



**OUTCOME AREA 15**

An Eritrean refugee who had been living in Yemen stands at Sciences Po in Paris, France, after accessing a UNHCR-supported complementary education pathway that helped him pursue a master's degree through a scholarship. © UNHCR/Josselin Brémaud

# Resettlement and complementary pathways

Resettlement offers life-saving protection to the most vulnerable refugees when countries of asylum cannot ensure their safety. Complementary pathways – such as family reunification, work and study mobility, sponsorship and humanitarian pathways – provide additional safe routes to third countries and help refugees rebuild their lives. UNHCR works with States to expand these opportunities.

In 2025, these efforts came under severe pressure. Expenditure fell by 50%, resettlement commitments declined and processing capacity was reduced. As a result, fewer refugees departed for resettlement and progress in expanding skills-based pathways slowed.

## Key results

- UNHCR supported more than 37,000 refugees to depart for resettlement in a third country, with the most departures from Türkiye, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Rwanda.
- UNHCR submitted nearly 35,000 refugees for consideration by 23 States, including 1,181 unallocated quota places for refugees requiring expedited processing or located in countries with limited or no allocated resettlement quota. These places remain a life-saving mechanism for refugees facing urgent threats to life.

### Progress in issuing machine-readable travel documents

- **79 of 149 countries** (53%) are fulfilling their obligation to issue machine-readable Convention Travel Documents to refugees.
- **35 of 99 countries** (35%) are fulfilling their obligation to issue machine-readable Convention Travel Documents to stateless persons.

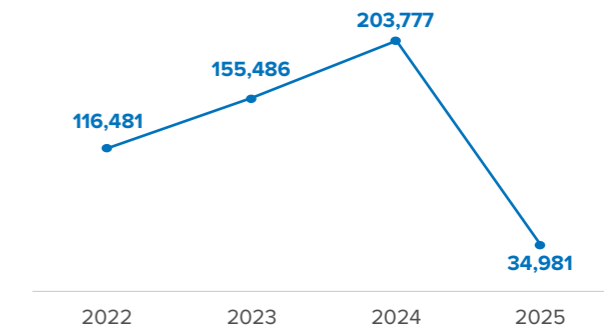
- Resettlement served as a life-saving protection tool and supported the [route-based approach](#), including through Emergency Transit Mechanisms in Libya and Rwanda.
- UNHCR and IOM launched a train-to-hire programme in Malaysia to equip refugees with skills and connect them with employment opportunities in Australia, helping fill labour market gaps and promoting self-reliance.
- In Italy, UNHCR is advancing complementary pathways through pilot projects with 10 private sector partners in aviation, goldsmithing, IT, trucking and health care. The projects support labour mobility from Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan and Uganda, with strong potential for scale and replication.
- In Uganda, the government launched a new online application process to help refugees access machine-readable travel documents, enabling more than 270 refugees to pursue education pathways in the region.
- UNHCR continued its strong engagement and advocacy with States and other essential partners, including the [Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#) that brought together over 300 actors engaged in third-country solutions.
- UNHCR co-published the [Safe Pathways for Refugees report](#), highlighting that over 280,000 individuals accessed family, work, study and sponsorship permits in 2023.

## Challenges

Shrinking quotas and the suspension of resettlement programmes resulted in the lowest number of resettlement submissions and departures in over 20 years – a reduction of 83% and 68% respectively, compared with 2024. Together with dramatic cuts to UNHCR and partner capacity, this further widened the gap between global needs and available resettlement opportunities. Reduced capacity and eroding political will have also constrained progress on complementary pathways, with persistent structural barriers continuing to limit the scaling of programmes and refugees' autonomous access to labour mobility, education and family reunification.

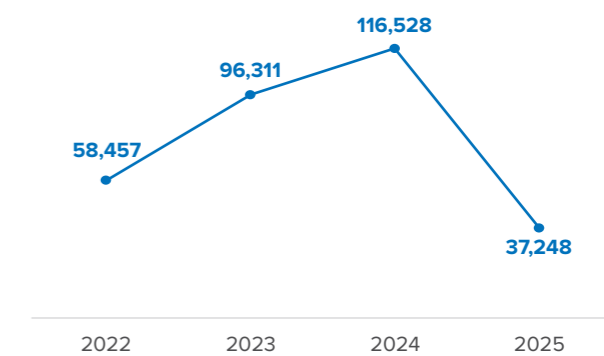
## Core outcome indicators

### Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement



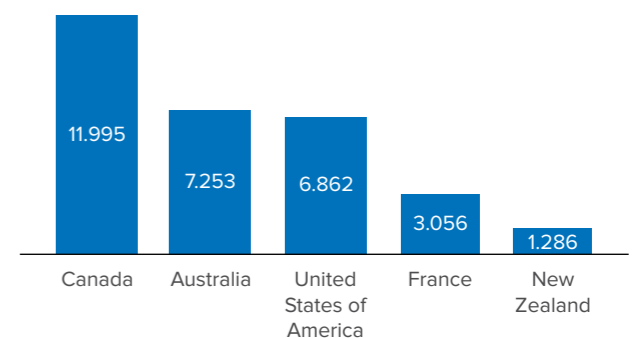
UNHCR in 74 countries submitted nearly 35,000 refugees for resettlement, meeting and exceeding quotas, although this was 83% fewer than in 2024 due to declining quotas.

### Number of resettlement departures facilitated by UNHCR



UNHCR facilitated the departure of more than 37,000 refugees, a 68% decrease from 2024, as countries slowed or suspended processing.

### Top 5 countries of resettlement by departures | 2025



In 2025, these five countries accounted for 82% of resettlement departures.

## Financial overview

### Global expenditure and budget for Resettlement and complementary pathways

- With the funds available, UNHCR could spend **\$77 million** towards budgeted needs of **\$225 million**.
- **50% decrease** in expenditure compared with 2024
- **\$147 million** of unmet needs or **66%** of the budget.
- **46%** of total expenditure under this outcome area, or **\$36 million**, was funded by flexible funding, including **\$24 million** of unearmarked funding.

### Resettlement and complementary pathways: largest operations by expenditure

These operations accounted for **\$30 million** or **38%** of global expenditure for this area in 2025

