

Republic of Korea

September 2023

December 1992

Accedes to 1951
Convention and
1967 Protocol

February 2001

Grants first
refugee status

July 2013

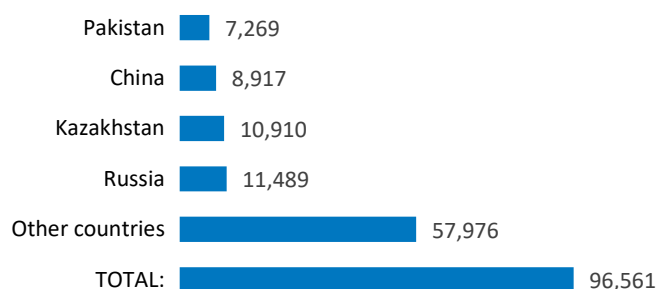
National Refugee Act
goes into effect

December 2015

Launches pilot
resettlement program
for refugees

People under UNHCR's mandate

Number of refugee status applications in Korea



Source: Ministry of Justice, published September 2023

Since 1994, 3,940 persons have been recognized as refugees or granted humanitarian status holders by the Government of the Republic of Korea.

By end-August 2023, a total of 22,547 first instance applications and administrative appeals were underway. This number does not include asylum applicants undergoing court proceedings or subsequent applications and appeals.

Fundraising

2022

Gov't: **USD 28.2 million**

Private: **USD 49.2 million**

UNHCR presence in RoK

Staff:

28 National

2 International

18 Affiliated (UNOPS ICAs & interns)

Offices:

1 Representation in Seoul

Working with partners

- UNHCR engages with various stakeholders including the Government, the National Human Rights Commission, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and people under UNHCR's mandate to improve the domestic protection system and treatment of refugees, asylum-seekers, and others under our mandate.
- UNHCR advocates for the people we serve so that they can have full access to their rights and that the principle of non-refoulement is applied to all individuals seeking asylum.

Main activities

Support to RoK's national asylum system

- RoK acceded to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol in 1992 and began registering asylum-seekers in 1994. The Government's first recognition of refugee status came in 2001. The Refugee Act, its Presidential Decree and Enforcement Regulations came into force on 1 July 2013. It is the first stand-alone comprehensive refugee law in the region and represents a significant enhancement of refugee protection. UNHCR works closely with all relevant stakeholders so that RoK's Refugee Act and its reform is implemented in line with the 1951 Convention.
- UNHCR advises and supports the Ministry of Justice, its Korea Immigration Service and relevant immigration offices that handle asylum applications in RoK so that decisions are made in accordance with international standards.
- UNHCR works alongside various CSOs to improve the quality of services provided to the people we serve. These will include offering consultations in legal aid, accommodation, employment as well as social integration and empowerment.
- UNHCR provides technical assistance to RoK on resettlement while also advising the Government, non-government and private partners on ways to come up with solutions as part of our efforts to share responsibilities.

Advocacy and fundraising activities

- UNHCR aims to strengthen positive public awareness about people under UNHCR's mandate by enhancing the public's understanding on forced displacement in and out of RoK. Various channels of communication are used for this purpose including the media, UNHCR's social media as well as active advocacy efforts made by UNHCR GWA and renowned actor Jung Woo-sung.
- In 2022, the Government's financial contribution to UNHCR reached USD 28.2 million, of which USD 3 million was unearmarked. The rest includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' regular support to UNHCR, earmarked geographically for major humanitarian emergencies as well as running the Junior Professional Officer programme. RoK entered UNHCR's "20 million club" of donors in 2016 and has been continuously increasing its contribution to UNHCR.
- UNHCR raised over USD 49.2 million from the private sector in 2022. In RoK, UNHCR launched its first private sector fund-raising activities in mid-2009. Since 2013, it has been one of the top ten private funding sources for UNHCR. Over half a million individuals including regular and one-off donors supported UNHCR's global operations in 2022 alone. In the context of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR also strives to engage with the private sector, particularly corporate and foundations, for both financial and shared-value partnerships in support of global and domestic operational needs.

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