

United Kingdom

September 2021

10,725 people were granted protection between June 2020 and June 2021, down 37%, due to fewer first decisions on asylum claims (down 4%), as well as the resettlement pause due to COVID-19.

5,000 Afghans will arrive in the UK within the first year of the newly announced Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) with a long-term target of up to 20,000

661 people were resettled in the year to June 2021, 81% fewer than in the previous year. So far in 2021, 27 people arrived in the UK under Community Sponsorship schemes.

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

Refugees	132,349
Asylum-seekers	77,245
Stateless persons	4,662
Total population of concern	214,465

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	20,433	Albania	8,491
Eritrea	14,016	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	6,389
Sudan	10,994	Iraq	6,090

*Data source: UNHCR 2020 Global Trends Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Advocacy: Since the start of the crisis, UNHCR has worked with the Home Office and the NGO sector to identify gaps in the government’s response to COVID 19 as it applies to asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, and recommend measures to address them. UNHCR is a member of a working group, led by the British Red Cross, whose purpose is the sharing of information, collaboration, and advocacy over COVID19-related issues in the sector. Our staff are liaising with the government to coordinate response in the areas of detention, resettlement, asylum decision-making and statelessness.

HIGHLIGHTS

Legal Opinion on the ‘New Plan for Immigration’

In May 2021, UNHCR UK published an [opinion](#) on the UK Government’s New Plan for Immigration. In September 2021, UNHCR published [observations](#) on the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Employment snapshot

In April 2021, UNHCR published a [snapshot study on employment](#), based on experiences of 14 refugees resettled to the UK in recent years.

‘GOODWILL IS THERE, WE HAVE TO HIGHLIGHT THAT WHILE STANDING UP TO XENOPHOBIA’



During Refugee Week, UNHCR spoke to Dr Waheed Arian, who as a teenager in the 1990s fled Afghanistan for the UK. He spoke about his journey from an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child to NHS doctor and charity founder. [Read his interview here.](#)

Key Priorities

- **Protection:** In the UK, UNHCR provides guidance on refugee and asylum law and policy to the UK government, legal practitioners, non-governmental organisations and many others. We also provide training on a range of issues to those working with asylum-seekers and refugees.
- **Legal Interventions in Precedent-Setting Cases:** UNHCR can intervene in select asylum cases, and we are always interested to hear from legal representatives about forthcoming cases raising matters of particular concern that are precedent-setting on significant issues of asylum and refugee law.
- **Asylum procedures:** The Legal Protection Unit provides advice on international refugee law in fulfilment of UNHCR's global mandate to supervise the application of the Refugee Convention
- **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** Between June 2020 – June 2021, there were 661 people granted protection through resettlement schemes, 81% fewer than in the previous year. In the first quarter of 2021, 341 resettled refugees arrived in the UK. Since the start of 2021, 27 people arrived in the UK under Community Sponsorship schemes.
- **Integration:** UNHCR advocates for more Government support to refugees and asylum-seekers to help them integrate for example through providing English classes, support towards employment and awareness raising of the challenges faced by persons of concern.
- **Capacity building:** UNHCR and the Home Office have a Quality Protection Partnership whereby UNHCR staff legal expertise is brought to bear on asylum policy and practices, including screening, detention, child protection and adjudicator training.

- **Alternatives to Detention:** UNHCR agreed to coordinate the evaluation of two government pilot projects offering alternatives to detention of persons in the asylum process. Early conclusions indicate community engagement increases positive outcomes.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with civil society groups including Refugee Week, the Women of the World festival, the Families Together coalition and other partners to better protect people forced to flee their homes and to support them to live their lives in the UK with dignity and respect.
- **External Engagement:** In the past six months external engagement with UK media, civil society and government has focused on two issues: First, the situation in Afghanistan, where UNHCR has called for UK humanitarian aid and supported the establishment of a new resettlement route. Second, UNHCR has repeatedly and clearly voiced concerns at provisions in asylum legislation before Parliament that breaches commitments under the refugee convention.

Statelessness

- The UK ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1959 and the 1961 Convention in 1966. The [2013 Statelessness Determination Procedure](#) enables stateless people to apply status recognition. The SDP has been accompanied by [policy guidance](#), updated in 2019.

UNHCR Presence in United Kingdom

Staff:

11 National Staff
6 International Staff

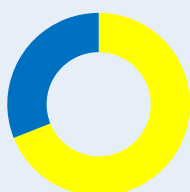
Offices:

1 Branch Office in London

Financial information (28 September 2021)

Financial requirements USD 2.6 M

Funding gap
31%
0.8 M



Funded
69%
1.8 M

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