

# Ireland

January - December 2018

In 2018 there were a total of **3,673 asylum applications** in Ireland, a 25% increase year on year. As a result the number of people living in reception centres increased by 19% to 6,106.

Of these, **12%** had status but were unable to leave because of continued pressure on the housing sector.

Ireland continued to welcome refugees on the resettlement and relocation

programmes, with 338 refugees arriving from Lebanon and 267 people from Greece. Meanwhile, the first people arrived on the community sponsorship programme in December.

## TOP 5 NATIONALITIES GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS, SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION\* 2018

1. **Syria**
2. **Afghanistan**
3. **Libya**
4. **Iraq**
5. **Pakistan**

\*Figures include applications from persons relocated to the State Under the EU relocation programme

## KEY FIGURES

**30%**

Refugee Recognition Rate. On appeal, 30% were successful at the International Protection Appeals Tribunal

**338**

The number of people who arrived on the resettlement programme from Lebanon

**3,673**

The number of applications for asylum in 2018

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

- 7 National Staff
- 2 Affiliated Workforce

### Offices:

- 1 Country Office in Dublin

Photo Right: Dublin's Zaatar bakery sell Syrian baked delicacies at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin to mark World Refugee Day



## Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Irish government, officials, NGOs and other partners to protect people forced to flee their homes and support them to live their lives with dignity and respect.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- By the end of December 2018, 6,106 people were living in reception centres.
- UNHCR acted as a member of the Standard Advisory Group drafting new standards for the accommodation system for asylum-seekers. The standards, which were published for public consultation in August 2018, are an opportunity to fundamentally transform the accommodation system for asylum-seekers in Ireland. They take a 'person centred' approach, which emphasises the rights, dignity, privacy and diversity of each asylum-seeker. They will ensure that asylum-seekers receive high-quality accommodation and services whilst they are in the asylum procedure. Once finalised, the standards will inform the tendering process and become the subject of contractual obligations for those operating and managing reception centres on behalf of the Government of Ireland. Ultimately, the standards will provide a framework for independent inspections. This should lead to more consistency across reception centres.
- In June 2018, the Irish Government opted in to the Recast Reception Conditions Directive and transposed its obligations into law. This means that the reception system in Ireland has been placed on a legislative footing and for the first time provides asylum-seekers with clear rights, including labour market access (with some limited sectoral exceptions) after 9 months if a first instance decision has not been taken.
- UNHCR Ireland in cooperation with the Border Management Unit trained 27 new recruits on the international protection framework and the identification of potential asylum-seekers at the border. The new recruits will carry out immigration functions at Dublin airport.

### Durable Solutions

- In partnership with the Irish authorities and NGOs, UNHCR developed the framework of a community sponsorship programme that gives citizens and community organisations the opportunity to welcome refugees to Ireland. A Syrian family of three arrived on the pilot phase of the programme in December 2018.

- UNHCR in partnership with the Irish Red Cross and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) established the Travel Assistance Programme in 2006. It is the only programme of its kind in Ireland. The programme assists refugees or those granted subsidiary protection in overcoming the financial and administrative obstacles to family reunification. In 2018 the programme assisted 20 families (59 people, including 30 children) of 11 nationalities (Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Bangladeshi, Iranian, Togolese, Zimbabwean, Congolese (DRC), Guinean, Nigerian, Uzbek) to reunite with family members in Ireland. Families were assisted to travel from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Iran, Lebanon, Togo, Turkey, Nigeria, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.
- UNHCR continued to support the Irish authorities in providing safe and legal pathways to refugees, with 338 refugees arriving in 2018 from Lebanon.
- The formal EU relocation programme came to an end in 2018, with Ireland receiving 267 asylum-seekers from Greece, the majority of whom were Syrian. Their asylum applications were then examined by the International Protection Office.

### Quality

- In line with UNHCR's advisory role as set out in Article 35 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR continued to work with the International Protection Office (IPO) and International Protection Tribunal (IPAT) on improving the quality of decision making. This work included the development and delivery of training, review of decisions and other support initiatives. The work being undertaken draws on best practice developed by UNHCR through activities implemented in other EU Member States and internationally.
- UNHCR initiated multi-agency training in a number of additional areas, including on asylum claims related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to staff at the IPO and IPAT.
- 30% of those who applied for refugee status or subsidiary protection were successful at first instance (the International Protection Office). Of those that appealed to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, 30% were successful. In 2017, 42% received refugee status or subsidiary protection at the International Protection Office and 19% at the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

### Events

- In June 2018, UNHCR and partners organized the first Irish Refugee Food Festival. The festival saw 16 restaurants and food businesses across the country open their doors and welcome refugee and asylum-seeker chefs into their kitchens to showcase their skills and share their culinary heritage.

- To mark World Refugee Day, UNHCR and over 200 libraries and bookshops around Ireland took part in the annual Book Reading Campaign. Using UNHCR's specially selected book lists for children and adults, readers had a wide selection of stories from around the world to choose from in the form of fact, fiction, autobiography and photography.
- In June 2018, UNHCR and Sport Against Racism organised the Fair Play Football Cup. 500 people watched on as 20 teams of refugees, asylum-seekers and members of the public from across Ireland took part in the tournament.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the continued support provided by Irish Aid to UNHCR programmes around the world. In 2018, Irish Aid contributed **US\$ 15,904,311 million**. This funding helped UNHCR's support refugees around the world, including in major emergency situations.



Photo Left: President Higgins meets with High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in Geneva in June, 2018

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