

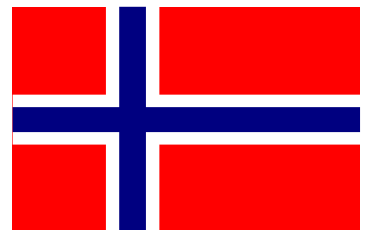
**COUNTRY  
CHAPTER**

**NOR**

# **NORWAY**

**BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY**

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## 1. Resettlement Policy

Norway recognizes and supports resettlement as an important instrument of international protection and as a durable solution to the plight of refugees.

Norway offers resettlement opportunities within annual quotas. The size of the annual quotas is set by the Parliament following proposals made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID).

AID allocates the annual quotas taking into account the advice of UNHCR and Norwegian government agencies, notably the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). Within this quota UDI resettles refugees in close co-operation with UNHCR.

Sub quotas are allocated to refugee groups taking into account both UNHCR's assessment of resettlement needs and priorities and the capacity to integrate refugees into local communities. The resettlement programme is operated in close co-operation with UNHCR. Thus, most offers of resettlement are made on the basis of UNHCR referrals.

The resettlement places made available on annual quotas may be applied flexibly within three-year periods. This allows for advance use of quota places from the following year within the three-year period. Likewise, when annual ceilings are not reached, unused places may be carried over to the following year. The current flexible period runs from 2007 to 2009.

### 1.1 The process of deciding on the composition of the quota

AID sets the basic criteria for the selection of refugees for resettlement. AID also decides the annual composition of the quota. This decision is based on the following annual process:

In March/April, UDI and IMDi share resettlement experiences from the previous year with AID through a preliminary recommendation of continued resettlement of refugee groups. AID in turn consults MFA and UNHCR. AID then suggests allocation criteria for next year's quota in June. These suggestions are again shared with UNHCR at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR).

UDI and IMDi receive a letter from AID after ATCR, where the criteria for the working process that will lead to next year's quota are presented. UDI will in October, after consultations with IMDi, present a more detailed allocation of the quota, based on the Government's suggestion on quota number. The allocation of the quota is finalised by AID in November. UDI will forward a letter explaining the quota size and composition to UNHCR.

## 2. Criteria for Refugee Status Eligibility and Resettlement

### 2.1 Eligibility

Cases submitted by UNHCR are to be given priority. UDI may additionally process cases submitted by:

- another (designated) inter-governmental organization;
- the Norwegian Foreign Service;
- international criminal courts that Norway has witness resettlement agreements with;
- Norwegian PEN (this applies only to persons who come under the Cities of Refuge Programme);
- Norwegian NGOs with presence in areas where UNHCR is not present.

No applicants are able to apply directly to any of the referral agents mentioned above.

### 2.2 Admissibility

For a refugee to be accepted by Norway the following criteria will be assessed:

- S/he must meet the criteria of the 1951 UN Convention or be granted a permit (subsidiary protection): Relevant points are the refugee's reason for leaving his/her native country, the risks a return entails and security in the country of first asylum. UNHCR's evaluation should form the basis for these considerations. At the same time, the protection consideration of cases submitted for resettlement should equal the protection consideration for spontaneously arrived asylum-seekers. This is also the case for credibility assessments.
- S/he should be in need of resettlement: The possibilities for finding other durable solutions should be considered in the short term as well as in a longer perspective.
- Exclusion: Persons that come under the exclusion clauses of the 1951 UN Convention shall, as a rule, not be offered resettlement in Norway.
- State security: UDI forwards cases involving security issues to the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST). Norway will not accept persons who are deemed to be a threat to state security.
- Behaviour: Persons of known criminal behaviour or heavy drug users are, as a rule, not to be offered resettlement in Norway.
- Female profile: 55 per cent (55%) of the total resettlement places should be allocated to women and girls, thus applying a strengthened gender focus. Furthermore, 15 percent (15%) of all resettled refugees should fall into the category "women-at-risk", excluding dependents.

Apart from this, Norway would like to receive refugees that reflect a fair and balanced composition in comparison to the rest of the refugee population(s). This criterion refers to social background and other individual factors. Variables that measure this criterion are for example education level, work experience, age and medical needs. Although 'integration potential' is no longer to be included in the list of criteria for the selection of individual refugees, the local municipality's capacity for serving the special needs of refugee groups will be considered when selecting cases, hence the need for a 'fair and balanced' composition of the caseload presented.

In addition to a strengthened gender focus, single women and families with children can more easily be offered good services in Norwegian municipalities. Norway can only resettle a limited number of single males. The capacity for settling refugees with reduced mobility, such as e.g. people confined to wheelchairs and elderly, is also limited.

### **2.3 Decision-making process**

UDI is responsible for selection of applicants for resettlement, for issuance of entry visas and for status determination and processing of the applications for resettlement. The applicant's eligibility for refugee status may be determined before departure from the country of asylum or upon arrival in Norway.

When UDI accepts an applicant for resettlement in Norway, he or she is given an entry visa and a residence or work permit prior to entering the country. This applies to applicants accepted via dossier selection as well as those accepted after an in-country selection.

## **3. Resettlement Allocations / Processing Priorities**

55 per cent (55%) of the total resettlement places should be allocated to women and girls, thus applying a strengthened gender focus. Norway is furthermore emphasizing Women at Risk (WAR) and these should constitute 15 per cent (15%) or more of all persons (excluding dependents) accepted under the quota. Norway also has 20 places allocated to medical cases 'Twenty or More' and some 75-100 places have during the latest years been allocated to emergency cases.

## **4. Submissions and Processing via Dossier Selection**

Norway may process referrals for resettlement on the basis of dossiers prepared by UNHCR, although, when necessary, the dossiers may be supplemented by interviews made by selection missions.

#### **4.1 Routing of Submissions**

Submissions should be made directly to UDI at [resettlement@udi.no](mailto:resettlement@udi.no) Emergency and medical cases should only be processed on the basis of dossiers referred by UNHCR Geneva, or through the Regional Resettlement Hubs in Nairobi and Beirut.

UDI notifies UNHCR about the decisions. The Norwegian Foreign Service representation in the country of asylum is informed about every positive decision and is instructed to issue necessary travel documents and visa.

#### **4.2 Processing Times**

Average time frame for UDI to make a decision in resettlement cases is 3-4 weeks after reception of the dossiers. Cases submitted as urgent are processed as normal cases with regard to time frame; however, they are given priority by UDI and usually processed within two weeks. Emergency cases are usually processed within 48 hours.

### **5. Submissions and Processing via In-Country Selection**

UDI decides whether selection missions will interview refugees or whether selections can be made solely on the basis of submitted dossiers. The decision is taken after consultations with IMDi and other relevant authorities.

#### **5.1 Routing of Submissions**

See 4.1.

#### **5.2 Processing Times**

Selection missions are headed by UDI; however, IMDi will normally participate. UNHCR submits a number of cases on dossier for consideration prior to the actual mission. The mission will interview all or some applicants. The decisions are made by UDI after the mission, based also on suggestions from IMDi. The decisions are final and UNHCR is requested to present the results to the refugees.

For accepted cases, the Norwegian Embassy in the country of asylum is instructed to issue necessary travel documents and visa.

After the decisions have been made some 2-4 weeks after the end of the selection mission, IMDi will make settlement arrangements with Norwegian municipalities. When housing, cultural orientation and other preparations have been arranged for,

travel arrangements are made through IOM.

With few exceptions, applicants accepted for resettlement will arrive in Norway within six months of acceptance. However, due to difficulties that may occur with exit arrangements and other formalities, processing time is sometimes prolonged. The entry permit may be extended under such circumstances.

## **6. Emergency Cases**

Norway offers accelerated processing in situations where a refugee's life or freedom depends on emergency resettlement. Refugees may be considered for emergency resettlement when they face, for example, threats of deportation, physical threat to security or undue detention. No geographical or national limitations apply to this category.

Emergency cases are given highest processing priority of all applications for resettlement and are usually processed within 48 hours.

## **7. Refugees with Special Needs**

Norway has a sub quota for refugees with medical needs (twenty-or-more). It is crucial that UNHCR submits a complete, transparent, and recently updated medical report in all referrals concerning refugees with special needs. When refugees with medical needs and victims of violence and torture require special treatment, available medical services in Norway are examined before decisions are made. The case will normally be rejected if required special treatment is not available or if it is only scarcely available in Norway. Refugees with medical needs should have prospects to recover after getting medical treatment in Norway.

## **8. Family Reunification of Refugees**

### **8.1 Eligibility**

The aim of the provisions on family reunification is to protect already established family ties. A permit for family immigration is primarily granted to close family members. The permit is granted for one year at a time. Spouse, cohabitants who have lived together for at least two years and children under 18 years of age are considered as close family members.

Other family members may be granted a permit to reside in Norway. The requirements are however strict. This group includes:

- a cohabitant with whom the person living in Norway has or is expecting a child (even if they have not been living together for at least two years);
- a person over 18 years of age intending to enter into marriage with a person residing in Norway within six months after entry into Norway;
- a single mother or father over the age of 60 without a spouse, cohabitant or relative in ascending or descending line in the country of origin, and for whom the son or daughter in Norway has special responsibility;
- a child over 18 years of age without a spouse or cohabitant, who is or becomes left in the country of origin when the remainder of the family obtain residence in Norway, or who for medical reasons is completely dependent on personal care from parents in Norway;
- full siblings under 18 years of age without a mother, father or other caregiver in country of origin or country of residence and with no mother and father in another country;
- other family members, when strong humanitarian considerations warrant it.

## **8.2 Routing of Submissions**

Applications shall be submitted to the nearest Norwegian Embassy or the Embassy assigned to handle applications for the country in question. UNHCR is requested to assist in this process where necessary.

## **8.3 Case Documentation**

More information about procedures and requirements for documentation are found on the web page below: <http://www.udi.no/templates/Tema.aspx?id=4475>

# **9. Medical Requirements**

In some cases UDI will, through UNHCR, request refugees to pass a medical examination before a decision can be made. The results of the medical examination will be considered when making the decision.

In other cases, UDI will request IOM to conduct medical examinations for refugees who have been accepted for resettlement to Norway. The results will not influence on the decisions, but are conducted in order to prepare the local health services in Norway.

After selection missions, UDI may also request IOM to conduct medical examinations on the group as a whole.

## 10. Travel

Norway is a member state of IOM, and makes use of its services. IOM arranges travel for refugees accepted for resettlement in Norway under the quota as well as for persons accepted for family reunification with refugees in Norway. Norway contributes to IOM's general budget besides paying for travel and other assistance. The Norwegian Foreign Service representation issues emergency travel documents (*laissez passers*) and visas to refugees before departure.

## 11. Further Rights and Obligations Upon Arrival

Status determination is conducted after arrival in dossier-cases and before arrival if there has been a selection mission.

After three years of legal residence in Norway, the refugee may apply for a permanent residence permit. This will allow him or her to reside outside Norway for a period of maximum two years without losing the permit. In order to obtain citizenship, the refugee must have stayed seven years in Norway with a residence or work permit. Other requirements apply if the refugee is married to a Norwegian citizen.

According to the Immigration Act, asylum may be revoked when the refugee no longer falls under the definition of a refugee, or if this otherwise is a consequence of general rules in public administrative law. This clause is only applied exceptionally, unless the refugee has clearly reavailed himself of the protection of his country of origin.

UDI will as a routine report the case to UNHCR as soon as fraud is discovered. Withdrawal of status will be considered.

The Norwegian Government has established a voluntary repatriation programme where financial support is given to any refugee who has been resettled, granted refugee status or a residence permit on humanitarian grounds in Norway. The rates are as follows:

- 15,000 NOK per person upon departure from Norway;
- Travel free of charge from the nearest airport in Norway to the country of origin.

## 12. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

A prime objective of Norwegian immigration policy is to ensure genuine equal status between immigrants (including refugees) and Norwegians. This means that



immigrants should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations as the rest of the population. Particular emphasis is placed on efforts to give immigrants the same opportunities as the rest of the population to acquire education and obtain employment. In addition it implies support for immigrant cultural activities.

AID sets out the general immigration and refugee policy in Norway. Other Ministries ensure that immigrants and refugees have equal rights in their sectors of responsibility. UDI and IMDi are the main implementing institutions. UDI is responsible for immigration control, reception of asylum-seekers and resettlement. MDi is responsible for settlement of immigrants and refugees in municipalities.

Quota refugees are as a rule not placed in reception centres, but are settled directly in the municipalities. Once the receiving municipality has been identified, IOM organises travel paid for by the Norwegian Government. On behalf of IMDi, IOM also delivers a four-day pre-departure Cultural Orientation-programme (CO) on Norwegian society and practical information for living in Norway. The primary objective of the CO-programme is to promote smoother integration of refugees into the Norwegian society. It prepares them for the initial adjustment period after arrival in Norway, addressing unrealistic expectations, and reducing the culture shock. As directed by IMDi, the CO-programme also provides the receiving Norwegian municipalities with relevant and updated information about the resettling refugees 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 IMDi. There are six regional settlement offices that select areas of settlement in over 100 different municipalities. The number of places available in municipalities is determined by the amount of positive responses received from local authorities to the requests for settlement submitted by IMDi. According to the policy of IMDi, the main goal for settlement of refugees in Norway is that the refugee is 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 develop networks, reduce isolation and make it feasible for municipalities to develop better programmes for large groups of refugees.

Municipalities sometimes specify which groups of refugees they would like to 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. The municipalities are the principal actors in satisfying the goal of settlement, and they receive state subsidies for settlement and integration of refugees during the five initial years after a refugee has been settled. The integration subsidy is the most important measure to achieve rapid and good settlement. After placement of refugees is confirmed, the municipality receives an integration subsidy of NOK 496,000 for an adult and NOK 476,000 for a child to provide for benefits (housing, education, healthcare and welfare) over a five-year integration period.

Upon arrival, refugees are received by municipal officials and are immediately accompanied to an arranged home or apartment. IMDi manages the Introduction Act and develops co-operation with actors and partners on an international and national level (state, municipalities, voluntary sector, and private organisations). Each regional IMDi office is responsible for settlement of a certain amount of refugees in their area and for managing the two-year Introductory Programme outlined in the Introduction 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. The programme is mandatory for all refugees between 18 and 55 years of age. As a part of the introduction programme, the refugees have the right and the duty to attend 250 hours of language training and 50 hours of social and cultural studies. Most refugees will, however, need more than 250 hours of language training as part of the programme. The aim of the programme is to prepare for studies or the labour market.

Schooling is mandatory for children between 6 and 16 years of age in Norway. In addition, youths between the ages of 16 and 19 have the right to further education. There are no school fees for primary and secondary schools in Norway. The same applies to most colleges and universities.


Municipalities have collaborated with NGOs on projects to increase social integration, such as the Project Refugee-guide, that is made possible by cooperation between the Red Cross and the municipality. Norwegian volunteers serve as 'guides' in the community, providing information and social contact with the Norwegian population. This project has had positive reports from refugees who, with the help of 'guides', were able to make friends and contacts more easily, both important for social integration.





Norwegian NGO's have no legally established responsibilities in integration of refugees. Many NGO's do, however, contribute voluntarily in the integration process.

The municipalities provide the same services to immigrants and refugees as the rest of the population. These services include health, education, housing, vocational training, employment etc.

## 13. Reference Materials

### 13.1 Other useful reference material

-  Act of 24 June 1988 concerning the entry of foreign nationals into the Kingdom of Norway and their presence in the realm (Immigration Act). Updated 1 May 2008.

-  Regulations concerning the entry of foreign nationals into the Kingdom of Norway and their presence in the realm (Immigration Regulations), passed by Decree of the Crown Prince Regent on 21 December 1990. Updated 5 June 2008
-  Act of 4 July 2003 concerning introduction scheme and tuition in Norwegian for newly-arrived immigrants (Introductory Act)
-  White paper no. 75 (2006-07) on Act concerning entry of foreign nationals into the Kingdom of Norway and their presence in the realm (Immigration Act)
-  Various pamphlets giving relevant information on housing, education etc. to foreign nationals who are going to live in Norway

### 13.2 Websites

- Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID):  
<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/aid/Topics/Immigration/asylum-and-refugee-policy.html>
- Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI):  
<http://www.udi.no/defaultRedesign.aspx?id=2112>