

UNHCR Germany

2021 – The Year in Review



Fahed and Anne-Marie met in Berlin through the organisation Start with A Friend, which brings “tandem partners” together to make settling in easier. © UNHCR/Gordon Welters

70 Years of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

Since its adoption in 1951, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees served to protect millions of people who were forced to flee their home countries due to serious human rights violations and persecution. The Convention remains acutely relevant, but has recently gotten under increasing pressure, also due to a continuing lack of responsibility sharing between States.

UNHCR Germany used the 70th anniversary of the Convention to **promote its principles and relevance** and to **reflect on the challenges and the ways forward**. UNHCR Germany co-organized a roundtable discussion together with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), and provided contributions to publications and key note speeches at a number of different events during the year, including at the “Hohenheimer Tage zum Migrationsrecht”, the annual “[Symposium on Refugee Protection](#)”, and the “[Fachtagung Asylrecht in der Praxis](#)” organized by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Additionally, UNHCR made the anniversary of the 1951 Convention a focus of its cooperation with the asylum authority in 2021, [strengthening the partnership](#) on fundamental principles of refugee protection in Germany and beyond.

Traditional and social media were used to mark the occasion and reflect on 70 years of the 1951 Refugee Convention. UNHCR produced a video series portraying **former refugees**, namely [Fatmire Alushi](#) (born in Kosovo, Football World Champion with the German national team), [Yusra Mardini](#) (born in Syria, Olympic swimmer 2016 in Rio and 2020 in Tokyo) and [Tareq Alaows](#) (born in Syria, activist and politician for the Green party in Germany), who found safety in Germany.



Priorities for Refugee Protection in the 20th Legislative Period in Germany

In September 2021, federal elections took place, followed by the establishment of the newly elected Parliament for its 20th legislative period.

In the run-up to the election, UNHCR published its [Points for Consideration for the Federal Elections 2021 in Germany](#), putting forward its considerations in **four key areas** to improve refugee protection, namely:

- Promoting the principles of refugee protection
- Pursuing Germany's positive international role in refugee protection
- Better aligning European refugee policy and practice with the Geneva Convention on Refugees
- Expanding the active admissions of refugees

UNHCR engaged in strategic talks with parliamentarians of the different political parties on their party programmes, advocating for improvements in refugee protection. This dialogue was complemented through a **series of animated videos**, in which UNHCR's considerations were illustrated and published on social media. *(Please click on the screenshots to start the four videos.)*





To support advocacy efforts around the federal election, a [video](#) with **refugee voices** expressing their hopes for the next German government was shared on social media. Another video [capturing refugee voices](#) highlighted current challenges and refugees' wishes regarding family reunification.

Following the elections and in view of the upcoming coalition negotiations, UNHCR shared a [short set of recommendations](#) on asylum policies with the parties represented in Parliament and with key Parliamentarians.

Germany as a Global Partner of UNHCR

As the second largest donor of humanitarian assistance and as fifth largest host country of refugees, Germany has continued to be an important player in refugee protection worldwide. Germany continued to pro-actively engage in global consultations through the Federal Foreign Office, including in the implementation of the Global Compact.

The Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) also continued to engage, particularly through the Special Initiative on Forced Displacement, in operationalizing the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), in supporting the inclusion of refugees and supporting host countries and communities, and pursuing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus at a strategic level.

Germany as a Donor

In 2021, Germany was the second largest donor to UNHCR, making record contributions of USD 488 million. The bulk of Germany's contribution was flexible, softly earmarked at situation level, which enabled UNHCR to respond to emerging needs and provided opportunities to improve the lives of refugees and internally displaced persons in some of the most complex situations as well as in 'forgotten' crises. Priorities for German funding included the Syria situation, the Afghanistan situation, the Corona response and the Sahel, with significant funding also going to the Venezuela situation, the DRC situation as well as the Yemen situation.

As pledged at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, Germany continued to provide substantial funding for the DAFI programme, having opened it up to other donors in 2019, and to promote access by refugees to higher education.

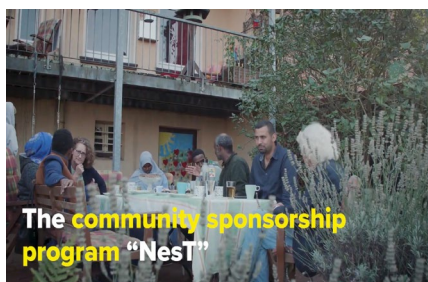
Acknowledging these substantial contributions and thanking Germany for its record contribution to UNHCR in 2021, UNHCR Germany created a video series, highlighting the importance of flexible funding and showcasing key operations that receive German funding. *(Click on the screenshots to see tweets, including videos.)*



Safe pathways to protection in Germany: Family reunification, resettlement and humanitarian admission to Germany

Complementing access to the asylum-procedure, Germany continued to offer and pursue safe pathways to protection in Germany for specific groups of refugees.

After some COVID-19-related challenges, which had caused delays in resettlement processing and arrivals in 2020, Germany admitted a total of 5,389 refugees in 2021 based on submissions by UNHCR from Turkey, Niger (evacuated out of Libya), Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya and Egypt. UNHCR Germany closely accompanied these programmes, co-organized relevant events and provided advice to the German Federal Government as well as to several Laender governments on the conceptualization and implementation of their programmes. Family reunification remained also an important safe pathway: to address administrative and procedural challenges, UNHCR promoted flexibility in documentary requirements as well as options to expedite procedures.



Since the beginning of the German Community Sponsorship Programme **Neustart im Team (NesT)** in 2016, 83 refugees arrived in Germany and were welcomed by mentoring groups, who support them in settling in. Jointly with government partners and civil society, UNHCR co-organised and participated in events promoting the programme and

documented the arrival of some of the resettled refugees. *(Click on the picture to watch video.)*

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