

**UNHCR**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Resettlement and Other Forms of Admission of Syrian Refugees

Country	Total confirmed pledges (persons) received since 2013
Australia	500 resettlement
Austria	1,500 humanitarian admission
Belarus	20 resettlement
Belgium	150 resettlement ¹
Canada	200 resettlement 1,100 private sponsorship
Denmark	140 resettlement
Finland	500 resettlement
France	500 humanitarian admission/resettlement
Germany	20,000 humanitarian admission 5,500 individual sponsorship ²
Hungary	30 resettlement
Ireland	310 resettlement ³
Liechtenstein	4 resettlement
Luxembourg	60 resettlement
Netherlands	250 resettlement
New Zealand	100 resettlement
Norway	1,000 resettlement
Portugal	23 resettlement
Spain	130 resettlement
Sweden	1,200 resettlement
Switzerland	500 resettlement ⁴
United States of America	open-ended number on resettlement
Uruguay	120 resettlement
TOTAL Official Pledges	33,837 + additional number to the United States of America
Unofficial Pledges	885
Combined TOTAL	34,722 + an additional number to the United States of America

¹ Including 75 in 2014 and 75 in 2015.

² Fifteen federal states in Germany have launched programmes for Syrian nationals with relatives in Germany. Approximately 5,500 visas have been issued under this scheme to date.

³ Including 90 in 2014, 100 in 2015, and 120 in 2016.

⁴ Under a pilot project started in 2013, Switzerland is resettling 500 over three years, of which 350 will be submitted by UNHCR by the end of 2014. In addition, Switzerland initiated a temporary extended family reunification programme from September to November 2013. Under this programme, 8,200 applications were received, and 3,750 visas have been issued to date.

“Providing solutions in the form of resettlement or relocation to safe third countries is a critical and often life-saving intervention for refugees having urgent protection needs and compelling vulnerabilities. Such solutions form an important component of the protection strategy for Syrian refugees. These interventions, in addition to providing solutions for vulnerable individuals and families, are also an expression of solidarity and burden sharing with countries in the region currently hosting more than two million Syrian refugees.”

- Strategic Overview, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan, United Nations

Overview

As the conflict in Syria deepens and the violence worsens, UNHCR expects that growing numbers of civilians will continue to seek safety and assistance across international borders. Likewise, as the number of displaced people grows, so does the strain on the capacities of communities in the region. UNHCR has encouraged the international community to show solidarity with countries hosting Syrian refugees in the region by offering opportunities for resettlement or other forms of admission for Syrian refugees. These interventions are critical for the most vulnerable refugees who are in urgent need of safety and protection.

In September 2013, UNHCR called upon countries to admit 30,000 Syrian refugees on resettlement, humanitarian admission, or other programmes from 2013 to 2014, with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable. During the High-Level Segment of the Executive Committee on Solidarity and Burden-Sharing with Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees, held in October 2013, it was agreed that the crisis has gone far beyond requiring only humanitarian assistance. At that meeting, Member States reaffirmed their support for the host countries in the surrounding region, and many announced special quotas for resettlement or other forms of admission for Syrian refugees.

In light of the growing needs of the Syrian refugee population, however, the goal of 30,000 by 2014 is only the first benchmark. It is anticipated that the number of Syrian

refugees with serious vulnerabilities who will be in need of resettlement or relocation will continue to grow. There are many refugees with acute protection needs who require an urgent response. There may be others who will be unable to return in safety and dignity in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, at the Informal Consultative Meeting as a follow-up to the High Level Segment on Solidarity and Burden-Sharing with Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees, on 21 February 2014, UNHCR invited States to consider multi-annual commitments towards an expanded goal of 100,000 additional places for Syrian refugees on resettlement or other forms of admission from 2015 to 2016. At least half of these places should be allocated for vulnerable refugees referred by UNHCR.

What is meant by resettlement and other forms of admission?

Reaching the expanded goal for Syrian refugees requires consideration of new and innovative approaches. As part of the emergency response, UNHCR encourages the international community to consider an array of solutions that can be mobilised. States can make pledges for resettlement, humanitarian admission, individual sponsorship, medical evacuation, or admission of relatives beyond existing family reunification programmes. States may also make commitments to expand their capacity to receive Syrian refugees under labour mobility and private investor schemes, student scholarships, or other migration programmes.

From which countries does UNHCR carry out resettlement and humanitarian admission?

The programmes are implemented in countries neighbouring Syria and in the wider region hosting the largest numbers of Syrian refugees who have fled the conflict, including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, as well as other countries in the region and beyond as needed.

Who can benefit from resettlement and humanitarian admission?

UNHCR is working closely with resettlement and humanitarian admission countries to prioritise the most vulnerable, including women and girls at risk, survivors of violence and/or torture, refugees with medical needs or disabilities, refugees at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, vulnerable older adults, and refugees in need of family reunification. Refugees who face serious threats to their physical security, particularly due to political opinion or belonging to an ethnic or religious minority group, may also be prioritised.

Vulnerable refugees are identified through registration data and community outreach by UNHCR and its partners. UNHCR is enhancing

its capacity to identify vulnerable refugees and to streamline procedures for referral. As the programmes continue to grow, additional personnel, equipment, and resources are needed.

What are UNHCR's resettlement and humanitarian admission goals?

UNHCR is proposing that countries admit on resettlement, humanitarian admission, or other programmes 30,000 Syrian refugees from 2013 to 2014, and an additional 100,000 Syrian refugees from 2015 to 2016, with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable.

States are encouraged to offer places for Syrian refugees *in addition to their current resettlement quotas* to ensure that resettlement opportunities also continue to be available for refugees from the rest of the world.

To date, the total pledges for Syrian refugees since 2013 stands at more than 34,700 places, plus an open-ended number pledged by the United States of America. An unprecedented majority of these pledges comes from European States.⁵

The goal of 30,000 from 2013 to 2014 has been reached and exceeded, and focus must now be on securing pledges for an additional 100,000 places for Syrian refugees from 2015 to 2016.

⁵ In addition, the United Kingdom has created the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme for Syrian refugees, and Ireland has launched the immigration-based Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme (SHAP).

How many refugees has UNHCR submitted for resettlement or HAP consideration to date?

Since 2013, UNHCR has submitted more than 10,000 Syrian refugees for resettlement or humanitarian admission consideration. More than 99 per cent of the cases so far considered by resettlement and humanitarian admission countries have been accepted. UNHCR has put in place the capacity to meet the 2013/14 submissions goal, as well as to upscale submissions in 2015 and 2016.



What other steps have been taken to mobilize increased opportunities for admission?

Core Group on Syrian Resettlement

To pave the way for further State commitments and support, a Core Group on Syrian Resettlement, comprised of resettlement and humanitarian admission States and chaired by Sweden, has been established. The Core Group aims to: (1) secure increased opportunities for resettlement, acceptance rates, and flexible application of criteria; (2) increase cooperation and support for streamlined resettlement processes from identification to departure; and (3) foster dialogue with host countries to demonstrate solidarity and support the resettlement and protection of refugees.

The Core Group has so far met on 12 December 2013 in Geneva, 5 February 2014 in Malmö, and 8 May 2014 in Amman. It will next be meeting in Geneva on 26 June 2014.

Prior to the meeting in Amman, from 6-7 May 2014, two smaller Core Group delegations each visited the Syrian resettlement operations in Amman and Cairo. These visits aimed to familiarise the States with the operational contexts and refugee profiles and to provide opportunities to liaise with the host governments. The visits provided groundwork for mobilising support for increased resettlement and humanitarian admission opportunities for Syrian refugees. The Core Group has been invaluable in garnering State cooperation, consensus, and support for enhanced and expedited resettlement procedures for Syrian refugees; sharing information and best practices; and garnering support for larger and longer-term commitments.

Host Countries Resettlement Working Group (RWG)

The RWG is comprised of the Geneva-based Permanent Missions of the host States in the region surrounding Syria, and has been meeting with UNHCR in Geneva to exchange information and feedback on the humanitarian admission and resettlement programmes in the region. The last meeting of the RWG was held on 11 June 2014, and attended by the permanent missions of the host countries, UNHCR, and the Swedish Chair of the Core Group. The host countries all welcome the efforts to secure larger commitments for resettlement and other forms of admission, and at the same time have asked resettlement States to be cognizant of the complex environments in which they are operating when it comes to messaging and coordinating efforts.

High-Level Meeting

As a follow-up to its call for an additional 100,000 places from 2015 to 2016, UNHCR convened a High-Level Meeting on resettlement and other forms of admission for Syrian refugees on 27 June 2014 in Geneva, during which countries made further commitments and shared plans and projections for helping to meet this goal.