

Strengthening refugee resettlement and other pathways to admission and solutions

Global Strategy 2016

SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL



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Cover photograph

Syrian refugee children looking out from their new home in Austria. The family arrived in Austria from Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp as part of a resettlement programme, having fled their hometown of Homs in Syria in 2012.

UNHCR / Mark Henley

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CONTEXT

There are almost 60 million forcibly displaced and stateless people in the world today - more than at any time since the Second World War. A significant proportion are refugees in need of protection and solutions. Voluntary return remains elusive for the majority and refugee-hosting states are struggling to cope.

One manifestation of this global challenge is the unprecedented number of refugees and migrants arriving in mixed flows in Europe during 2015, sparking a surge of political and public interest in the refugee and migration issue. Mixed movements to North America and in the Asia-Pacific have also been witnessed.

UNHCR and partners are working to support host countries, but there is an urgent need to increase international solidarity in the pursuit of durable solutions through resettlement or other forms of admission.

Many States have responded to show solidarity. A number of countries have announced significant additional spaces through resettlement and other humanitarian pathways specifically for Syrian refugees. Increases in global resettlement quotas are also expected, with a focus on Africa. This elevated level of interest in resettlement and other forms of admission for refugees requires UNHCR to substantially increase its capacity to respond and provide referrals, advice and support to States seeking to provide protection and solutions to refugees. Given both the protection and political imperatives to maintain the institution of asylum and to share responsibility for today's massive international protection needs, this scale up is a critical expression of solidarity and hope.

Thus far, UNHCR has responded by intensifying case processing to meet increased targets with existing resources. The comprehensive strengthening of capacity as set out in this Appeal is required immediately to ensure that existing commitments continue to be met at scale.

Going forward, it is hoped that States will continue to create and expand pathways for admission for refugees. The High Level Conference on Global Responsibility Sharing for Syrian refugees on 30 March 2016 will encourage and seek to expand commitments further. UNHCR will again review its approaches and resource needs in mid-2016 to ensure it has the capacity to respond.

UNHCR STRATEGY

UNHCR's response to this unprecedented level of requests for referrals of refugees for resettlement and other forms of admission centres on:

- (i) The immediate scale up of capacity for resettlement processing, including through the deployment of additional resettlement, registration and community-based protection staff; and
- (ii) Strengthening guidance and overall operational capacity for the long-term provision of increased referrals for resettlement and other pathways to admission and solutions, including facilitation of new programmes.

UNHCR's objective is to increase access to resettlement and other pathways for admission, and enhance the efficiency of the process while maintaining the integrity of procedures. This will also increase solidarity with host States and improve UNHCR's capacity to assist refugees remaining in the region.

A focus on effective and efficient identification of the risks and needs of refugees, including through protection-sensitive registration and community-based protection activities, is critical. To maximize efficiency while maintaining the integrity of procedures, simplification and streamlining of resettlement processes is also a priority.

Moreover, there is a need to complement increased resettlement with greater efforts to expand pathways to protection and solutions. Strengthened protection-based registration data will support effective targeting to ensure all available pathways to admission and solutions are fully utilized. With a greater understanding of refugees' capacities, coping strategies and a proactive approach to the use of non-traditional pathways, there is scope for UNHCR and partners to contribute to a wider range of solutions opportunities.

Resettlement

In 2016, it is estimated that more than 1.15 million refugees globally are in need of resettlement.¹ This projected number has exceeded 1 million for the first time since reporting of resettlement needs began over 30 years ago. In recent years, resettlement places have only been made available for around 12 per cent of the number of refugees in need of resettlement.

Since September 2015, a number of countries have announced significant additional places for resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes.

Resettlement quotas and processing times are established through national processes and therefore continue to evolve. However, current estimates suggest that in 2016, UNHCR will increase its resettlement submissions to 141,000 individuals globally as a minimum. This marks an increase of 37 per cent compared with submission rates in 2014.

Having received initial commitments to funding from Canada and the United Kingdom, UNHCR has initiated the recruitment of additional staff in an effort to scale up resettlement processing to ensure that operations are in a position to respond to the anticipated increased quotas.

Pathways to solutions

In addition to resettlement, other pathways to admission can provide both interim and definitive solutions in the short or longer term. In refugee-hosting countries, UNHCR and partners are exploring existing legislation and policy to identify opportunities for legal employment and for potential pathways to more secure future stay arrangements.

In addition, UNHCR has been working with non-hosting States to develop approaches for admitting refugees through a wider variety of pathways, including to:

¹ UNHCR's Global Projected Resettlement Needs 2016

1. Create or expand humanitarian pathways for admission, which are specifically designed to provide protection to refugees with compelling needs. Humanitarian pathways for admission may include resettlement/humanitarian admission, private sponsorships, humanitarian visas, and medical evacuation; and
2. Facilitate access to additional pathways for admission, by creating or expanding opportunities for refugees to access safety and protection through admission of relatives, academic scholarships and apprenticeships, and labour mobility schemes, or by relaxing or removing certain legal barriers or administrative requirements for admission.

UNHCR and its partners will need to invest in the approaches necessary to negotiate and build the conditions required for these pathways to become accessible for more refugees. Country-by-country analysis of opportunities and obstacles, combined with close monitoring of identified pathways, will require experienced staff and the ability to identify and respond quickly to new needs. Greater emphasis on a wider range of solutions pathways will also require investment in the building of partnerships, the engagement of actors not previously involved in refugee programmes, and the development of an evidence base to support the policy and advocacy work needed to achieve short and longer-term goals.

Comprehensive solutions

Experience has shown that solutions must address to economic, social and cultural, civil and political factors, as well as legal pathways to be fully sustainable. UNHCR is developing a more structured approach to these dimensions in the form of multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies that support the inclusion of refugees in national services and in local social and economic systems.

The inclusion approach ensures refugee access to national health and education systems, but focuses also on rule of law areas such as civil registration; access to justice; housing; representation in local governance structures; and social protection systems. This approach complements UNHCR's commitment to longer-term thinking at the outset of emergencies. Deeper links between protection needs and solutions generally will contribute to the progressive improvement in their enjoyment of rights while refugees remain in asylum, strengthen their capacities and resilience, and alleviate the push factors for onward movement in dangerous conditions.

Active participation in joint planning and implementation, including in advocacy for legislative and policy changes, will be an essential element of partnership going forward. UNHCR will prioritize the inclusion of refugees in national and international planning mechanisms, in particular those addressing the Sustainable Development Goals, drawing on improved community-based responses and on greater knowledge and closer collaboration with refugee and host communities, national and local development agencies, international development resources and financial institutions.

Through application of UNHCR's Alternatives to Camps Policy, numerous initiatives designed to support community-based interventions, and collaboration with national civil society and local and national government structures, UNHCR is already moving towards this approach with existing resources. A multi-year planning pilot in six operations is currently testing how UNHCR's existing systems can support a longer-term perspective.

Additional resources will support the shift in UNHCR's approach through policy, operational guidance and technical field support on planning and programme design with a particular focus on inclusive protection interventions and community-based initiatives. Such resources would further address the higher cost of outreach in urban and rural areas where persons of concern are not concentrated in camps, and to contribute to joint feasibility, market and population assessments that act as a foundation for joint long-term planning.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Resettlement	
Potential for resettlement realized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase resettlement staffing (including through the deployment of affiliate workforce) within key operations in Africa, MENA and Turkey in order to increase the percentage of persons of concern identified in need of resettlement who are submitted and depart for resettlement. ▪ Ensure that increases in resettlement places offered by resettlement countries are fully utilized. ▪ Work with States to design and implement efficient and expedited processes for resettlement and humanitarian admission while maintaining integrity, with the aim of reducing average processing times from identification to departure for resettlement. ▪ Proactively work within communities and with partners to ensure the efficient and effective identification of risks, needs and vulnerabilities which may lead to a variety of protection interventions including resettlement. ▪ Advocate for an increase in the number of resettlement places offered by resettlement countries.
Pathways to solutions	
Pathways to Solutions for refugees realized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with States to create or expand humanitarian pathways for admission, which are specifically designed to provide protection to refugees with compelling needs, including for example, legal and physical protection and medical needs

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