, including resettlement. The pilot projects under implementation are limited in terms of scope, linkages with development instruments, financing and target countries; future projects should be less limited in these aspects.
- Consideration needs to be given to expanding joint EU resettlement initiatives, in the context of RPPs or through other instruments, to respond effectively to emergency refugee situations, including the strategic use of resettlement in situations with large influxes of refugees.

- As part of the ongoing pilot RPPs in the Western Newly Independent States (WNIS) and Tanzania, Member States are urged to respond to calls made by UNHCR and the European Commission to offer resettlement to refugee groups identified within the framework of these projects.

### *Pursue Resettlement within a Comprehensive Approach to Durable Solutions for Refugees*

- Resettlement is one of several tools for addressing protection needs in regions of refugee origin. A comprehensive approach towards the range of durable solutions is required in these countries and must involve long-term development assistance inputs.
- Resettlement must never be seen as negating the right to seek/enjoy asylum in Europe, nor as the only way to address protection needs of refugees in regions of refugee origin.

### *Maximise the Value of NGOs as Resettlement Partners in Europe*

- Resettlement is a coordinated activity undertaken in partnership with resettlement countries, UNHCR, NGOs and other actors. It includes a variety of specific processes, from the identification in the field of refugees in need of resettlement, to screening, processing, reception and integration. Existing consultation processes such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement should be applied to the European dialogue.
- NGO engagement in resettlement processes should be increased, from pre-departure (e.g. selection and cultural orientation) to post-arrival (e.g. reception and integration) to respond effectively to refugees' needs.
- It is recommended that inter-European NGO partnerships be expanded, to capitalise on existing expertise and exchange best practice. NGO collaboration in this project has demonstrated the value of identifying good practices in resettlement partnerships with governments.
- There are already several examples of good practice in resettlement NGO partnerships with governments at the local level. Consultations between local authorities and exchange of good practice should become institutionalised to allow for mainstreaming of good practice throughout the country.
- As part of the effort to advocate for and expand resettlement to new EU countries, it is vital that there should exist a clear understanding about the meaning, intent and role of resettlement. Stakeholder debates in countries considering—and undergoing training for—programmes on resettlement as a protection tool have proved useful in enhancing this understanding.

## Recommendations for the Resettlement Process

### *UNHCR Resettlement Operations*

- In addition to increasing UNHCR's resettlement capacity, deployments are an important tool for fostering the transfer of information between resettlement field operations and refugee-receiving countries. For NGOs and government officials of European countries, especially emerging resettlement countries, deployments of personnel offer a unique way to gain resettlement experience in countries of first asylum and offer unique possibilities for understanding the complexity of refugee protection.
- It is essential for UNHCR to ensure that resettlement staff are equipped with the tools necessary to identify and submit refugees for resettlement, in addition to ensuring the efficacy and professional management of the resettlement process.

### *Selection of Refugees by European Resettlement Countries*

- States are recommended to make their resettlement programmes more flexible to allow for more effective responses to protect refugees who are most at risk.
- A dossier submission programme offers an important and flexible protection mechanism and should be a component of existing and new European resettlement programmes, particularly for emergency, urgent and medical cases.
- Participation of non-governmental actors in the selection process can facilitate a more effective sharing of information regarding refugee protection and reception needs, as well as constructive participation and transparency in related decision-making.
- There are no published statistics that associate the application of integration potential criteria with higher degrees of integration of resettled refugees. Governments wishing to ensure the integration of refugees could do so by developing high-quality and targeted reception and integration services which take account of specific vulnerabilities.

### *Preparing Reception through Selection and Cultural Orientation*

- Pre-departure cultural orientation constitutes the beginning of the integration process for refugees and is an important ingredient in the continuum of resettlement services. Employment of professional trainers, as well as involvement by former refugees in delivering cultural orientation, should be seen as two key elements in such programmes.

## Starting a New Life: Models and Approaches in Europe

- Member States should ensure that individuals being resettled are accorded refugee status, or a similar status with the same benefits and rights accorded to refugees, upon admission to the country. A permanent residency status is key to the provision of this durable solution and provides the security and stability needed to reconstruct lives in a new home country.
- Reception and integration services should provide adequate levels of support to resettled refugees, taking account of their particular vulnerabilities. Specialised refugee services can be an important element of integration services; however, they should be time-limited and foster autonomy, independence and interaction with the local community.
- The perception of limited capacity (particularly in housing) among individual municipalities to welcome and integrate refugees has been cited as an obstacle to expanding resettlement quotas or to acceptance of certain refugee profiles. States should, in consultation with municipalities and other civil society actors, identify resources to increase the capacity of municipalities to provide reception and integration services, including services to refugees with special needs.
- Given the variation in national policies regarding geographical placement of resettled refugees within European countries and the potential effect on integration outcomes, it is recommended that an analysis be conducted of current placement procedures to municipalities, including an examination of secondary movements.
- Non-governmental agencies bring to the table broad social networks and associated resources and are often better placed to provide services to resettled refugees. As such, States, municipalities and NGOs themselves should examine which aspects of reception and integration services NGOs could be actively involved in.
- Volunteer efforts by local communities in reception and integration activities complement professional services provided by NGOs and municipal authorities and create important support networks for refugees, among individuals, services and organisations.
- It is crucial that civil society institutions speak out to correct misinformation and to provide positive input regarding refugee resettlement, including the benefits that refugees can bring to communities.
- There is a need for more academic research in the field of economic self-sufficiency—and integration of resettled refugees in general—and for more exchange of practices regarding reception and integration assistance to vulnerable groups. At a European level, sharing experiences and 'lessons learned' in the field of integration of resettled refugees should be piloted, in order to promote better understanding of the links between service provision and integration outcomes.



## References for Resettlement Programmes

<b>Denmark</b>	
<b><i>The Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs</i></b> Holbergsgade 6, 1057 Copenhagen K	Tel: +45 33 92 33 80 Website: <a href="http://www.inm.dk">www.inm.dk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:inm@inm.dk">inm@inm.dk</a>
<b><i>The Danish Immigration Service</i></b> Ryesgade 53 2100 Copenhagen Ø	Tel: +45 35 36 66 00 Website: <a href="http://www.udlst.dk">www.udlst.dk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:us@us.dk">us@us.dk</a>
<b><i>Danish Refugee Council</i></b> Borgergade 10 1300 Copenhagen K	Tel: +45 3373 5000 Website: <a href="http://www.drc.dk">www.drc.dk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:drc@drc.dk">drc@drc.dk</a>
<b>Finland</b>	
<b><i>Finnish Directorate of Immigration</i></b> P.O. Box 18 Panimokatu 2 A, 00581 Helsinki	Tel: +358 (09) 476 5500 Website: <a href="http://www.uvi.fi">www.uvi.fi</a> Email: <a href="mailto:ulkomaalaisvirasto@uvi.fi">ulkomaalaisvirasto@uvi.fi</a>
<b><i>Finnish Ministry of the Interior</i></b> PO Box 26, FI-00023 Government Kirkkokatu 12, Helsinki	Tel +358 71 878 0171 Fax +358 71 878 8555 Website: <a href="http://www.poliisi.fi/">www.poliisi.fi/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:kirjaamo@intermin.fi">kirjaamo@intermin.fi</a>
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**Caritas Sweden**

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Email: [mhl@migranthepline.org](mailto:mhl@migranthepline.org)

**UNHCR**

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
(UNHCR)**

Website: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

**UNHCR Refworld**

Website: [www.refworld.org](http://www.refworld.org)



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Last steps to safety: A Liberian refugee family arrive in Sheffield - father Jack, nephew Ruden, mum Abetor and six-year-old daughter 'Princess Diana'

# City offers safe haven for victims of misery

## 'We should be proud to offer refuge from torture'

Story **Lyn Barton**  
Picture: **Chris Lawton**

A GROUP of refugees from war-torn Africa arrived in Yorkshire yesterday to put the horror of their experiences behind them and start a new life.

The 19 men, women and children have been resettled in Sheffield as the first part of a United Nations programme which will see more than 500 take up residence across Yorkshire and the rest of the UK.

Largely from Liberia, the group have been living for more than a decade in the squalid conditions of the refugee camps of Guinea and Ghana, where they had had to escape the brutal civil war which erupted in 1989.

Many will have survived torture, rape and the murder of their families, and even 15 years later will be unable to return to their homes.

"People in Sheffield should be proud that they will be able to offer a refuge to people who need a place of safety and a base to rebuild their lives," said Jim Steinko, chief executive of the Northern Refugee Centre.

"The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone have been an appalling example of how innocent people get caught between warring factions, and are the people who often suffer the most in terms of losing their lives and loved ones, their homes and jobs."

Jan Wilson, the leader of the Sheffield Council, urged people to make the refugees feel at home and said there was no hint of resentment from local communities.

"I hope Sheffield people will welcome these refugees in the way we have a history of doing and we hope we can properly support this small number of people."

"We are not expecting trouble," she continued. "We are the first in the country to receive these new arrivals."

"Other towns and cities will also be welcoming refugees, and I'm pleased that we are in a pos-

ition to set the example of welcoming these people."

Around 70 people of different ages and with different skills will eventually come to live in Sheffield under the scheme funded by the Home Office. Many speak excellent English, but some will speak French as a first language.

They will be given homes by Housing Associations and help adjusting to life in Britain. The partly-furnished houses will be in locations all over the city. None will be from the council-house waiting list.

Coun Wilson stressed that they were not 'asylum seekers'. "Those who arrive in Sheffield will already have refugee status. They won't have to apply for asylum as this has already been granted."

"They have been through health screening and are in a position to start integrating into our community straight away."

She said the refugees will be able to claim benefits other citizens are entitled to and, unlike asylum seekers, they will be able to work and make their own living.

"I hope these people will embrace their new life in our city and make a valuable contribution to it."

Home Secretary and Sheffield MP David Blunkett said providing sanctuary for those fleeing terror was a "distinguishing" and "noble" British tradition.

The United Nations scheme would provide a safe route for people to come and live in Britain without forcing them into the hands of people traffickers.

"The people we are moving to safety have suffered horrific human rights. They are the survivors of torture, rape and the victims of long-term conflict. They have been trapped in a life of misery in refugee camps for more than a decade. Their stories are heart-rending and I am glad we are able to offer them the chance of safety and a better life."

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All girls love a new doll: The smiling daughter known as Princess Diana holds her new 'baby'.

# A home at last after hell of rape, murder and brutality

Lyn Barton

AT the age of 14 Abetor was forced to watch as her father's throat was cut during Liberia's vicious civil war.

Utterly helpless, Abetor knew that to scream for mercy or even appear to grieve would identify her as a relative and mark her for death.

"The gratuitous killing was the beginning of a shocking train of events that 13 years later has led her to Yorkshire in search of a new and better life."

Abetor said: "I was captive for 11 months. They raped me and beat me. I had to cook for them and clean for them and do everything."

"They killed most of my friends. There were plenty of girls there, but many were killed. 'Everyday they (the rebels) would come and say they wanted to see more blood and so they would kill more people.'"

Still barely a teenager, a victim of torture and persecution and by then pregnant, Abetor managed to escape the rebels and sought sanctuary in the first of four successive refugee camps in Western Africa. Conditions were hard with up to 10,000 people living in squalor under tarpaulin and surviving on corn meal and wheat.

building contractor forced to tie his home in Liberia when he rebels starting systematically killing members of his tribe.

Their daughter Princess Diana was named in honour of her namesake because she was born in 1987, the year the princess died in a road crash.

"Princess Diana was so good to people, she loved everybody so I gave her name to my daughter," said Abetor.

The youngster celebrated her sixth birthday last week and for the first time her parents were able to celebrate with a birthday party.

Last night - thanks to a United Nations programme which saw the family resettled in Sheffield - Princess Diana slept in a real bed with a solid roof over her head for the first time in her life.

Abetor and Jack, who have brought their orphaned nephew Jack to live with them, are excited about the future.

"I want to learn to read and write and to speak better English," said Abetor. "I want to get a job and if I have to clean floors that is no problem."

Jack, 41, is also keen to make the best of his new life and get a job to support his family.

"For us it is like coming from hell to heaven," he said.



Abetor: Saw her father murdered by rebels.

There was a prevailing feeling of despair, said Abetor: "Life was hard and many people suffered. People thought they would never leave the camps and die there."

As the powder keg of ethnic tensions in the region exploded, the camps were targeted by militias who launched lethal firebomb attacks. Again in fear of her life, Abetor was forced to flee and in the confusion lost her son, now 13 and thought to be in Sierra Leone.

In 1983, Abetor met and married 41-year-old Jack, a

Endurbúseta áttelepítés Resettlement Reinstallation Hverfesting Genbosaetning Umeleensjoframmen Gjenbosetting Vidarebosättning Presfólvaní Genbosaetning Hverfesting Endurbúseta Resettlement Vidarebosättning Áttelapítés



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