

Emergency and Urgent Resettlement in Europe: Modalities and Challenges



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Refugee Resettlement

Definition

The selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State that has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status

Rights

- ✓ Protection against *refoulement*
- ✓ Access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals
- ✓ Opportunity to become a naturalised citizen

Resettlement in 2012



- 74,835 refugees from 79 countries of origin were submitted by UNHCR from 80 countries of asylum to 26 resettlement countries.
- 69,252 refugees departed for resettlement.
- Global average acceptance rate of resettlement submissions: 88.4%

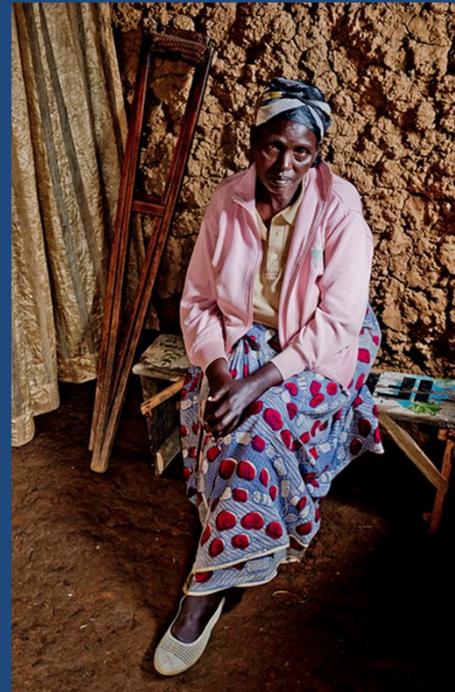
Prioritising cases – Normal priority

- No immediate medical, social, or security concerns that would merit expedited processing
- Decisions and departure within **12 months** of submission



Prioritising cases – Urgent priority

- Serious medical risks or other vulnerabilities that require expedited resettlement within **six weeks** of submission
- Ideally, cases should be submitted within two weeks of identification



Prioritising cases – Emergency priority

- The immediacy of the security and/or medical condition necessitates removal from the threatening conditions within a few days
- Primarily cases with legal and physical protection needs (47% in 2012) and life-threatening medical needs (42% in 2012)
- Ideally, a **seven-day maximum** between the submission of an emergency case and the refugee's departure



Modalities



Selection Missions

- Due to limited available places in specialised programmes, the majority of emergency and urgent cases are considered by selection missions or through other resettlement country interviews.
- Selection missions have limited capacity for expediting case processing within the ideal time frames.
- However, in some cases, they may be able to prioritise or expedite decisions and departures upon request.

Modalities

Dossier Submissions

- Most specialised programmes for emergency and urgent resettlement consider cases on a dossier basis.
- Decisions on acceptance of a case are made on the basis of a file review – no interview by a resettlement country is required.
- Cases are processed through the UNHCR Resettlement Service and Regional Hubs.
- Dossier submissions enable expedited resettlement processing.
- They also enable resettlement processing in countries that do not host selection missions, or where security conditions restrict access.

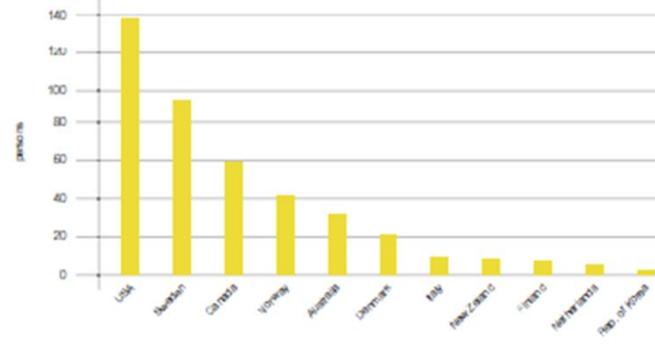
Case submissions by priority

UNHCR Resettlement by Priority in 2012

UNHCR Submissions and Departures by Priority	Submissions			Departures	
	Cases	% Cases	Persons	Persons	% Persons
Normal	25,277	87.9	67,048	62,574	90.4
Urgent	3,007	10.8	6,096	6,253	9.0
Emergency	396	1.3	851	425	<1
Grand Total	28,770	100.0	74,895	69,252	100.0

- Emergency and urgent priority cases comprise more than **10%** of the global quota.
- More **specialised programmes** are needed for emergency and urgent resettlement.

UNHCR Emergency Departures by Country of Resettlement



Why do we need more specialised programmes for emergency and urgent resettlement?

- Nearly 7,800 refugees were submitted under emergency or urgent priority in 2012.
- 8 of the 27 resettlement countries offer specialised programmes for emergency and/or urgent resettlement, providing some 900 places per year:
 - *Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden* have emergency and urgent dossier quotas, which benefitted nearly 800 refugees in 2012.
 - *Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* have emergency quotas, which benefitted nearly 100 refugees in 2012. An interview is usually required by these resettlement countries.
- The remaining 6,900 refugees with emergency and urgent resettlement needs in 2012 had to be submitted under regular resettlement programmes, such as those using selection missions, which are not designed for expedited case processing.

Emergency Transit Facilities (ETFs)

- ETFs provide a mechanism for the transfer to safety of refugees who would otherwise not receive the protection they need in a timely manner.
- In 2012, ETFs were utilised by the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Current Models of ETFs

Emergency Transit Centres (ETC)
Timisoara, Romania (established in 2008) and in Humenné, the Slovak Republic (est. in 2009), which can house up to 250 (Timosoara) and 150 (Humenné) evacuated refugees for up to six months.

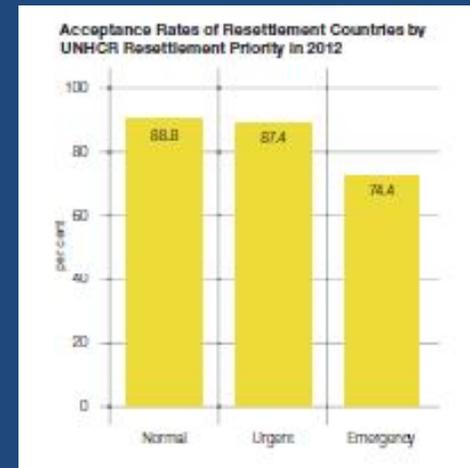
Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)
in the Philippines (est. in 2009), where refugees are accommodated in a variety of urban housing.

When are ETFs used?

- Where refugees at serious protection risk could be transferred while pending resettlement processing, as they are:
 - at immediate risk of *refoulement* or facing other acute, life-threatening situations;
 - in detention;
 - particularly sensitive or high profile cases; or
 - inaccessible in the host country
- In situations where it is more expedient and incurs lower costs to process the cases, even if the refugees concerned are not necessarily at immediate risk

Key challenges in emergency and urgent resettlement

- **Needs** exceed availability.
- **Processing times** for most emergency and urgent cases are often longer than the ideal timeframes.
- **Acceptance rates** of emergency and urgent cases are generally lower. In 2012, for example:
 - All cases globally - 88.8% accepted
 - All emergency cases - 74.4%
 - Dossier emergency cases - 53%
 - All urgent cases - 87.4%
 - Dossier urgent cases - 47%



Examples of reasons for lower acceptance rates

- **Restrictive state criteria**
 - *restrictions on certain nationalities or profiles*
 - *restrictive legislative requirements*
- **Differing assessments of refugee claim or resettlement need**
 - *narrow interpretations of the 1951 Convention in determining refugee status*
 - *emphasis on individualised refugee claims, when many refugees have not undergone individual RSD or are recognised on a prima facie basis*
 - *more emphasis on strong refugee claims than on compelling resettlement needs*
- **Challenges to the capacity of municipalities to accommodate refugees**
 - *large families*
 - *single men*
 - *refugees with specific needs*
- **Level of information available in supporting documentation**
 - *Medical Assessment Forms*
 - *Best Interests of the Child Determination forms*

Recommendations

For UNHCR:

- Systematically **manage and track** emergency and urgent cases and quotas to identify trends, strengths, challenges, and solutions.
- Provide further **operational guidance and training** to staff on enhancing the quality of RRFs and supporting documentation.

Recommendations

For States:

- Provide more **detailed reasons for rejection** of resettlement cases to assist UNHCR in determining whether to resubmit to another country.
- Exercise **flexibility** in the application of State resettlement criteria and requirements, given the emergency or urgent nature of the cases.

Recommendations

- Explore ways to expedite departures of refugees in need of emergency or urgent resettlement through:
 - the use of ETFs
 - providing shared housing
 - in exceptional emergencies, accommodating refugees in reception centres prior to the identification of a municipality

Recommendations

- Identify ways to **enhance the resources**, capacity, and receptivity of municipalities to receive vulnerable refugees, such as through:
 - the European Refugee Fund
 - twinning arrangements
 - awareness-raising campaigns

- Contribute further places to the **stand-by pool** of resettlement places for emergencies.

Recommendations

- Ensure that any transfer to an ETF is pre-conditioned upon an indication of the **likelihood of acceptance** of the case.
- Increase **emergency and urgent resettlement places** in EU countries.
- Encourage **countries with new or emerging resettlement programmes** to implement and/or strengthen their emergency and urgent resettlement capacity.