



# PARAGUAY

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF  
PARAGUAY

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**Paraguay Overview:**

Resettlement programme since: <b>2010</b> (primeras llegadas)	Selection Missions: <b>Yes</b>	Dossier Submissions: <b>No</b>
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Resettlement Admission Targets for 2011:

Admission targets for UNHCR submissions:	15 persons
Total Resettlement Admission Target:	15 persons

**Regional allocations for 2011:**

Africa	
Asia	
MENA	
Europe	
America	15
Total	15

**Sub-quota characteristics:**

Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:	2011 Description, additional comments:
Emergency resettlement procedures	
Medical cases	
Cases of women at risk	
Unaccompanied minors	
Family reunification (within the program)	

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

The Republic of Paraguay recognizes that resettlement is a key instrument for the protection and in the search for durable solutions to problems facing refugees. The Republic of Paraguay, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), agrees that the relocation is intended to meet the special needs of refugees whose life, safety, freedom and other fundamental human rights are threatened in the country where they sought refuge. The objective of the resettlement program is to

facilitate their early integration in Paraguayan society based on self-reliance and positive contribution to local society.

## **1.2 Ministries or Departments Responsible for Resettlement Policy**

The resettlement program is coordinated by the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE). The various public actively involved in this program include:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for coordination of the resettlement policy;
- Interior Ministry, through the Department of Immigration and the Department of Informatics of the National Police, to provide personal documents to foreigners in the country;
- National Secretariat for Housing and Habitat, to provide housing for those resettled;
- Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the institution responsible for providing medical care to the population;
- Ministry of Education and Culture, the institution responsible for education policy and promoting the country's culture;
- Ministry of Justice and Labor, through its institutions: the National Professional Career Development Service (HNS) and the National Employment Education and Training Service (SINAFOCAL) whose policies are aimed at empowering citizens by providing access to employment opportunities.

## **1.3 Process of Determining the annual resettlement quota and composition**

The annual quota for resettlement is decided by the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), in consultation with the UNHCR (Regional Office for Southern Latin America, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina), which finances part of the immediate assistance program. The annual share is decided at the beginning of each year or at the end of the previous year.

## **2. Eligibility Criteria for Recognition of Refugee and Asylum Status**

### **2.1 National legislation that defines eligibility for refugee status**

General Law 1938 on Refugees of July 2, 2002 defines and regulates refugee status in accordance with the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.

### **2.2 Distinction between the criteria for recognition of refugee status to asylum-seekers and those for resettled refugees**

There is no distinction between the criteria for recognition of refugee status to asylum seekers and those for resettled refugees.

## **3. Resettlement Criteria**

### **3.1 Eligibility criteria for refugee resettlement**

The beneficiaries of the resettlement program are refugees under the terms of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and other regional instruments, in particular the Cartagena Declaration of 1984.

The criteria for the resettlement of refugees in the Republic of Paraguay, as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding on Resettlement of Refugees in Paraguay, signed by the Republic of Paraguay and the UNHCR, are:

- A need for legal and physical protection;
- Refugee survivors of violence and/or torture (their resettlement in Paraguay will be subject to the availability of appropriate services);
- Women at risk;
- Children and adolescents;
- Refugees without prospects local integration in the first country of refuge.

### **3.2 Admissibility criteria**

There are no special criteria for admissibility.

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

### **4.1 Resettlement allocations**

The program in its current stage provides for the resettlement of 15 people a year, with the possibility of extending the quota under study.

### **4.2 Processing priorities**

Resettlement will favor refugees needing legal and physical protection who lack prospects of local integration in the first country of refuge. Special consideration will be given to the resettlement needs of refugees from Latin America.

## **5. Refugee Presentation and Processing Through Dossier Selection**

N/A

## **6. Presentation and Processing of Refugees Through Selection Missions**

### **6.1 Selection Mission policies**

Selection missions involve at least one representative of Paraguay's CONARE and a representative of the UNHCR program's executing agency in the country, the Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid (CIPAE). These officials may be accompanied by a representative of the UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America. Some candidates may be interviewed by telephone, depending on the need.

### **6.2 Case documentation**

The UNHCR submits cases to CONARE through a resettlement request form (RRF), duly completed and signed by the applicant. This is accompanied by all relevant and appropriate documentation in support of each case.

### **6.3 Routing of cases**

UNHCR submits cases to CONARE through UNHCR's Regional Office for Southern Latin America.

### **6.4 Processing times**

From receipt of cases to the selection mission: about 1 ½ months.

From the selection mission to decision on the case: about 15 days.

From decision-making to departure: about 1 month.

## 6.5 Recourse, appeals

None have so far occurred. When an application is rejected for resettlement by CONARE, UNHCR may request a review of the case on the basis of additional information which it will provide for CONARE.

## 7. Emergency/Urgent Cases

So far, this procedure has not been used. According to the Memorandum of Understanding on Resettlement of Refugees in Paraguay, UNHCR may ask CONARE to consider acceptance of cases with urgent need of legal and physical protection, solely on the basis of existing documentation. Considering the urgency of these cases, the decision must be made by CONARE within no more than one month from the date of the request.

## 8. Special Categories/Specific Needs

N/A.

## 9. Medical requirements

There are no special medical requirements for resettlement in Paraguay.

## 10. Orientation

Prior to the interviews conducted during a selection mission in the country of first asylum or by telephone, candidates will have had the opportunity to read a document with information on living conditions in Paraguay, the country's general characteristics, population, climate, cost of living, job prospects, education, health, and other aspects of interest. An informational video is shown before the interviews. The UNHCR produces this written and audiovisual material. Questions and inquiries are addressed and further information provided on the immediate assistance program during the interviews.

## 11. Travel

Travel is provided by UNHCR, which works in coordination with the International Office for Migration (IOM) in the country of first asylum.

People can enter Paraguay with an ID or passport. The documents are legalized in the Paraguayan Consulate in the country of first asylum.

## 12. Situation on Arrival and Paths for Obtaining Citizenship

### 12.1 Situation facing immigrants on arrival

People resettled by the program enter Paraguay under the same conditions as all refugees.

### 12.2 Documentation issued

Upon entering the country the following shall be granted to resettled refugees:

Temporary residence, valid for 3 years, which is processed by the General Immigration Directorate within 8 days;

Civil identity card, which is processed by the ID office and received within a month.

These are the same documents that are given to any foreigner legally established in the country, and do not identify people as refugees.

### 12.3 The requirements, costs and deadlines for obtaining citizenship

Upon completion of 3 years of residence in the country, resettled people will be able to request permanent residency if they wish.

The Constitution of the Republic of Paraguay stipulates the following requirements for obtaining citizenship by naturalization:

- Legal adulthood;
- A minimum of three years of residence in national territory;
- Performance in the country of any profession, trade, science, art or industry, and
- Appropriate conduct.

Also, with respect to acquiring citizenship, the Constitution also affirms that: "Citizens are:

- Any Paraguayan national at least 18 years of age, and
- Any naturalized Paraguayan national after two years of naturalization."

It also states that "The judiciary shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear these cases."

The procedure for obtaining nationality and citizenship through naturalization is carried out within the judiciary with representation of an attorney, with of fees and costs established in the Professional Fee Rate for Judicial Lawyers.

## 13. Settlement in the Country and Community Services

### 13.1 General description of services, including providers and assistance period

The National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) is the state agency that coordinates actions aimed at facilitating the integration of resettled refugees in the Paraguayan community.

The UNHCR regional office is based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Its implementing agency in Paraguay, the Committee of Churches for Emergency Aid (CIPAE), deals with the daily monitoring of resettled refugees and administers funds that UNHCR contributes to the program.

The integration assistance program includes guidance, documentation, food, housing, health, education, training, employment assistance and services provided by various public authorities. The Immediate assistance program is limited in time (12 months) and in scope, and is intended to supplement people's efforts to integrate into their new host country. Thus, refugees are the most important players in this process.

### 13.2 Reception

CIPAE and CONARE staff receive those being resettled at the Asuncion international airport and subsequently transfer them to accommodations provided for each case, where a brief meeting is held to explain some aspects of the program. The program stipulates that beneficiaries will be accommodated in cities near the capital Asuncion, in the central department of the country.

### 13.3 Guidance

In order to achieve the fastest possible integration into Paraguayan society, CIPAE and CONARE provide social guidance for recently-arrived refugees, based on the principles of self-sufficiency and a positive contribution to the host country. To that end, the

program provides orientation sessions on various topics, such as education, health, employment, documentation, housing, handling everyday affairs (shops, banks, transportation, money, telephone service, etc..) and knowledge of social and cultural norms. These sessions are provided by CIPAE together with governmental or private sector specialists in each area.

#### **13.4 Housing**

CONARE with the National Secretariat of Housing and Habitat (SENAVITAT) are responsible for the provision of adequate housing, built within the framework of SENAVITAT's housing projects for the Paraguayan population. The UNHCR contributes through CIPAE to supply the dwellings with basic amenities. During the first year resettled refugees accommodated in these homes do not pay rental expenses. At the end of the first year of residence, people can arrange to buy their homes by paying a minimum quota for several years, depending on SENAVITAT's plans and requirements.

#### **13.5 Health**

Resettled refugees have the same access to free public health care as Paraguayan citizens, within the National Public Administration's available resources and services. During the first year, the UNHCR-funded program provides limited assistance for some health expenses or medicines not covered by the public plan.

#### **13.6 Language instruction**

So far those resettled are Spanish-speakers and the program does not provide instruction in Spanish as a foreign language. People have access to Guaraní language instruction through the public education system.

#### **13.7 Education**

The school calendar begins in February and ends in December. Education in Paraguay is free in public schools from kindergarten to university. Resettled people have access to public education under the same conditions as nationals. For the children of resettled refugees, the UNHCR-funded program provides a single, special annual payment for each student for school materials and uniforms in preschool, primary and secondary schools.

#### **13.8 Vocational training**

Resettled refugees are offered guidance with respect to the labor market, with the aim of helping them find employment, rapidly. For those interested, the Paraguayan government offers vocational training in various skills (electrical, plumbing, computer, bakery, mechanics, bricklaying, hairdressing, etc.) through the National Career Development Service (SNPP) and the National Employment Education and Training Service (SINAFOCAL). These trainings are free.

#### **13.9 Financial assistance**

The UNHCR-funded program provides beneficiaries with a monthly subsistence stipend for 12 months from the date of arrival, which, if well managed, can cover minimum food expenses, utilities and other needs. The program provides a single allocation for clothing.

#### **13.10 Mechanisms for sharing information with service providers**

CONARE is the state agency that coordinates efforts facilitating the integration of resettled refugees in the Paraguayan community. This task is supported by CIPAE and UNHCR. CONARE meetings represent the official forum for exchange of information about matters relevant to the integration of resettled refugees.

## 14. Refugee Family Reunification

With respect to legislation related to rights and restrictions on family reunification, the Memorandum of Understanding for the resettlement of refugees in Paraguay between the Government of the Republic of Paraguay and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees affirms that "based on the principle of family unity, the Government of the Republic of Paraguay will provide entry into national territory for family members of refugees resettled in accordance with current regulations."

Regarding deadlines, procedures and general legal framework, Paraguay's General Law No. 1938-1902 on Refugees does not cover the specific case of "family reunification." However, art. 2 of that Law states that to ensure the maintenance of the family unit, refugee status will apply, by extension, to the spouse or person with whom the refugee has an affective relationship, as well as descendants and ascendants in the first degree.

It is very important to note that until now, there have not been any cases of family reunification in our country, because all refugees have arrived in Paraguay with family members.

## 15. References, Resources

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [www.mre.gov.py](http://www.mre.gov.py)
- Ministry of Justice and Labor, [www.mjt.gov.py](http://www.mjt.gov.py)
- National Employment Education and Training Service (SINAFOCAL), [www.mjt.gov.py](http://www.mjt.gov.py)
- National Career Development Service (SNPP), [www.mjt.gov.py](http://www.mjt.gov.py)
- Department of Immigration, [www.migraciones.gov.py](http://www.migraciones.gov.py)
- National Secretariat for Housing and Habitat, [www.senavitat.gov.py](http://www.senavitat.gov.py)
- Ministry of Education y Culture, [www.mec.gov.py](http://www.mec.gov.py)
- Minister of Public Health and Social Welfare, [www.mspybs.gov.py](http://www.mspybs.gov.py)