

WHAT IS RESETTLEMENT TO A THIRD COUNTRY?

- ❖ **UNHCR is mandated to find a durable solution for refugees. There are three possible durable solutions: voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, local integration in the country of asylum, and resettlement to a third country.**
- ❖ Resettlement to a third country means that a refugee leaves her / his country of asylum and legally travels and settles in another country that has agreed to admit her/him as a refugee and to grant permanent settlement there.
- ❖ **Resettlement is normally only used when the other options - voluntary return to the home country and local integration in the country of asylum - are not available within a reasonable period of time.**
- ❖ Resettlement does not solve all the problems faced by refugees who are resettled. Adapting to a new country can be difficult as well.
- ❖ **Resettlement is not a right, and there is no obligation on countries to accept refugees for resettlement.**
- ❖ Whether a refugee may be resettled depends on the availability of resettlement countries with open quotas for refugee resettlement, admission criteria of the country of resettlement as well as the cooperation of the country of asylum and the refugee concerned.
- ❖ **If a person is a 'refugee' or qualifies for refugee status it does not automatically mean that she / he is eligible for resettlement to a third country.**
- ❖ **Resettlement is a limited option available to refugees who meet very specific requirements. There are specific criteria defined by the resettlement countries and the UNHCR for a refugee to be considered for resettlement. Detailed information is available on UNHCR's website (www.UNHCR.org).**
- ❖ The needs of refugees and the solutions available in responding to those needs are considered and assessed by UNHCR on an on-going basis as part of its everyday work.
- ❖ **Resources and resettlement places are limited each year. Only a very small fraction of the world's refugees are resettled each year.**
- ❖ Given the limited opportunities and places available for resettlement it is important for UNHCR and resettlement countries to give priority consideration to those refugees most in need of resettlement on protection grounds.
- ❖ The number of refugees to be resettled in a given year is determined by the resettlement countries themselves and not UNHCR.
- ❖ **Refugees do not choose to be resettled or decide which country will accept them. However, if a country does offer resettlement, a refugee has a right to decline the offer. Please note that declining a resettlement offer could jeopardize future resettlement.**

WHO IS INVOLVED IN RESETTLEMENT?

- ❖ **Resettlement to a third country depends on the willingness of the country to accept a person for legal stay in its territory.**
- ❖ Each resettlement country has its own regulations and procedures regarding the resettlement for refugees.
- ❖ **UNHCR has no decision-making authority on resettlement and must respect the regulations and procedures set by resettlement countries for considering cases. UNHCR can only recommend a case for resettlement, but cannot guarantee that the recommendations will be accepted by resettlement countries.**
- ❖ Decisions are made by the officials of the resettlement country who are authorised to grant resettlement according to their regulations and procedures.
- ❖ **It is the authorities of the resettlement country and not UNHCR who takes the decision as to whether a refugee will be accepted for resettlement or not.**

RESETTLEMENT AND FRAUD

- ❖ All resettlement services provided by UNHCR staff and partners, including information and documents are FREE.
- Refugees should not give money to anyone in return for resettlement.**
- ❖ Any person who offers resettlement services or travel documents in return for money or favours is committing fraud and is breaking the law. **It is wrong to charge money for resettlement and it is wrong to ask for favours in return for resettlement.** If this happens, it should be immediately reported to the UNHCR Regional Representative in writing and put in the complaint box at UNHCR RR Kyiv.
- ❖ Travel documents for resettlement are normally issued by the resettlement country.
- ❖ At many stages of the resettlement process, refugees may be interviewed by representatives of either resettlement countries or UNHCR. **Misrepresenting of facts (including family links, family composition, refugee claim) during an interview is fraud and may result in the rejection of a case for resettlement submission/approval.** Any effort to abuse the process may result in rejection as well as legal action.
- ❖ ***Any individual caught misrepresenting UNHCR or a resettlement country, selling resettlement information or producing fraudulent travel documents will be reported to the authorities and will be dealt with according to the full force of the law.***

RESETTLEMENT PROCEDURES

- ❖ **Only persons in need of international protection can be considered by UNHCR for resettlement.**
- ❖ There are transparent systems in place at UNHCR to identify cases in need of resettlement. Cases are recommended in various ways including jointly in panels. No individual staff member is solely responsible for identification of a case for resettlement. An application for resettlement will not influence this procedure.
- ❖ Cases are reviewed and identified for resettlement on a case by case basis according to the criteria set by resettlement countries. While any refugee can express interest in resettlement, only those cases meeting the criteria can be considered.
- ❖ Eligibility for resettlement referral is determined by the UNHCR Office after one or a series of interviews. If a case is identified for resettlement based on various transparent identification procedures the refugee will be informed and called for a resettlement interview at the UNHCR office. Repeated visits to UNHCR will NOT result in expedited identification and slows down office processing capacity.
- ❖ The process of actual submission of the case by UNHCR, interview conducted by the resettlement country and communication of the decision by the resettlement country **takes time** and is **beyond the control of UNHCR.** Average processing time is **at least several months or more**, it also may take several years. During this time refugees are requested not to repeatedly contact the office with resettlement related queries. However refugees are advised to **keep UNHCR updated in writing on any change in their residential address, phone numbers and family composition.**
- ❖ When a refugee's case is approved for resettlement, UNHCR and the resettlement countries are committed to ensure that the refugee departs as soon as possible but the time is **beyond control by UNHCR.** Travel date is normally fixed by resettlement countries.

NOTE: Frequent visits, telephone calls and applications to UNHCR regarding resettlement significantly hinder staff functioning capacity. This negatively impacts on the ability of staff to work on individual refugee cases including for Protection and Durable Solutions