




UNHCR PROJECTED GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT NEEDS

2027





Cover Photo: Muhigirwa, a refugee tailor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, earns a small income through sewing to support his family amid ongoing food shortages in Kakuma. He fled violence twice, first to Uganda, then to Kenya, and arrived in Kakuma with eight children and a single sewing machine.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Working alongside States' responsibility and supported by the international community, UNHCR holds a mandate to provide international protection and pursue durable solutions for refugees. The scale of global displacement, coupled with the growing prevalence of protracted refugee situations, has heightened pressure on host countries, asylum systems and humanitarian actors. Despite several States' considerable commitment in welcoming refugees, even amid economic and resource constraints, durable solutions are not keeping pace with rising needs.

Resettlement remains a critical component of a comprehensive solutions approach.

Alongside voluntary repatriation and local integration and complemented by other legal admission pathways such as family reunification, labour and education mobility, sponsorship and humanitarian pathways, resettlement offers protection and a solution for refugees with heightened needs. While voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution in many situations, as displacement becomes more complex and protracted, solutions need to be pursued through a comprehensive approach that offers genuine options to refugees.

The Projected Global Resettlement Needs (PGRN) report is situated within this continuum, providing an evidence-based assessment of global resettlement needs to support strategic advocacy among States and partners. In doing so, it helps advance more predictable, equitable and sustainable approaches to responsibility-sharing, while reinforcing the central role of resettlement as a protection tool and a means of enabling durable solutions for refugees worldwide.

In 2027, global resettlement needs are projected at **2.4 million**, representing a **modest decline from 2026**. This decrease continues a downward trend from the 2025 peak but also includes significant regional and population-level variations. While needs for some groups, notably Syrian refugees, have declined due to evolving political conditions and increased prospects for voluntary repatriation, other populations, such as Sudanese and South Sudanese, have experienced rising needs driven by escalating or continued crises. Overall, the scale of projected global resettlement needs continues to vastly outpace available opportunities.

The distribution of needs reflects changes in protection environments, fluctuations in population figures and prospects towards voluntary repatriation or local integration.

Eastern and Southern Africa represent the region with the highest projected resettlement needs, followed by Asia and the Pacific, and West and Central Africa. Ethiopia, hosting a diverse refugee population including South Sudanese, Somalis, Eritreans and Sudanese, emerges as the country of asylum with the largest projected needs globally, followed by Türkiye and Uganda.

Population-specific developments further illustrate these dynamics. Afghans continue to represent the largest population group in need of resettlement, despite a statistical decline largely linked to returns under adverse circumstances rather than improved conditions. Although projected needs for Syrian refugees have been reduced, returns are expected to remain gradual and constrained by persistent protection and socioeconomic challenges.

At the same time, displacement in Sudan, South Sudan, the DRC, as well as broader instability across the Horn of Africa continue to increase needs in multiple regions. Rohingya refugees and Venezuelans also continue to feature prominently among populations requiring international protection and access to solutions.

These evolving needs are unfolding within a constrained operational context and dramatically reduced political commitment. As a result, the gap between resettlement places and needs continues to widen, despite the decrease in projected needs for next year. Following record resettlement departures of over 116,000 in 2024, capacity fell sharply in 2025 and 2026. This contraction reflects a combination of reduced humanitarian funding, changes in policy orientations and weakened programme structures, including pauses in admissions, more restrictive criteria and processing backlogs. Amid these constraints, UNHCR submitted nearly 35,000 refugees for resettlement in 2025, prioritizing individuals facing heightened protection risks, including refugees with legal and physical protection issues, women and children at risk and survivors of violence or torture. Concurrent investments in digital systems and identity management tools, such as the Digital Gateway and the UNHCR HELP platforms, have supported more efficient and accountable processing, improved feedback mechanisms, and better connected refugees to useful resources.

Resettlement continues to demonstrate value beyond individual protection outcomes. When applied strategically, it can alleviate pressure on host countries and support more stable protection environments. For example, in Thailand, resettlement efforts for long-staying refugees from Myanmar have been central to advancing policy dialogue with the Government to unblock access to legal employment. In Kenya, as envisioned in the Shirika plan, it helps improve refugee integration and self-reliance while also supporting refugees with needs that cannot be addressed in-country.

The significant decline in available resettlement places risks forward momentum in improved policies and practices in host countries. Reduced quotas limit access to protection for the most vulnerable, increase strain on over-burdened systems and undermine progress toward global responsibility-sharing commitments, including those under the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and the [Roadmap 2030 for Third Country Solutions](#).

Looking ahead, sustained and collective commitment is necessary to preserve and strengthen resettlement as an integral component of a comprehensive solutions approach. Addressing challenges requires renewed emphasis on **predictability, flexibility** and **scale**. Multi-year quota planning, balanced regional allocations linked to needs and the reconsideration of restrictive admission criteria can strengthen programme effectiveness. Expanding participation among States, including through small-scale or emerging programmes, strengthening collaboration with the NGOs and refugee-led organizations, and refugees themselves, combating anti-refugee narratives and better equipping the unallocated global resettlement quota can further enhance global capacity. Investment in complementary pathways, such as targeted work to strengthen skills development, documentation and information in countries of asylum, remains vital and should expand to address global displacement alongside resettlement.

STATEMENT BY THE REFUGEE ADVISORY GROUP

The global resettlement system is under strain. Funding is being cut, quotas are shrinking, and anti-refugee narratives are increasingly shaping political decisions. At the same time, asylum space is narrowing, humanitarian priorities are being deprioritized, and new crises continue to emerge.

The cost of inaction is clear: lives at risk, prolonged displacement, and increasing pressure on already fragile host contexts, undermining both stability of protection systems. **Refugee resettlement remains one of the most vital tools of international protection.** For those facing acute risks, with no viable prospect of return or local integration, it offers safety, dignity, and a path to rebuild. Yet at a time of growing need, access is shrinking.

Complementary pathways, including family reunification, education, labour mobility, and community sponsorship, **are essential to expanding protection.** When designed strategically, they strengthen self-reliance and broaden access to durable solutions. However, they must remain **additional to, not substitutes for, resettlement.** Substitution risks shifting responsibility away from protection obligations and leaving the most vulnerable without access to safety.

Importantly, the effectiveness of **these systems depends on meaningful inclusion.** Refugee-led organizations and individuals with lived experience bring critical insight into what works in practice, identifying gaps, risks, and unintended consequences that policies alone cannot anticipate. Their participation strengthens outcomes, builds trust, and helps counter harmful narratives that erode public support and human rights.

As we approach the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, this is a moment of accountability. The Convention is not a political preference; it is a binding commitment grounded in humanitarian principles. States and partners must act. This means safeguarding and expanding resettlement programmes, strengthening complementary pathways, and ensuring broader responsibility-sharing. It also means resourcing and enabling genuine participation of refugee-led actors in decision-making spaces.

The credibility of the global protection system will be defined by what happens now. This is not a moment for aspiration. It is a moment for action. Sustaining commitment to refugee protection will require renewed leadership, innovation, and broader partnerships.

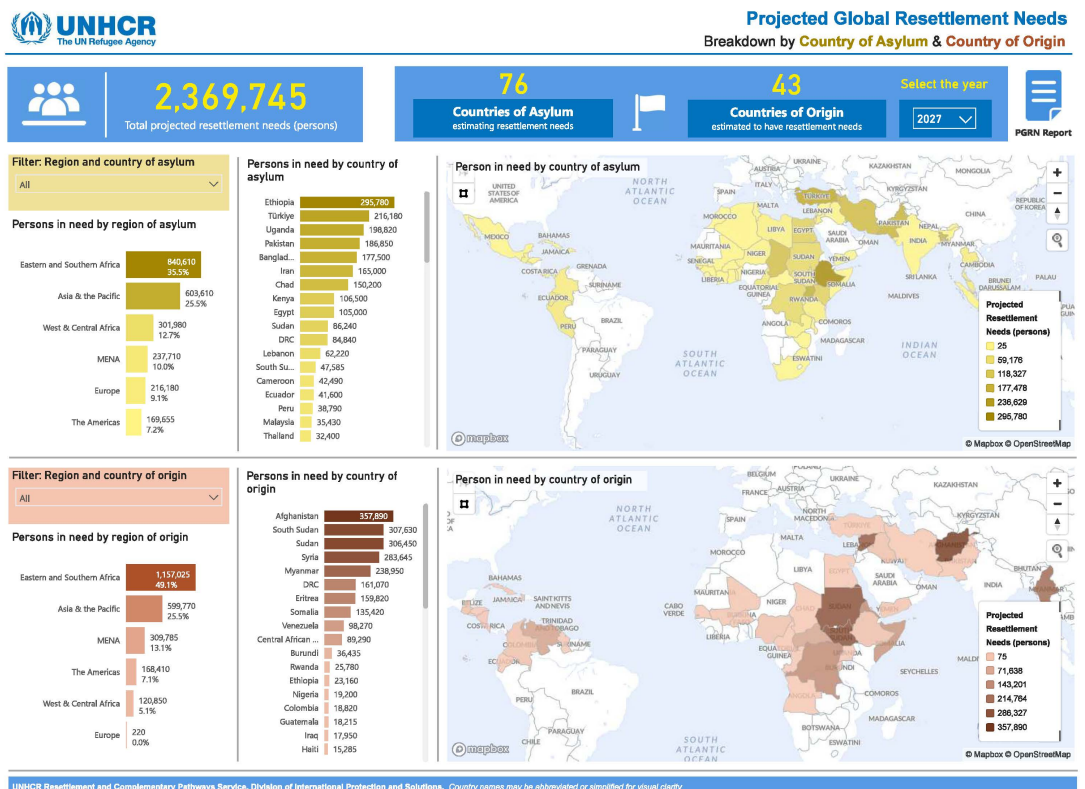
The Refugee Advisory Group to the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (CRCP) is the main representative body of regional, national and global refugee representatives influencing policy decision-making on third country solutions at the CRCP. Find out more information [here](#), including biographies of the current members.

INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment 75 years ago, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, along with States and partners, has been using resettlement as **an invaluable protection mechanism** to save individual lives and to contribute to solutions for refugees as part of international response to global displacement. From the beginning, resettlement was treated as an offer of solidarity to countries of first asylum, a characteristic that is best employed when resettlement and complementary pathways are woven into wider population and regional protection and solutions strategies.

The annual **Projected Global Resettlement Needs (PGRN)** report is a **principal advocacy tool**, highlighting where resettlement needs are the most acute, analyzing the cause and the risks faced by refugees within their hosting countries and noting key protection issues in the regional contexts. It also examines the availability of complementary pathways and durable solutions opportunities beyond resettlement.

Projected resettlement needs are based on **context-specific methodology** that draws on protection needs analysis, field level assessments including consultations with refugee communities, partner NGOs and in some cases, other available data such as socioeconomic data. In addition to forecasting needs, the PGRN also reports on the achievements and challenges within the operational environment. To complement the narrative report, the PGRN report is accompanied by an **interactive online dashboard** with map-based features that enables users to apply filters, such as country of origin and country of asylum. Resettlement needs information is also available on UNHCR's **Refugee Data Finder** page.



While resettlement is the focus of this report, it is still carefully **examined within the broader solutions landscape** of voluntary repatriation and local integration and alongside complementary pathways, such as family reunification, labour mobility, education pathways and sponsorship opportunities. Across regions, the report highlights how UNHCR's protection and solutions strategies make use of all solutions as conditions allow. In this regard, the report highlights the importance of a comprehensive, evidence-based approach towards solutions which when supported with early planning, programming, financing and partnerships – including with development actors and the private sector – can maximize refugees reaching a durable solution.

For many refugees though, resettlement remains the only viable solution to address their protection needs, and **every resettlement space offered is of critical importance**, especially during times when available quotas are low. As the number of places is further limited, UNHCR identifies and prioritizes resettlement submissions for refugees with acute risks. Women and girls at risk, separated and unaccompanied children and individuals with legal and physical protection needs are some examples.

The number of resettlement spaces available each year is dependent upon the commitments made by States and supported by UNHCR and partners. Through regulated processes and thorough vetting procedures, States undertake checks and determine the final decision. The host government, IOM and other actors in hosting States play a key role in advancing different stages of processing. Each resettlement movement offers a meaningful chance for individuals to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity with access to naturalization and citizenship. A wide array of partners, including NGOs, diaspora groups and civil society actors support integration into their new communities.

However, the ability of UNHCR, States and partners to deliver these outcomes at scale and meet the targets of the [Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030](#) is shaped by **implementing predictable, multi-year programmes that efficiently utilize resources**. While many continue to offer support, the overall humanitarian ecosystem is currently operating under strain, and resettlement quotas have declined significantly in 2025 and 2026 from 2024. All the while, lingering instability contributes to protracted displacement while emerging conflicts trigger additional movements to safety. Furthermore, reductions in humanitarian funding are increasing refugee vulnerability and constraining the capacity of UNHCR and partners to provide support to refugees on the ground.

It is within this landscape of heightened concern and evolving dynamics that we navigate our next steps and **determine the required approaches to preserve and expand resettlement and support complementary pathways**. Continued solidarity and responsibility-sharing remain essential to sustaining asylum space and access to solutions. The effective use of policy levers and innovative tools, upholding principles including accountability to affected people and strengthening multi-lateral partnerships is necessary to safeguard resettlement as a vital protection instrument and enhance access to labour and education mobility, sponsorship pathways and family reunification.

The data within this report will help guide the efforts, while recognizing the important nuances behind the numbers.

RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN 2027

Global resettlement needs for 2027 are projected at nearly **2.4 million**, representing a **modest decline** of 6 per cent from the 2.5 million forecasted in 2026. This continues the downward trend observed since the peak of 2.9 million in 2025, although the rate of decline has slowed.



TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECTED
RESETTLEMENT NEEDS

2,369,745



76 COUNTRIES
OF ASYLUM



43 COUNTRIES
OF ORIGIN

While the needs of some population groups increase in 2027, there is a notable reduction in certain groups and areas based on context-specific changes.

- **Syrians in the Middle East and Türkiye:** After the fall of the Assad regime in late 2024, the projected resettlement needs of Syrians have declined as movements and interest in voluntary repatriation have increased. Forecasted needs shifted from 933,200 in 2025 to 442,500 in 2026 and further to 283,600 in 2027. However, large-scale returns are expected to be gradual and uneven, with many Syrians unlikely to return in the near term due to ongoing protection, legal, socioeconomic and personal constraints. Resettlement remains vital for those at heightened risk, for whom return is premature. Moreover, a comprehensive and strategic use of solutions for Syrians, including resettlement and complementary pathways, can complement voluntary return measures, reduces pressure on host countries, preserves protection space in the region, and sustains host governments' confidence in international responsibility-sharing. Türkiye continues to record one of the largest projected resettlement needs as a host country globally (second overall).
- **Afghans in Iran and Pakistan:** Iran and Pakistan host the largest number of Afghan refugees worldwide. The decline in projected resettlement needs of Afghans does not necessarily signal an improvement of the protection environment or increased access to solutions. Rather, it reflects the impact of policies and enforcement measures, such as deportations and returns under adverse circumstances, which have led to a substantial number of returns to Afghanistan and a corresponding reduction of the refugee population.

Despite this overall decrease, Afghans remain the population group with the highest resettlement needs globally in 2027 with over 2.9 million Afghan refugees and Afghans in refugee-like situations hosted in Iran and Pakistan. Afghanistan itself continues to face a severe humanitarian emergency, economic collapse and widespread human rights concerns. The recent and rapid escalation of hostilities across Asia and the Middle East has led to a marked deterioration in the humanitarian situation and contributes to the reason why Afghans remain the top population group with projected resettlement needs in 2027.

Bangladesh. A young man looks out of his shelter in the Rohingya refugee camps.

© UNHCR/Shari Nijman

- **Venezuelans in the Americas:** Venezuelans in need of international protection note a slight reduction of 2 per cent in forecasted resettlement needs but continue to rank among the top 10 countries of origin with the highest needs (ninth overall).



Other population groups and host countries saw **increases** in projected resettlement needs.

- **Eastern and Southern Africa:** The region records the highest cumulative resettlement needs in 2027, with Ethiopia (first globally) and Uganda (third) reporting large needs. Ethiopia currently hosts 1.1 million refugees primarily from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. The projected resettlement needs are estimated to rise significantly due to ongoing insecurity linked to conflict, particularly in Amhara, Tigray and Gambella, which has increased exposure to violence as well as reductions in humanitarian assistance affecting food rations and cash support. Across Eastern and Southern Africa, resettlement needs increase for South Sudanese, Sudanese, Eritrean and Somali refugees. Congolese refugees also remain a population with high needs (sixth globally).
- **South Sudanese refugees:** Since 2017, the refugee population of South Sudanese has remained above 2 million, now totalling 2.4 million refugees hosted in East Africa and the DRC. The protracted nature of displacement often exacerbates vulnerabilities and risk, including high levels of dependency on humanitarian assistance, which has been further strained by the current financial crisis. In addition, over 2025, new movements continued with more than 205,000 South Sudanese refugees seeking safety in neighbouring countries, while a further 326,000 people were newly displaced within South Sudan between February and December. In 2027, the South Sudanese refugee population group have the second highest resettlement needs globally.
- **Sudanese refugees:** Since April 2023, displacement flows from Sudan have increased significantly with Sudan now facing one of the most severe humanitarian and displacement crises in the world. As of January 2026, the conflict in Sudan has resulted in over 3.6 million refugees and asylum-seekers affecting not only the protection and asylum systems in Eastern and Southern Africa (South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda) but also in the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Libya) and West and Central Africa (Chad, Central African Republic) regions, while returns are expected to continue. With growing projected resettlement needs from 2026 to 2027, Sudanese now represent the population group with the third highest resettlement needs.
- **West and Central Africa:** The region experiences the largest proportional increase, rising by nearly 50 per cent. Chad emerges as the host country with the top needs in the region. Refugees from Sudan and the Central African Republic account for the groups regionally with the largest needs in 2027.
- **Asia and Pacific:** While the projected needs of Afghans decline, the forecasted needs for Rohingya refugees from Myanmar increase slightly, making this population group the one with the fifth largest needs globally. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran rank as the fourth, fifth and sixth host countries worldwide with the highest projected resettlement needs in 2027.

Figure 1

Resettlement needs by region

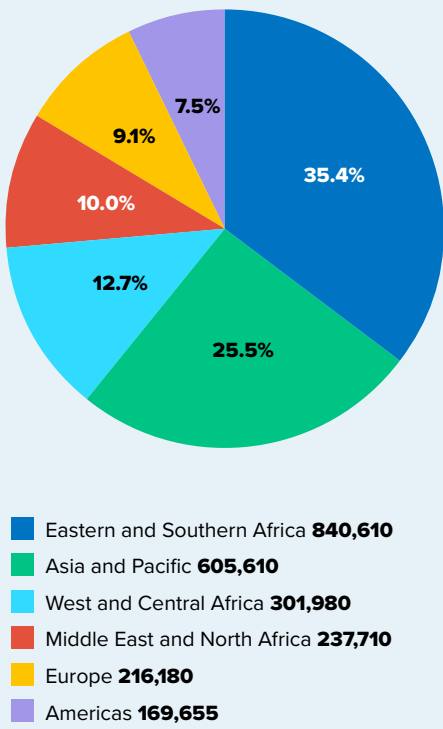
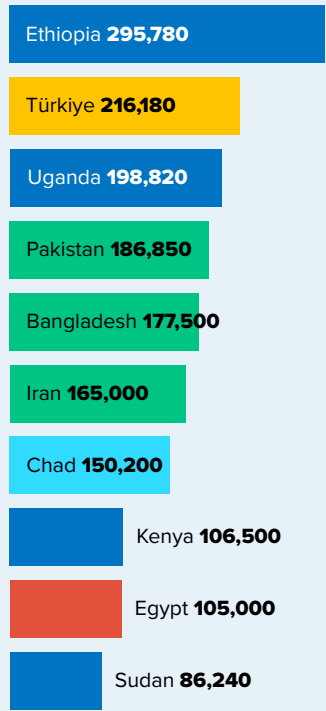


Figure 2

10 countries with highest resettlement needs

i) By country of asylum



ii) By country of origin

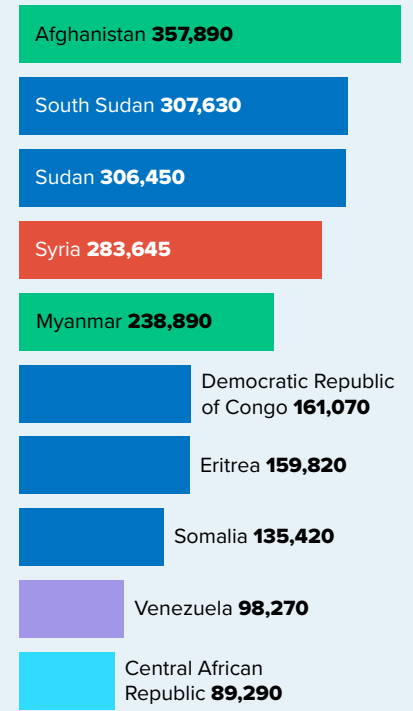
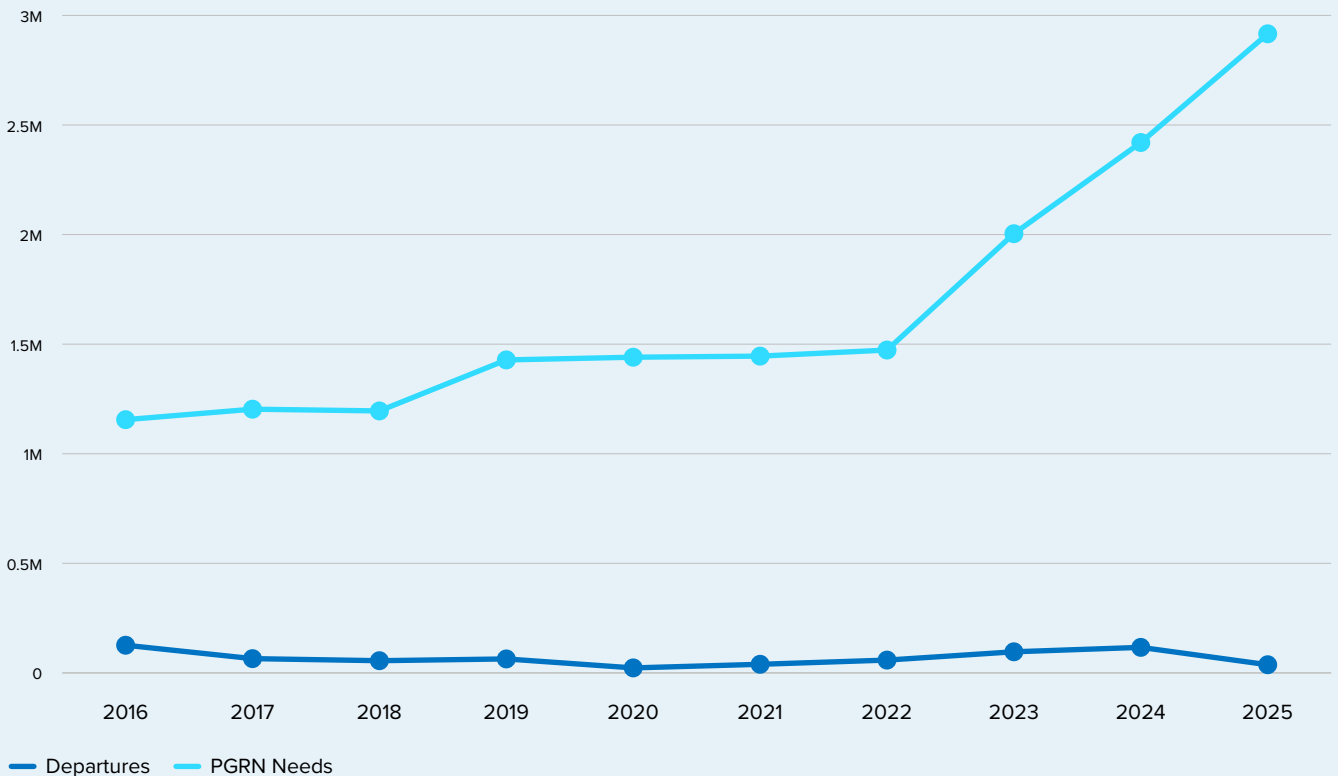


Figure 3

Total resettlement needs vs departures (individuals), 2016-2025



UNHCR'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESETTLEMENT IN 2025

While 2024 embodied an unprecedented, collective achievement of more than 116,000 refugees departing for resettlement, the situation shifted abruptly in 2025. Amid a constrained environment characterized by lowered quotas, sharp funding reductions and sizeable staffing losses of UNHCR and partners across regions, submission and departure numbers declined dramatically in 2025. Against this backdrop, **UNHCR utilized, to the extent possible, resettlement to help protect refugees with heightened needs and met its annual resettlement quota for 2025.** Additional to resettlement spaces, UNHCR also supported complementary pathways to expand access to legal admission opportunities, contributing to progressively achieve achievement of solutions for a broader group of refugees.



RESETTLEMENT SUBMISSIONS
GLOBALLY IN 2025

34,981

In the **Americas**, UNHCR submitted more than **1,700** individuals for resettlement. UNHCR operations in Costa Rica, Colombia and Ecuador referred the largest percentage of individuals—39 per cent, 10 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. These submissions are composed of refugees, primarily originating from Nicaragua and Venezuela. For exiled Nicaraguans, [a report in September 2025](#) indicates an increased risk of repression across borders, putting safety in the country of asylum in jeopardy.

With close to **14,300** resettlement submissions made, the **Asia and Pacific region** recorded the highest number in comparison to other regions. Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Afghan refugees constituted the majority of the submitted individuals. In Pakistan, ongoing resettlement processing and departures have been an important safeguard within the collapsing protection space during the [Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan](#), helping to prevent the refoulement of refugees already in the resettlement pipeline.

From **Eastern and Southern Africa**, resettlement submissions by UNHCR exceeded **6,600**. Over 45 per cent of submissions were of Congolese refugees. Many Congolese refugees are in protracted displacement situations across the region, and renewed fighting in 2025 in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo prompted new movements fleeing conflict. Thousands of refugees from Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan were also identified with compelling protection needs and prioritized for resettlement.

In **Türkiye (Europe)**, UNHCR submitted over **3,600** refugees for resettlement with case composition primarily of Afghans followed by Syrians. 32 per cent of resettlement

submissions from Türkiye in 2025 were women and girls at risk, compared to 14 per cent in 2024. Resettlement offers safety to help these women rebuild their lives as many are single heads of household who have survived sexual violence in their country of origin, during transit or in Türkiye.

In the **Middle East and North Africa** region, UNHCR made submissions for almost **7,400** refugees with the operations in Egypt and Lebanon providing the highest number of submissions. In Egypt, refugees from Sudan and South Sudan accounted for the majority of resettlement referrals, while in Lebanon referred refugees originated mainly from Syria. Resettlement offers protection for refugees who face legal and physical protection needs in their host country. In 2025, there was a significant rise in detentions in Egypt linked to irregular movements and residency violations, especially among Sudanese, Eritreans and more recently Syrians, further constraining the protection environment.

From **West and Central Africa** region, nearly **1,400** refugees were submitted for resettlement in 2025, primarily from UNHCR staff in Cameroon and Chad. A majority of the submissions were for refugees from the Central African Republic and Sudan. In Chad, resettlement referrals have helped address the constrained protection environment given the continued influx from Sudan since April 2023 which has progressively deepened overcrowding in settlements.

Spain. Clara sits with her granddaughter, Marcela, in a park near her home in Valladolid. After fleeing Nicaragua, Clara rebuilt her life through resettlement, finding safety, work and stability for her family.

© UNHCR/Ébano Stories



Adapting while strengthening integrity

UNHCR continues to adapt its operational approaches to safeguard the integrity of the resettlement programme, applying robust anti-fraud standard operating procedures and identity management across diverse operational contexts in all regions. This ensures that the people who have the most acute needs are resettled by proactively combatting any signs of fraud. To maintain trust and transparency with resettlement States, UNHCR works with States to maintain thorough vetting of all refugees in the resettlement process, and fraud is disclosed when detected on submitted cases.

The use of the corporate **Population Registration and Identity Management (PRIMES)** tools, including **proGres** database and **Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS)**, enhances the accuracy and reliability of identity verification across the case processing continuum. Biometric data is a core component of UNHCR's registration dataset. In 95 countries where biometric systems are in operation, more than 90 per cent of new registrations in 2025 included the creation of a unique biometric record. To further strengthen the quality and consistency of registration data underpinning resettlement processing, UNHCR introduced across all operations the Registration Data Quality Assessment Framework, to identify and fix data discrepancies before they become issues. Throughout 2025, UNHCR also engaged in active discussion with a number of resettlement States to extend the **PRIMES Interoperability Gateway (PING)** to support secure resettlement case data exchange. This builds on automated data exchanges using the interoperability gateway to support refugee inclusion in national digital identity programmes.

UNHCR is also working to roll-out its **Digital Gateway** to support a more sustainable way of working and transform how forcibly displaced people access information, services and support, including resettlement processing. The Digital Gateway allows for accessing services remotely to complement in-person support, updating certain information digitally, requesting appointments via online ticket systems, utilizing clear feedback and enquiry mechanisms and receiving timely updates. In 2025, aspects of the Digital Gateway were functional in Egypt, Indonesia, India and Iraq.

Counselling and managing expectations of refugees who have been submitted for resettlement consideration remains a key concern, particularly when States' programmes change and departures slow. Through **UNHCR's HELP platform**, operations provide verified, country-specific information on services, warnings against scams and clear guidance on reporting fraud, corruption and exploitation, helping refugees distinguish official UNHCR channels from fraudulent actors. Importantly, HELP sites also provide useful information on key topics such as resettlement, complementary pathways, family reunification, and travel documents. In 2025, UNHCR's HELP platform covered 150 countries and received 10.7 million visits.

RESETTLEMENT IN 2026: CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

Supporting durable solutions

In 2026, global displacement remains at critically high levels, with many refugees facing protracted displacement and with limited access to durable solutions and complementary pathways. Despite constrained resources, countries of asylum continue to host large refugee populations, while mixed movements along shared routes place additional pressure on asylum systems and States. In this environment, sustained and predictable resettlement places can — alongside other solutions — offer hope and stability.

In addressing these challenges, the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees called for the number of refugees living in protracted, aid-dependent situations to be reduced by half by 2035**. This vision signals a decisive shift from supporting States in managing protracted displacement to reducing it through pursuance of socioeconomic inclusion, self-reliance, voluntary return, local integration, resettlement and complementary pathways in tandem. It reaffirms that protection, sustainable responses and durable solutions are mutually reinforcing —not competing— priorities, and sets out a credible pathway to restore dignity, agency and ultimately advance durable solutions for millions of refugees worldwide.

Third country solutions are essential to global responsibility-sharing. The ambition of the High Commissioner's goal on third country solutions positions resettlement as a life-saving protection tool for those at heightened risk and a strategic tool for engagement, alongside expanded complementary pathways for work, education, family reunification and other protection-sensitive legal admissions. Together, these pathways support refugee agency, ease pressure on host countries and translate solidarity into concrete outcomes.

Resettlement at a crossroads

UNHCR **acknowledges the States and partners that continue to display robust commitment** but remains concerned that the current political and operational environment threatens years of collective progress in resettlement.

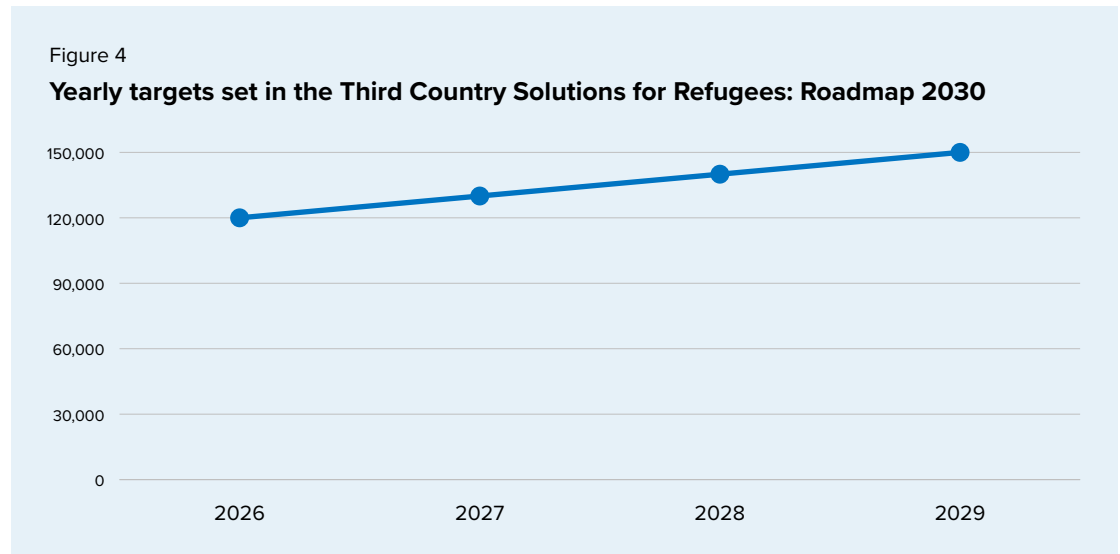
As domestic policy environments shifted, a number of countries paused or downsized resettlement programmes, resulting in **a contraction of 166,000 resettlement places between 2024 and 2025**. In 2026, resettlement quota figures fell even further amounting to approximately 20,000 spots meeting less than 1 per cent of global resettlement needs.

The resettlement community set itself annual targets to resettle 1 million refugees through the Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030. For 2027, the goal is to resettle 130,000 refugees. Resettlement data show that this is both necessary and achievable, but

Note

See [Annex A](#) at the end of the PGRN for more in-depth figures on resettlement quotas and projected needs between 2024-2026.

only if there is sustained commitment at the highest levels and a shared determination to translate ambition into action.



The way forward: UNHCR's call to action

Below are **concrete contributions** of how States and partners can help preserve and strengthen resettlement.

SUSTAIN AND EXPAND ENGAGEMENT IN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES

There is a need to have more States at the table, including through broader participation of small- and medium-sized countries. Every resettlement place demonstrates global responsibility-sharing and provides life-saving protection. The recent examples to resume or increase resettlement programmes offer valuable lessons for others. States with established quotas are further encouraged to adopt more flexible and inclusive approaches, including by reducing restrictive admission criteria. Multi-year programming can help ensure more predictable and sustained contributions. Engagement in multilateral fora, such as the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways and the Priority Situations Core Group, can support knowledge-sharing and peer learning among States.

UNHCR stands ready to work with actors to make resettlement more even and predictable, allowing for better and more equitable allocation of resources and smoother processing experiences. This could look like protected baseline quotas, multi-year financing projects or contingency planning to lessen disruptions.

USE RESETTLEMENT STRATEGICALLY WITHIN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS LANDSCAPE

Resettlement should be used strategically as part of broader protection and solutions strategies under coordinated planning. Applied in a targeted manner, and alongside the route-based approach, resettlement can generate benefits beyond those directly supported, including easing pressure on national systems and contributing to conditions for self-reliance, local integration and, where possible, voluntary return. Resettlement should be included in broader protection and solutions strategies as a complementary tool to other durable solutions to advance responsibility-sharing and support host State capacities.

EXPAND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS VIA MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WHILE PRESERVING RESETTLEMENT

States are encouraged to expand and strengthen complementary pathways, including family reunification, skills-based mobility, sponsorship and humanitarian admissions, as a complement to resettlement. While resettlement remains a core protection and durable solutions response for the most vulnerable, complementary pathways broaden access to safe and regulated admission, diversify solutions and reduce reliance on irregular onward movement. The expansion of complementary pathways requires the engagement of a diverse range of actors, including the private sector and civil society. In this context, it is vital to ensure protection safeguards are in place and that barriers to autonomous access are addressed.

PROMOTE POSITIVE NARRATIVES, STRENGTHEN MEANINGFUL REFUGEE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT INTEGRATION

Harmful anti-refugee rhetoric can shape public perceptions and, in turn, influence policy decisions. Evidence on successful integration and refugees' economic contributions should be more consistently highlighted. Resettlement is also a regulated admission pathway, with robust screening processes, often among the most thoroughly vetted across various visa categories.

Why it matters

Preserving and expanding resettlement is not an abstract policy objective, but a life-saving protection intervention for refugees who face the most acute risks globally. Fewer resettlement places have tangible consequences for the lives of refugees such as women and children at risk, survivors of violence or torture and human rights defenders. These dynamics compound uncertainty for refugees who have already waited years in protracted displacement, and they place additional pressure on host countries and front-line services.

Resettlement remains one of the concrete protection tools that the international community can use to protect those most at risk, while contributing to more balanced response to forced displacement. Without renewed collective effort, gaps will continue to widen further, with direct consequences for refugee lives and for the credibility of our shared commitments.

THE UNALLOCATED RESETTLEMENT QUOTAS: A LIFESAVING TOOL

The unallocated quotas are **global, flexible places that are not tied to specific countries, regions or refugee populations**. This unique characteristic makes them an extremely valuable protection mechanism, particularly in an increasingly shrinking global protection environment. Unallocated quotas are critical to provide refugees facing compelling resettlement needs access to a fast, life-saving durable solution. They are additional and complementary to quotas allocated to specific populations and regions.

Since 2025, resettlement options have drastically reduced, both in terms of the number of available places and the locations from which refugees can be resettled. In a context marked by a sharp decline of allocated quotas, **unallocated quotas have become more crucial than they have ever been**. Not only do they provide expedited resettlement to refugees facing imminent danger, but they also offer solutions to those located in countries with no regular resettlement opportunities, including locations where precarious security conditions or other types of obstacles prevent resettlement States from conducting selection missions. In this regard, **the flexibility for States to process cases remotely is key** to ensure that these refugees have access to a permanent solution.

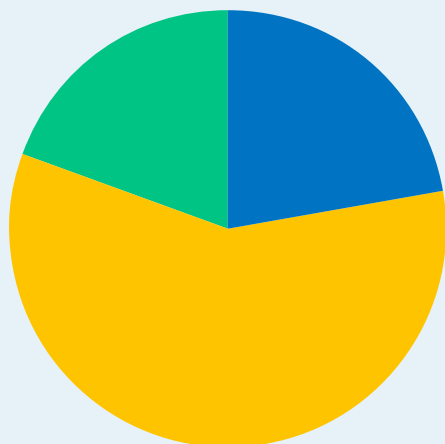
Jordan. A family in Azraq Camp finds relief and hope, as stable electricity makes life-saving care safer for their daughter with critical medical needs.

© UNHCR/Hasan Alabdallah

In 2025, **nine countries** provided unallocated quotas in addition to quotas dedicated to specific countries, thereby putting in place flexible and expedited procedures in order to respond to the needs of those who are the most at risk. UNHCR made submissions under the

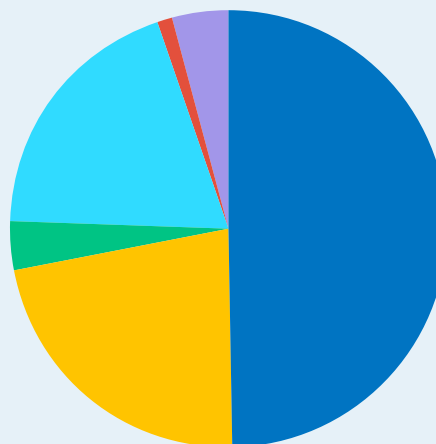


Figure 5

Overall submission breakdown by priority 2025

■ Normal **22.3%**
■ Urgent **58.4%**
■ Emergency **19.3%**

Figure 6

Overall submission breakdown per category 2025

■ Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs (LPN) **49.7%**
■ Survivors of Violence and/or Torture (SVT) **22.4%**
■ Medical Needs (MED) **3.4%**
■ Women and Girls at Risk (AWR) **19.3%**
■ Family Reunification (FAM) **1.0%**
■ Children and Adolescents at Risk (CHL) **4.1%**

unallocated resettlement quotas for approximately **1,300 persons** residing in **69 countries of asylum**. Profiles of individuals included, but were not limited to, women and girls at risk, survivors of gender-based violence, human rights defenders, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) individuals at risk and persons held in prolonged or arbitrary detention.

Most unallocated quota cases were submitted under the category **Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs**. These cases often involve individuals who are facing compelling protection risks, including being at risk of refoulement. In such contexts, resettlement serves as a critical protection tool, as an acceptance by a resettlement country can halt deportations and facilitate high-level interventions with national authorities.

Here are some examples of how the unallocated quotas have helped protect lives:

HOPE FOR A SINGLE FATHER

An Ethiopian couple fled persecution to Yemen. After losing his spouse, the husband became the sole caregiver for three young children amid active conflict and extreme hardship in Yemen. In the absence of regular quotas, the use of the unallocated quota enabled the family's expedited resettlement, providing a critical pathway to safety and stability.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SAFETY

A transgender woman fled severe abuse in her country of origin in West and Central Africa. She faced continued arrests and harassment in her country of asylum. With no regular quotas available, the unallocated quota enabled her rapid resettlement to Finland. This ensured her immediate protection from further harm.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

A Venezuelan journalist spent years reporting under growing threats, censorship and detention for telling the truth, covering contested elections and opposition voices. As the risks escalated, he was forced to flee to Colombia, where he continued advocating for human rights while facing ongoing insecurity. In 2025, he and his family were resettled to Canada through the Human Rights Defenders stream, a programme that offers safety to people defending human rights who face serious risks because of their work.

Despite these life-saving outcomes, important gaps remain. Notwithstanding persistent and growing needs in a context where shrinking humanitarian aid affects the most basic services, including medical care, the number of **medical resettlement slots available in 2025 remained largely insufficient**. In situations where critical medical care is unavailable in the country of asylum, the absence of resettlement options often results in the loss of life. UNHCR therefore calls on States to increase the number of places for refugees with medical profiles, who often also face significant additional protection risks.

Similarly, some of the refugees who are the most at risk remain unable to access resettlement due to restrictive admission criteria. **Adopting stringent limitations** in relation to family size, nationality, profile, geographic location or language, amongst other factors, **risks undermining the effectiveness of the unallocated resettlement quotas by excluding refugees with acute protection needs**. Unaccompanied children are among the most vulnerable refugees for whom, in some situations, resettlement may be the only feasible avenue to safety. However, resettlement options for them remain extremely limited and subject to multiple restrictive criteria.

Looking ahead to 2027, in light of continued international instability and displacement amidst a context of decreasing allocated quotas, **the need to maintain accessible and flexible unallocated quotas will remain essential** to ensuring that UNHCR can effectively respond to urgent protection situations globally. The use of the unallocated resettlement quotas will also continue to play a strategic role in improving protection environments, facilitating access to individuals in detention and supporting advocacy for alternatives to detention and expanded inclusion within national systems.

Chad. A UNHCR staff member checks the identities of Sudanese refugees who are waiting to be relocated away from the Tiné border crossing.

© UNHCR/Caitlin Kelly



PERSPECTIVES: IRAN

Finding safety in a new home: the story of Zahra*

The last two months before Zahra was accepted for resettlement to Europe were unbearably tense. As an Afghan refugee, life in Iran had become increasingly difficult. She remembered that just six days before receiving the call confirming her resettlement acceptance, she was feeling so overwhelmed and hopeless.

Zahra was trying to make ends meet after she was forced to discontinue her studies, while also taking care of her sister Nooria*, who has a cognitive disability. Their parents could not support them financially, and the threats she was receiving from an abusive man added a constant layer of fear in her daily life.

When the news of her resettlement finally arrived, her initial reaction was a mix of hope, fear and a deep sense of responsibility. Given the serious protection risks she was facing, she was resettled under the unallocated quota, which allows for expedited processing of refugees exposed to heightened protection challenges.

Zahra often thinks that one day she may write about her life—not because she considers herself extraordinary, but because she believes her story carries a message worth sharing: that even in the darkest hours, if you can hold on for just one more day, life can still change for the better.

When Zahra finally arrived in Europe, everything changed. She had expected the adjustment to be incredibly difficult, but things began to fall into place. About a month after her arrival, she moved into her new home and started the joyful process of making it her own. She decorated it with flowers and filled it with colour. She loved her small home; it made her feel safe, peaceful and genuinely happy.

As she works to restore a sense of normalcy and security, Zahra has also acquired skills in nail care so that she can become more independent. She will always remember the first money she earned: 20 euros for doing a friend's nails. It was a small amount, but for her, it was a meaningful sign of independence and possibility.

Every night, she practices breathing meditation, and the deeper she looks within herself, the more she realizes she is content. She feels especially grateful that her sister is with her and that she can continue to take care of her. Today, Zahra truly feels that the safety she once wished for, she now has.

**Names changed for protection reasons*



Peru. Venezuelan refugee, Fabiola, works with APPV, an organization led by Venezuelan women that helps refugee women strengthen their leadership, autonomy and confidence, while providing assistance to survivors of gender-based violence.

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THE AMERICAS

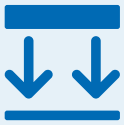
The Regional Bureau for **the Americas** provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement and complementary pathways activities in the region. The coverage of the Bureau includes the Multi-Country Office in Argentina [covering the Argentine Republic (**Argentina**), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (**Bolivia**), the Republic of Paraguay (**Paraguay**), the Eastern Republic of Uruguay (**Uruguay**)], the Federative Republic of Brazil (**Brazil**), **Canada**, the Republic of Chile (**Chile**), the Republic of Colombia (**Colombia**), the Republic of Costa Rica (**Costa Rica**), the Republic of Ecuador (**Ecuador**), the Republic of El Salvador (**El Salvador**), the Republic of Guatemala (**Guatemala**), the Republic of Honduras (**Honduras**), the United Mexican States (**Mexico**), the Multi-Country Office in Panama [covering **Anguilla**, **Antigua and Barbuda**, **Aruba**, **Barbados**, **Belize**, **British Virgin Islands**, **Curaçao**, the Republic of Cuba (**Cuba**), the Commonwealth of Dominica (**Dominica**), the **Dominican Republic**, **Grenada**, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana (**Guyana**), the Republic of Haiti (**Haiti**), **Montserrat**, the Republic of Nicaragua (**Nicaragua**) the Republic of Panama (**Panama**), **Saint Kitts and Nevis**, **Saint Lucia**, the Dutch overseas territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (**Saint Maarten**), **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, **Suriname** and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (**Trinidad and Tobago**)], the Republic of Peru (**Peru**), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (**Venezuela**), the Multi-Country Office in Washington D.C. [covering the Commonwealth of the Bahamas (**Bahamas**), the British Overseas Territories of Bermuda (**Bermuda**), **the Cayman Islands**, **the Turks and Caicos Islands**, **the United States of America** and its territories **Puerto Rico** and **the U.S. Virgin Islands**].

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS
FOR THE REGION

169,700



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

-1.5%

HIGHEST
RESETTLEMENT
NEEDS



BY COUNTRY
OF ASYLUM

Ecuador

41,600

Peru

38,800

Colombia

30,000

BY COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN

Venezuela

98,300

Colombia

18,800

Guatemala

18,500*



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

1,728



DEPARTURES IN 2025

4,533

- The region maintains a strong normative framework for refugee protection reinforced through [The Chile Plan of Action \(2024\)](#).
- Displacement in the region is driven by protracted crises, political instability, violence by non-State actors, human rights violations, climate-related pressures and economic fragility.
- Over 6.9 million forcibly displaced Venezuelans are hosted across Latin America and the Caribbean, mainly in Columbia, Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica.
- Colombians, Guatemalans, Haitians and Nicaraguans are also estimated to have high resettlement needs due to ongoing insecurity and, in some cases, worsening humanitarian conditions in their countries of origin.
- While most refugees in the Americas pursue protection and solutions through national asylum systems, temporary protection arrangements and local integration pathways, resettlement remains a critical instrument for those who face risks that cannot be adequately addressed in their host country.
- In 2024, the Americas led globally in resettlement submissions and departures. Yet numbers fell sharply in 2025, even dropping lower than other regions as policies shifted in destination countries.

**This projected figure also includes internally displaced and returned Guatemalans with international protection needs.*

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

Despite the reduction in mixed movements that have dominated the regional landscape in recent years, complex and interconnected displacement continues in the Americas, driven by protracted crises, political instability, violence by non-State actors, human rights violations, climate-related pressures and economic fragility. Since 2025, **the region has faced increasingly restrictive and deterrence-focused measures in response to mixed movements which have significantly reshaped regional displacement dynamics and protection needs.** Concurrently, northbound movements through Central America have dropped to historic lows.

Since 2021, asylum systems in the Americas have developed the capacity to register between 200,000 and 300,000 new asylum applications annually. The sustained level of arrivals has placed national asylum systems under considerable strain with significant adjudication backlogs persisting. As a result, the total number of asylum-seekers pending resolution has risen to over 4.6 million across the entire region.

Colombia. Venezuelan refugees and migrants affected by the mid-2025 floods in Puerto Careño, Vichada.

© UNHCR/Jaime Castañeda



As of mid-2025, **Mexico** had approximately 172,000 cases pending resolution, while **Peru** and **Costa Rica** reported around 557,000 and 195,000 unresolved cases, respectively. At the same time, criminal networks continue to exploit people in vulnerable situations who are seeking safety and opportunities to rebuild their lives. While asylum applications in Latin America and the Caribbean have remained consistently high, decreased availability of resettlement and complementary pathways has further constrained options for those in urgent need of protection.

Over 6.9 million forcibly displaced people including persons in need of international protection from **Venezuela** continue to be hosted across Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite recent developments in Venezuela and growing attention to the prospect of return, more than 65 per cent of Venezuelans do not intend to return in the short or medium term. In the first quarter of 2026, several operations conducted surveys on [return intentions](#) among Venezuelan populations, confirming that, while interest in return is increasing, the majority continue to prioritize remaining in host countries due to socioeconomic and protection considerations. Countries in the region have demonstrated remarkable solidarity by receiving and supporting millions of Venezuelans, with **Colombia**, **Peru**, **Ecuador** and **Costa Rica** remaining among the principal host countries.

Governments have adopted a **range of innovative protection measures, including temporary protection schemes, regularization programmes and inclusion policies**, aimed at facilitating access to documentation, employment, education and health services. The use of alternative, protection-oriented [stay arrangements](#) for Venezuelans has been consistently reported. No new regularization programmes were introduced in 2025 and most beneficiaries accessed these arrangements in previous years.

Despite these important efforts, many refugees and asylum-seekers continue to face significant protection risks. Economic constraints, administrative barriers to regularization and overstretched asylum systems limit access to essential services and a durable legal status, leaving many exposed to exploitation in informal labour markets, discrimination, gender-based violence, trafficking and other forms of abuse.

Colombia remains one of the largest refugee-hosting countries globally, hosting millions of Venezuelans (around 2.8 million) alongside people displaced by long-standing internal conflict (around 7.1 million). While the Temporary Protection Status (TPS) has significantly expanded access to legal protection, individuals with acute protection needs, including survivors of violence, women and girls at risk, LGBTIQ+ persons and those facing targeted threats, continue to require international protection interventions, including resettlement.

Similarly, **Peru** and **Ecuador** host significant Venezuelan populations, approximately 1.6 million and 440,450 people respectively based on the latest available information. Growing socioeconomic pressures, barriers to documentation, limited livelihood opportunities and reduced humanitarian funding continue to strain national systems and affect the capacity to respond effectively to protection needs.

In **Central America**, violence perpetrated by organized criminal groups, gangs and other non-State actors continues to drive forced displacement both within and across borders. Individuals fleeing persecution by criminal groups, such as women and girls at risk, LGBTIQ+ persons, and children targeted for recruitment, face severe protection risks. People continue to flee **Honduras** and **Guatemala** who are also hosting smaller refugee populations with significant protection needs.

Mexico occupies a pivotal role in the regional displacement landscape as a major destination and hosting country for persons in need of protection. In recent years, Mexico has experienced record numbers of asylum applications, reaching a total of 172,000 pending asylum applications mainly from people originating from Honduras, Cuba and El Salvador. Refugees and asylum-seekers in Mexico often face heightened vulnerabilities related to insecurity, limited access to humanitarian assistance and risks of exploitation and trafficking along routes.

Costa Rica remains one of the countries hosting the largest refugee population relative to its national population, particularly asylum-seekers from **Nicaragua** who have fled political persecution and human rights violations. The sustained influx since 2018 has placed significant pressure on the national asylum system, resulting in large backlogs and extended processing times.

In the **Caribbean**, UNHCR prioritized support to States to strengthen identification systems, prevent refoulement and further develop national asylum frameworks, while continuing efforts to prevent statelessness and promote stabilization. **Haiti** is facing a rapidly worsening internal displacement crisis, with more than 1.4 million people displaced—a 50 per cent increase in one year—driven primarily by escalating violence and acute protection risks. In this context, UNHCR maintains a limited but strategic presence; It works with UN partners, the government, civil society and community-led organizations to reinforce protection across humanitarian and development responses, expand access to civil documentation, prevent statelessness and promote coordinated, protection-sensitive returns. Across the Americas, over 135,000 Haitians have been granted refugee status or other forms of protection, while nearly 250,000 remain asylum-seekers; in response, UNHCR continues to advocate for the application of the Cartagena refugee definition to Haitian asylum-seekers, including through simplified procedure.

Despite these challenges, the Americas region **has maintained a strong normative framework for refugee protection**, grounded in the **Cartagena Declaration** and reinforced through commitments under the **Global Compact on Refugees** and **The Chile Plan of Action (2024)**. Governments across the region have demonstrated important leadership through policies promoting protection, regularization and inclusion.

Nevertheless, growing humanitarian funding constraints are affecting the capacity of host countries and humanitarian actors to sustain adequate protection responses. In this context, resettlement remains a critical international responsibility-sharing mechanism. It provides life-saving protection for refugees facing acute risks that cannot be mitigated in countries of asylum, while also supporting host governments that continue to demonstrate solidarity with displaced populations.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

Resettlement remains a critical component of UNHCR's protection and solutions strategy in the Americas. While most refugees in the region pursue protection and solutions through national asylum systems, temporary protection arrangements and local integration pathways, a significant number continue to face risks that cannot be adequately addressed in their countries of asylum. For these individuals, resettlement is both a life-saving intervention and an essential international protection tool within the broader solutions architecture.

In the Americas context, resettlement serves several interrelated strategic functions.

First and foremost, resettlement provides **a critical protection solution for refugees facing acute and immediate threats** to their safety. Across the region, UNHCR identifies individuals with urgent protection needs including survivors of torture and trafficking, women and girls at risk of gender-based violence, LGBTIQ+ individuals facing persecution, children with specific protection needs and refugees facing targeted threats from criminal actors or armed groups.

In parallel, resettlement plays an important role in **preventing refoulement** in contexts where refugees may face barriers accessing asylum or where national protection systems are under strain.

Resettlement also **demonstrates international solidarity** with countries of asylum across the Americas that continue to host large refugee populations despite significant economic and institutional pressures. Countries such as **Colombia, Peru, Ecuador** and **Costa Rica** have shown strong commitment to refugee protection and inclusion policies. Resettlement opportunities provided by the international community contribute to responsibility-sharing and reinforce these positive protection environments.

Furthermore, resettlement contributes to broader protection outcomes by providing safe and legal pathways for refugees who might otherwise resort to irregular migration routes controlled by smuggling and trafficking networks. Expanding access to resettlement therefore supports efforts to reduce the influence of criminal actors involved in irregular migration.

Resettlement also complements other durable solutions and protection activities. Across the region, UNHCR works with governments and partners to promote local integration and voluntary repatriation where conditions permit, including access to legal documentation and territory, access to rights and services, education, work and health, and legal pathways towards permanent residency and naturalization, as well as complementary pathways including labour mobility programmes, education pathways and sponsorship initiatives.

A pilot project for labour mobility was launched with Italy, targeting refugees and asylum-seekers in **Colombia** and **Ecuador**. As of March 2026, 12 beneficiaries departed Colombia to Italy to work in airports logistics.



After fleeing Venezuela, Nelson sought safety in Peru. With support from UNHCR and EU funding, he covered urgent medical expenses for his son, obtained legal documentation, and accessed essential services, allowing the family to regain stability.

© UNHCR/Jaime Giménez

Family reunification remains one of the most effective complementary pathways available to refugees in the region, providing safe and sustainable opportunities for refugees to rebuild their lives while strengthening family unity.

However, complementary pathways cannot substitute for resettlement in addressing acute protection needs. Individuals facing targeted persecution, survivors of severe trauma and refugees with complex medical conditions often require relocation to countries where appropriate protection frameworks and specialized services are available.

The evolving humanitarian funding environment is increasingly constraining protection responses across the region. Reduced funding has led to a contraction of UNHCR's operational footprint, contributing to heightened vulnerabilities among refugee populations and underscore the growing importance of targeted protection interventions, including resettlement and complementary pathways.

In response, operations in the Americas have introduced a series of targeted adaptations to sustain delivery and maximize the use of limited resources. These include strengthened regional coordination, expanded use of remote processing modalities, introduction of more robust case prioritization frameworks—supported through targeted trainings—and enhanced collaboration with resettlement States through regular coordination and close follow-up on specific cases to streamline procedures and maintain processing efficiency.

Given the scale and complexity of displacement across the Americas, predictable and expanded resettlement opportunities remain essential to sustaining protection responses and ensuring that refugees with the most urgent needs are able to access safety and durable solutions. It alleviates pressure on humanitarian systems by providing solutions for refugees with unmet needs, support positive engagement with host governments through responsibility sharing, and reinforce the credibility of international protection systems.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

Due to ongoing crises and continued protection risks faced by refugees in multiple countries of asylum, the projected resettlement needs in the Americas for 2027 remain substantial at **169,700** but observe a **modest reduction** of 1.5 per cent from last year's projections for 2026.

Despite evolving policy approaches across the region, the underlying drivers of displacement in the Americas (e.g. violence, persecution and human rights abuses) remain largely unchanged. UNHCR operations across the region identify refugees with urgent protection needs who cannot find safety through local solutions. Common profiles include survivors of violence and trafficking, women and girls at risk, LGBTIQ+ persons facing persecution and individuals at risk of refoulement.

The largest resettlement needs in the region are associated with Venezuelan refugees across South and Central America, followed by Colombians, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Cubans. Refugees fleeing violence and persecution in Central America still face severe protection risks in host countries.

The operation in **Ecuador** estimates that **41,600** individuals, mainly from Venezuela and Colombia, will be in need of resettlement in 2027, a slight decrease of 10 per cent in comparison to 2026. With a 49 per cent increase in femicide from 2024 to 2025, forcibly displaced women in Ecuador face compounded risks linked to socioeconomic marginalization, discrimination and hyper-sexualization. Meanwhile, weakened community and institutional support networks limited access to timely and appropriate services, including for children at risk and survivors of violence and torture. LGBTIQ+ individuals will be prioritized for resettlement due to the severe human rights abuses many have endured and continued discrimination faced in Ecuador.

In **Peru**, the operation has projected **38,800** persons will be in need of resettlement—an increase compared to 2026, largely driven by these legislative changes. Despite local integration being the most feasible solution for Venezuelan refugees, significant challenges exist in Peru due to the political and socioeconomic context. As of December 2025, the country registered 556,911 asylum-seekers, predominantly Venezuelans amid rising insecurity, repeated States of Emergency and increased migration control operations. This securitized approach has been reinforced by restrictive legislative reforms. Humanitarian exceptions that previously allowed vulnerable Venezuelans to enter Peru without a passport or visa were repealed. In February 2026, Peru amended its Refugee Law, introducing more restrictive provisions, including the establishment of admissibility procedures and new barriers to accessing asylum for individuals in expedited removal proceedings due to irregular entry or stay.

The projected resettlement needs of **30,000** individuals in **Colombia** remain in line with what was reported in the 2026 PGRN. Colombia continues to face considerable challenges in meeting humanitarian and protection needs. Resettlement remains a critical protection tool, providing access to durable solutions while reinforcing international responsibility-sharing and supporting Colombia's sustained commitment to refugee protection. Individuals with legal

and/or physical protection needs, including LGBTIQ+ refugees, constitute the most frequent primary resettlement submission category and face direct threats to their physical integrity in Colombia, including intimidation, surveillance and targeted violence.

UNHCR's strategy in **Guatemala** continues to center on providing protection and solutions for asylum-seekers, refugees, displaced and returned Guatemalans with international protection needs. By the end of 2025, Guatemala hosted 3,819 asylum-seekers, mostly from Venezuela, Honduras and Nicaragua. In-country processing continues to be a life-saving mechanism for those at risk of extreme violence and threats by gangs and other criminal groups. In 2025, resettlement in Guatemala remained key for refugees with specific protection needs, despite a decline in referrals compared to 2024. The projected resettlement needs for 2027 have increased to **18,500** compared to 13,200 in 2026, as returnees in need of international protection have been included in the targeted population.

UNHCR in the **Dominican Republic** mostly referred refugees from Haiti and the trend of increased refugee submission from Haiti is expected to continue in 2027. In 2025, the Directorate General of Migration reported more than 376,000 deportations to Haiti. As security and humanitarian conditions in Haiti continue to deteriorate, an increasing number of Haitians are approaching UNHCR and partners with needs. Access to international protection in the Dominican Republic and the capacity of the national asylum system remain limited. As such, the operation estimates similar needs as in 2026 that around **17,200** people will be in need of resettlement in 2027.

Costa Rica remains the largest host country for asylum-seekers and refugees from Nicaragua. Resettlement has been critical in saving lives and providing durable solutions, particularly for high-risk cases facing persecution, as reports of human rights violations targeting exiled Nicaraguans and their relatives have increased. There has been an increase in homicides since 2023 and Nicaraguans have been particularly affected. For 2027, the operation estimates that 12,100 individuals will be in need of resettlement, a slight decrease in comparison to 2026 (estimated at 19,300).

In total, **6,600** individuals are projected to be in need of resettlement in **Panama and the South Caribbean**.

- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the closure of UNHCR's field office due to budgetary constraints has further reduced operational capacity. Resettlement and complementary pathways will remain essential protection tools and, in many cases, life-saving mechanisms for the most vulnerable refugees facing serious protection risks. It is estimated that 3,000 refugees, mainly Venezuelans and Cubans, will be in need of resettlement in 2027.
- Across the **Caribbean**, UNHCR's operational footprint has been significantly reduced, including the closure of several field presences. In **Guyana**, where UNHCR is no longer present, resettlement will be required primarily as a protection tool on a case-by-case basis. In **Aruba and Curaçao**, prospects for local integration remain limited, with Venezuelans frequently detained for irregular stay or unauthorized work, at times for prolonged periods and in conditions below international standards. An estimated **2,100** individuals — primarily Venezuelans — will require resettlement in 2027.
- In **Panama**, resettlement will remain a critical protection tool for the most vulnerable individuals, including women at risk, survivors of violence and persons with medical needs or specific protection concerns. An estimated **1,400** people will require resettlement in 2027.

In **Cuba**, UNHCR continues to engage with the Government to promote accession to international refugee instruments and the establishment of national asylum mechanisms. Meanwhile, the small number of refugees recognized under UNHCR's mandate face acute vulnerabilities due to the deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian situation on the island, compounded by the impact of tightened sanctions.

Resettlement from **Honduras**, through both in-country processing and traditional resettlement, provides life-saving solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees at risk. In-country processing offers a safe alternative to risky overland routes, while traditional resettlement offers a durable solution to refugees from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Venezuela. UNHCR in Honduras estimates that at least **3,100 persons** will be in need of resettlement in 2027. This figure aligns with the projected figure for 2026, due to the continuous security situation in the country.

Mexico remains one of the largest hosting countries of asylum-seekers and refugees in Latin America. Resettlement is used strategically for individuals facing acute risks and for whom remaining in the country is not a viable option, functioning as a life-saving mechanism. For 2027, the operation estimates that approximately **1,900** refugees will be in need of resettlement. Asylum-seekers from Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Honduras and Colombia are most frequently identified as facing heightened risks, including violence, extortion, kidnapping and gender-based violence.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

In 2025, UNHCR operations across the Americas continued to use resettlement strategically to respond to urgent protection needs and advance broader protection objectives. A total of **1,728** refugees from multiple countries of asylum were submitted for resettlement consideration to various resettlement countries. During the same period, **4,533** refugees departed from the Americas to third countries.

Operations in the region faced significant challenges in 2025, including reduced operational capacity due to declining funding, a drop in available resettlement quotas and reduced case processing resources resulting from staffing cuts affecting protection activities, including resettlement, across UNHCR and partners in the Americas.

In light of these constraints, operations across the Americas adapted their approaches to sustain resettlement delivery and make the most effective use of limited resources. As an example, **Colombia**, amid a drastic reduction in its quota—from 32,060 individuals in 2024 to just 150 in 2025—strategically recalibrated its resettlement programme to prioritize refugees facing the most acute and life-threatening protection risks. These included survivors of gender-based violence and individuals targeted by criminal groups. Even with reduced staffing, UNHCR operations in the Americas successfully processed and submitted all cases to meet allocated quotas in a timely manner, including the full utilization of available unallocated

resettlement slots. UNHCR also strengthened regional coordination and cooperation with resettlement States to improve processing efficiency and maintain the integrity of resettlement programmes despite operational constraints.

Complementary pathways and **family reunification** continued to provide additional opportunities for refugees to access protection and a pathway to durable solutions, reinforcing the importance of a comprehensive approach.

As examples, UNHCR colleagues in **Mexico** provided support to the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) with developing a family reunification protocol that aims to incorporate minimum safeguards in favour of refugees and grounded in key protection principles, including the best interests of the child and a gender-sensitive approach. **Brazil** continued implementing its community sponsorship programme for Afghans departing from Pakistan, receiving more than 300 individuals in late 2025. **Argentina** also launched a pilot community sponsorship initiative with a resettlement component for a small number of Nicaraguan individuals from Guatemala and Costa Rica. The first families departed in late 2025 and were welcomed in different parts of Argentina by community-based organizations.

The region also remained proactively engaged in promoting labour mobility, strengthening programmes with Canada and Italy. Two operations actively engaged in these initiatives are **Colombia** and **Ecuador**. In 2025, both operations have implemented labour mobility pilots with Italy aimed at addressing workforce shortages in specific sectors of luggage handlers via Wings for a Future project in Colombia and in the healthcare sector through the Hope project in Ecuador. Specifically in Colombia, the programme targeted refugees and in Ecuador the programme targeted refugees and host country individuals.

The implementation of skills-based pathways has progressed slowly but steadily, with departures to third countries already taking place in late 2025 and early 2026, demonstrating States' commitment to these initiatives. Still, prospects for scaling up existing programmes and expanding such initiatives to additional operations remain constrained by several factors. These include limited partner capacity and the reduced UNHCR operational footprint to support access to opportunities, as well as challenges in refugees fully meeting labour market requirements without upskilling or language support. Additional obstacles include certification of professional experience, possession of valid passports, apostilles and supporting documentation, as well as limitations related to family unity considerations.

PERSPECTIVES: COSTA RICA

Finding a place in the world

Yessenia* was born in the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region of Nicaragua, a predominantly Indigenous and Afro Indigenous territory marked by geographic isolation and limited access to public institutions. Despite this, she began her activism as a teenager. Before turning 20, she was living openly as a trans woman, raising awareness about LGBTIQ+ rights and creating spaces for youth leadership, art and culture in her community.

She pursued her education with determination, becoming the first trans woman to graduate from the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN). She earned a degree in Intercultural Nursing with a specialization in Hygiene and Epidemiology and went on to work at a nearby hospital, continuing her commitment to public service while promoting diversity and human rights.

In April 2018, crisis hit her country. Protests against the government were met with violent repression by police, the military and paramilitary groups. Yessenia did not participate, but as many health professionals she witnessed the injured and the dead brought into her hospital. When staff were ordered not to treat those wounded during demonstrations, many fled the country. As staffing collapsed, Yessenia was appointed deputy head of the medical center and of medical supplies—but continued to receive only an assistant nurse's salary.

Her attempts to speak up were met with threats. She was told she should be grateful to be employed at all as a transgender woman and warned that no other hospital would hire her if she lost her job.

By 2022, the harassment intensified as she was directly targeted by a political group in charge of monitoring healthcare workers. She faced unpaid suspensions and humiliating assignments. When her family told her that police had surrounded her home twice while she was away, she knew she had no other option but to flee.

In early 2023, Yessenia crossed into Costa Rica. But even there she did not feel safe. The Nicaraguan community there is large and diverse, especially in the towns near the border, and she knew it was only a matter of time before word got about where she was. Yessenia applied for asylum in Costa Rica in 2024. Through UNHCR and due to her protection needs, she was connected to an opportunity for resettlement to Spain. Spain, she believed, might finally place her far enough from the reach of the Nicaraguan regime—a place where she could live openly and safely as a trans woman.

Yessenia has suffered persecution, discrimination and violence, and yet she remains proud of who she is, someone driven to heal, to teach, and to help others. Yessenia is looking forward to rebuilding her life in Spain and the opportunities a permanent solution this can bring. She hopes that her education and experience as a nurse will help her become self-reliant more quickly. Knowing the value of support networks, she is also researching LGBTIQ+ organizations in Spain and starting to smile at photos of cities across the Atlantic. "It's starting to take shape in my mind," she says. "I have hope to make a new life in Spain. I will find a new place in the world."

**Name changed for protection reasons*



Bangladesh. A young boy watches as a water jug gets filled at a water point in the Rohingya refugee camps.

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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

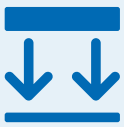
The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement and complementary pathways activities in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (**Afghanistan**), the Multi-Country Office in Australia [covering the Commonwealth of Australia (**Australia**), the Cook Islands (**Cook Islands**), the Republic of Fiji (**Fiji**), the Republic of Kiribati (**Kiribati**), the Republic of Marshall Islands (**Marshall Islands**), the Federal States of Micronesia (**Micronesia**), the Republic of Nauru (**Nauru**), New Zealand, the Republic of Niue (**Niue**), the Republic of Palau (**Palau**), the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (**Papua New Guinea**), the Independent State of Samoa (**Samoa**), Solomon Islands, the Kingdom of Tonga (**Tonga**), **Tuvalu**, the Republic of Vanuatu (**Vanuatu**)], the People's Republic of Bangladesh (**Bangladesh**), Kingdom of Bhutan (**Bhutan**), **Brunei Darussalam**, the People's Republic of China (**China**), the Republic of India (**India**), the Republic of Indonesia (**Indonesia**), the Islamic Republic of Iran (**Iran**), **Japan**, the Multi-Country Office in Kazakhstan [covering the Republic of Kazakhstan (**Kazakhstan**), the Kyrgyz Republic (**Kyrgyzstan**), the Republic of Tajikistan (**Tajikistan**), **Turkmenistan**, the Republic of Uzbekistan (**Uzbekistan**)], **the Republic of Korea**, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (**Lao**), **Malaysia**, the Republic of Maldives (**Maldives**), **Mongolia**, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (**Myanmar**), the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (**Nepal**), the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (**Pakistan**), the Republic of the Philippines (**Philippines**), the Republic of Singapore (**Singapore**), the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (**Sri Lanka**), the Multi-Country Office in Thailand [covering the Kingdom of Cambodia (**Cambodia**), the Kingdom of Thailand (**Thailand**), the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (**Viet Nam**)], Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (**Timor-Leste**).

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS
FOR THE REGION

603,600



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

-25%

HIGHEST
RESETTLEMENT
NEEDS



BY COUNTRY
OF ASYLUM

Pakistan

186,900

Bangladesh

177,500

Iran

165,000

BY COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN

Afghanistan

352,700

Myanmar

239,000



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

14,253



DEPARTURES IN 2025

7,908

- Less than half of the countries and territories in the region are States parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Many major host countries have not established a national asylum system, laws or procedures.
- Asia and the Pacific hosts 17.6 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The Afghanistan and Myanmar Situations account for the vast majority of refugees and asylum-seekers.
- While Afghans remain the population group with the highest resettlement needs globally, their projected needs have declined, mainly due to deportations and returns in adverse conditions to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the recent and rapid escalation of hostilities across Asia and the Middle East has led to a marked deterioration in the humanitarian situation.
- The projected resettlement needs for refugees from Myanmar are increased by 2.4 per cent. Myanmar continues to generate large-scale internal displacement and cross-border movements, with serious protection implications in the region.
- The strategic use of resettlement and complementary pathways remain a critical pillar of the region's protection and solutions strategy, helping to support sustainable responses and expand refugee inclusion in national systems.
- In 2025, the region led globally in resettlement submissions (14,253) and was the second highest in departures (7,908).

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

Asia and the Pacific hosts 17.6 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons, including 5.2 million registered refugees, people in refugee-like situations, asylum-seekers and other people in need of international protection, 7.5 million internally displaced persons and 731,000 internally displaced returnees; 1.2 million others of concern; and 2.6 million stateless persons (representing over half of the world's stateless population) as of end 2025. The **Afghanistan and Myanmar Situations** together account for the vast majority of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region. As of end 2025, there were almost 3 million Afghan refugees and Afghans in need of international protection in the region, primarily in **Pakistan** and **Iran**. Some 1.5 million refugees from Myanmar (including 1.3 million Rohingya refugees) reside throughout the region, primarily in **Bangladesh, Malaysia, India** and **Thailand**.

Malaysia. Together COBEM (Coalition of Burma Ethnic Malaysia) and Refuge for the Refugees support refugees from Myanmar with livelihoods programmes

© UNHCR/Azwan Rahim



Only 20 of the 45 countries and territories in the region are [States parties](#) to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, and many of the refugee-hosting States have not established a national asylum system, laws or procedures. Refugees therefore fall under national immigration laws and may be considered “illegal immigrants” when they enter or remain irregularly, regardless of UNHCR documentation. This contributes to a protection environment in which arrest, prolonged or indefinite detention, deportation and refoulement remain systemic risks.

Across the region, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons live with insecure legal status which limits access to rights and services, restricts self-reliance and perpetuates dependency on dwindling humanitarian assistance. Many cannot work lawfully and face barriers to access national education, health care and justice mechanisms. Some populations are confined to camps, settlements or immigration detention facilities with restricted freedom of movement; others live in urban and peri-urban areas with limited documentation and heightened exposure to exploitation, trafficking, and gender-based violence. Economic downturns, rising living costs and funding shortfalls are eroding coping capacities and increasing harmful practices, including child labour, early marriage and dangerous onward movements. These pressures are intensified by the energy and cost of living shock triggered by the conflict in the Middle East, which has significantly affected countries in the region that are highly dependent on imported fuel, driving up transport, food and basic costs for refugee and host communities. In parallel, the region’s high exposure to floods, cyclones, temperature extremes and seismic activity continues to generate new protection needs and worsen existing vulnerabilities, particularly in areas with limited resources to build climate resilience. Against this backdrop, resettlement and other third country solutions remain a critical protection tool for refugees most at risk.

Afghanistan Situation

The protection environment for Afghans is shaped by intersecting crises within Afghanistan and constrained protection space in neighbouring countries of asylum. Inside Afghanistan, some 3.2 million people remain internally displaced, while the broader population continues to face a severe humanitarian emergency, economic collapse and widespread human rights concerns. UNHCR’s [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan – Update II](#) issued in September 2025 reaffirms conditions in Afghanistan continue to give rise to significant international protection needs and highlights the heightened risks faced by certain profiles.

Pakistan and Iran host more than 2.9 million Afghan refugees and Afghans in refugee-like situations, but recent policies and enforcement measures have contributed to a substantial number of returns, including deportations and returns under adverse circumstances which has reduced the refugee population in both host countries significantly. Restrictions, particularly on the rights of women and girls to education, work, movement and public participation, have further eroded resilience and prospects for safe, dignified return in the near term.

Since late 2023, **more than 2 million Afghans have returned from Pakistan under the [Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan \(IFRP\)](#)** and related measures, while **returns and deportations from Iran** have also remained high. Many of those returning had limited time to prepare, resulting in loss of assets and documentation, separation from family members and exposure to arrest and detention. In Afghanistan, returnees face an environment of widespread poverty, limited livelihood opportunities, weak basic services and contamination by explosive ordnance in some areas. **These conditions raise serious concerns about the sustainability and safety of return and highlight the need for continued access to protection and**

solutions, including resettlement, for Afghans with acute vulnerabilities who cannot safely remain in host countries or return.

The **recent and rapid escalation of hostilities across [Asia and the Middle East](#)** has led to a marked deterioration in the humanitarian situation in a number of countries in the Asia and Pacific region, notably **Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan**. This has placed significant strain on humanitarian capacities and host communities and increased the risk of internal displacement, new outflows and onward movements. In response, UNHCR is leading a refugee coordination model for potential refugee movements, working with authorities, UN agencies and humanitarian partners.

Myanmar Situation

Myanmar continues to generate **large-scale internal displacement and cross border movements, with serious protection implications in the region**. Since 2021, political upheaval, intensified armed conflict and a deteriorating human rights situation have driven new displacement and curtailed access for humanitarian actors. At the end of 2025, the Myanmar Situation accounted for 5.9 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the region, including around 1.3 million forcibly displaced and stateless Rohingya refugees. Intensified violence across multiple parts of the country has pushed the number of internally displaced persons to over 3.6 million and led to new movements into **Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand**. While severe funding shortfalls have significantly reduced humanitarian aid in Bangladesh, UNHCR and partners launched the [2025-26 Joint Response Plan \(JRP\) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis](#) under the leadership of the Bangladesh Government in March 2025.

Prospects for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity remain extremely limited.

Rohingya refugees in **Bangladesh** continue to live in congested camps exposed to insecurity, fires, monsoon-related hazards and deepening funding gaps that have resulted in reductions in protection and assistance. In other host countries, Rohingya and other refugees from Myanmar often lack formal legal status, face restrictions on movement and work and are at heightened risk of exploitation, trafficking and detention. [UNHCR's Guidance Note on Myanmar](#) issued in May 2024 calls on States to maintain access to territory, uphold the right to seek asylum and respect the principle of non-refoulement for those fleeing. The protracted nature of the situation, combined with limited prospects for solutions inside Myanmar and constrained protection space in host States, underscores the importance of resettlement and complementary pathways as part of a broader responsibility-sharing approach and their criticality to stabilize and support populations in host countries.

Onward movements

The fragile protection environment and limited access to durable solutions in host States continues to drive dangerous onward movements of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons across the region, often in mixed movements alongside migrants, notably along the **South and South-East Asia Route** and the **South-West Asia Route**. [UNHCR's data](#) indicates that an estimated 6,200 people attempted maritime journeys in 2025, with women and children accounting for the majority (60 per cent). Most movements originated from Myanmar and Bangladesh, with refugees seeking safety in countries across **South and South-East Asia**, including **Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand** and beyond, often facing interception, detention, pushbacks and further protection risks along the route. At least eight tragic boat incidents were recorded in 2025, resulting in 892 people reported dead or missing.

Along the **South-West Asia Route**, Afghans continue to move irregularly into neighbouring countries and onwards, driven by the impact of the humanitarian, economic and human rights crises inside Afghanistan and shrinking protection space in host States. Many undertake complex and fragmented journeys through **Pakistan** and **Iran** towards Türkiye, Central Asia and Europe, frequently relying on smugglers and facing risks of violence, exploitation, trafficking, extortion and family separation. In several areas, Afghans encounter restrictive border practices, including summary returns, denial of entry, excessive use of immigration detention and obstacles in accessing territory and asylum procedures.

To address these challenges, UNHCR works with an array of partners in the region to operationalize a **Route-Based Approach** and to enhance protection-sensitive border practices, expand solutions and reduce reliance on dangerous journeys.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

The **strategic use of resettlement**, in combination with complementary pathways, remains a critical pillar of the protection and solutions strategy in Asia and the Pacific in 2026 and 2027 and helps to **support sustainable responses** and **expand refugee inclusion** in national systems, at a time when protection space is under strain, humanitarian resources are shrinking and dangerous onward movements are increasing.

Life-saving and strategic protection tool

UNHCR operationalizes **resettlement as an essential and strategic protection tool** to address the acute needs and vulnerabilities of refugees, while supporting advocacy for broader strategic protection outcomes, particularly with respect to the use of detention to manage asylum, and protection from forced return:

- In **Thailand**, UNHCR uses the resettlement quotas to provide solutions for refugees in prolonged or indefinite detention, particularly for Rohingya refugees. This has contributed to increased UNHCR access to detained populations, improved release rates and fuller application of alternatives to detention under the [Government of Thailand's Memorandum of Understanding on Alternatives to Detention for Children](#).
- In **India**, resettlement is relied upon as an alternative to deportation for detained refugees. It simultaneously has afforded greater UNHCR access to refugees and asylum-seekers in detention facilities and negotiation opportunities for release and exit permissions. This strengthened the receptiveness of UNHCR's technical advice on the newly implemented [Immigration and Foreigners Act](#).



Kazakhstan. Afghan refugee Farhad received a direct scholarship from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in 2020 to study International Relations.

© UNHCR/Elyor Nemat

- In **Pakistan**, ongoing resettlement processing and departures have been an important safeguard within the collapsing protection space during the IFRP, helping to prevent the refoulement of refugees already in the resettlement pipeline. At the same time UNHCR's advocacy for the establishment of a national protection mechanism for Afghan refugees with heightened risk profiles relies heavily on the continued availability of resettlement as a protection tool. Advocacy continues for the reinstatement of free-of-charge exit permits for refugees which would be supported by increased resettlement quotas.
- In **Iran**, resettlement is a strategic lever for advocacy to extend exemption categories of refugees with heightened risk profiles, in the context of mass returns to Afghanistan.

Expression of international solidarity and a means to ease pressure

Resettlement helps ease pressure on overstretched humanitarian responses and national systems, particularly in large scale operations facing severe funding cuts:

- In **Bangladesh**, resettlement for those with the highest needs not only addresses acute risks but also supports efforts to reinforce the protection environment and manage rising tensions and violence within the camps. A meaningful resettlement quota for Rohingya in the congested and underfunded camps is essential to demonstrate international solidarity with Bangladesh. Multi-year commitments by resettlement countries to provide durable solutions to Rohingya refugees help decongest the camps, reduce pressure on scarce services and signal a tangible commitment to manage the situation together.
- In **Thailand**, resettlement for highly vulnerable camp-based refugees mitigates the impact of reduced assistance and service closures. It also reassures the Government that their efforts to improve conditions in camps and provide more inclusive policies on lawful employment will be matched by ongoing international solidarity and responsibility-sharing.

- In **Pakistan** and **Iran**, increased access to resettlement and complementary pathways is also an important element of regional responsibility-sharing under the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees](#), especially at a time when both countries face significant security, economic and political pressures. Third country solutions serve as a tangible support to host governments that have maintained asylum space for millions of refugees over decades.

Promoting protection-oriented reforms

Beyond its immediate and individual impact, resettlement in Asia and the Pacific contributes to broader strategic objectives in host countries and supports gradual policy reform and inclusion:

- In **Malaysia**, UNHCR's strategic use of resettlement is linked to advocacy around establishment of a national asylum framework and inclusive access to work, health and education. With the development of skills-based pathways in the region, this advances national discussions towards refugees' formal inclusion and builds the case for a more predictable, rights-based system.
- In **Thailand**, large-scale resettlement and group processing for long-staying Myanmar refugees has been central to UNHCR's dialogue with the Government on securing access to legal work for camp-based refugees and on operationalizing the National Screening Mechanism. In August 2025, the Government of Thailand adopted a Cabinet Resolution granting camp-based refugees of working age access to legal employment outside the camps. This marks an important step toward strengthening self-reliance and inclusion, which was founded on prior international solidarity and responsibility-sharing and is contingent upon continued resettlement for refugees with heightened needs who may face barriers to accessing legal work.

Supporting route-based responses to onward movements

Along the **South-West Asia Route**, resettlement addresses acute protection needs while complementary pathways expand safe and regulated admission opportunities for Afghans in Iran and Pakistan following their displacement. This aims to reduce the need for highly vulnerable refugees to undertake dangerous onward movement towards Türkiye and Europe and to support efforts to develop protection-sensitive border and return practices. As shown by the exemption categories established in Iran and the protection mechanisms proposed in **Pakistan**, resettlement and national protection measures are linked and earlier meaningful protection and solutions outcomes can remove the need for onward movements.

Along the **South and South-East Asia Route**, resettlement of Rohingya and other refugees originating from Myanmar from Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia mitigates the drivers of onward movement and offers safe alternatives to increasingly deadly maritime journeys. Data on Rohingya movements show that the absence of viable protection and solutions in first countries of asylum is fuelling record numbers of sea departures and deaths at sea. Visible and predictable resettlement opportunities — even at modest scale — are an important part of route-based programming, complementing efforts to improve reception, strengthen protection in border and coastal areas and address smuggling and trafficking along the routes. In **Indonesia**, for example, even limited resettlement opportunities, along with other third country solutions, are instrumental in maintaining access to territory and disembarkation for refugees arriving by sea, particularly Rohingya. Without visible prospects for third country

solutions, there is a real risk that boats in distress may no longer be allowed to disembark, with potentially fatal consequences.

A catalyst for complementary pathways and sustainable responses

Across the region, UNHCR situates resettlement within an expanding portfolio of third country solutions that provide durable or progressive solutions, including education and labour mobility pathways and family reunification, to support longer-term strategies for inclusion in national systems:

- In **Bangladesh**, the significant growth of complementary pathways since 2025, particularly scholarship programmes and labour mobility initiatives, is helping to diversify solutions for Rohingya while resettlement remains focused on those with acute protection needs.
- In **Malaysia**, complementary pathways are being expanded in parallel to resettlement, with a focus on advocacy for refugees' access to education and decent work as enabling criteria to qualify for skills-based pathways.
- In **Iran** and **Pakistan**, complementary pathways are integral to discussions with authorities and with resettlement States on multi-year, route-based approaches to Afghan solutions.
- In **India**, **Indonesia** and **Thailand**, UNHCR is using resettlement strategically to support advocacy for increased access to education, skills development and livelihoods, thereby enhancing refugees' eligibility for skills-based complementary pathways.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

The Asia-Pacific region is projected to have **603,600 refugees** in need of resettlement in 2027, a reduction from 806,700 in 2026. This decrease is driven primarily by the significant decline in the Afghan refugee population, following large-scale returns from **Iran** and **Pakistan** to **Afghanistan**, many occurring under adverse circumstances. A further contributing factor is the gradual expansion of self-reliance opportunities in some contexts, notably **Thailand**, where enhanced access to livelihoods and legal employment has allowed a limited number of refugees to meet their basic needs and reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance. Still, the overall level of projected resettlement needs in Asia and the Pacific remains among the highest globally.

Persistently high needs, despite reduced population figures in key operations, reflect the severity of protection risks, the deeply protracted nature of displacement, deteriorating conditions in several host countries and the limited alternative solutions. Eighty-nine per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region originate from Afghanistan or Myanmar, countries affected by prolonged conflict, instability and human rights concerns that continue to constrain

prospects for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. Structural barriers to legal status, self-reliance and access to decent work and basic services continue to expose refugees to heightened risks, harmful coping mechanisms and intergenerational impoverishment.

UNHCR assesses that approximately **186,900 refugees in Pakistan** face protection risks and vulnerabilities requiring a resettlement response, including those at imminent risk of refoulement, prolonged insecurity, severe discrimination or sustained deprivation of basic rights. Notwithstanding the declining refugee population — which results in a 13 per cent reduction in estimated needs compared to the previous year — approximately 75 per cent of the refugees in Pakistan with heightened risks of harm if returned require resettlement. Non Afghan refugees, including Yemeni, Somali and Myanmar nationals, face compounded challenges related to discrimination, restricted legal status, limited integration prospects and the absence of durable solutions.

In **Bangladesh**, UNHCR assesses that approximately **177,500 refugees** (around 15 per cent of the total refugee population) are in need of resettlement. Based on a strengthened methodology drawing on demographic data, vulnerability and protection profiling, specific needs assessments, participatory assessments and sectoral analysis, these estimates represent a significant increase compared to the previous cycle (125,500). Resettlement remains a critical protection response given the scale, severity and urgency of risks faced by the Rohingya refugee population.

Resettlement needs in Bangladesh are driven by deteriorating security conditions in the camps. Women and children comprise the majority of the refugee population and face heightened exposure to gender-based violence, trafficking, exploitation and harmful practices, amplified by declining humanitarian assistance. The presence of organized groups in and around the camps further contributes to serious threats including assaults, kidnappings, extortion and forced recruitment. With over half the population under 18 years and nearly 4,000 unaccompanied or separated children with heightened needs, resettlement may represent the only viable durable solution for those most at risk, offering immediate protection and a way forward to recovery, access to education and stability.

In **Iran**, UNHCR estimates that **approximately 165,000 refugees**, or around 10 per cent of the current refugee population at the end of 2025, will be in need of resettlement, the vast majority from Afghanistan and a small number of refugees from Iraq. This reflects a significant reduction from 348,900 in previous years, reflecting the sharp reduction in the refugee population following large-scale returns from Iran to Afghanistan in 2025 and additional returns triggered since the onset of the Middle East Situation in February 2026. Refugees in need of resettlement include women and girls at risk, particularly female-headed households and survivors of gender-based violence; children and adolescents at risk; refugees with serious legal and protection concerns, including LGBTIQ+ individuals; and survivors of violence and torture. The absence of a legal right to work leaves many refugee women and girls highly exposed to abuse, exploitation and harmful coping mechanisms, including remaining in abusive relationships or entering temporary arrangements for survival. Widows and divorced women without effective support face acute challenges in sustaining their households, while economic hardship has driven widespread child labour and school dropout, despite formal access to primary and secondary education. Children and adolescents are often engaged in hazardous work, exposing them to exploitation and harassment, while child survivors of sexual violence face heightened stigma. For LGBTIQ+ refugees, criminalization of same-sex relations and widespread social exclusion result in severe risks of marginalization, harassment and violence.

In **Malaysia**, UNHCR estimates that **approximately 35,400 refugees** are in need of resettlement, based on an analysis of specific needs recorded in UNHCR's database. This figure represents an increase of 41 per cent compared to 2026 estimations, reflecting a large scale registration exercise undertaken in 2025 that enabled more systematic identification of vulnerabilities across the registered refugee population. Priority profiles include refugees with heightened protection risks and specific needs, such as women and girls at risk, children and adolescents at risk, survivors of violence and torture and individuals facing serious legal and protection challenges. The population projected to be in need of resettlement is predominantly refugees from Myanmar, alongside smaller but significant numbers from Somalia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and other countries.

In **Thailand**, UNHCR estimates that **approximately 32,400 refugees** will be in need of resettlement. This reflects a significant decrease from previous projections (83,500) driven largely by progress in self-reliance and expanded access to legal employment opportunities for long-staying camp-based refugees, particularly those of working age. As a result, resettlement is increasingly prioritized for refugees facing acute protection risks or structural barriers that prevent sustainable self-reliance in an environment with reduced humanitarian aid. Priority profiles include camp-based Myanmar refugees with heightened protection needs, particularly women and girls at risk, children at risk, persons with disabilities, survivors of violence and/or torture and individuals facing persistent legal and physical protection concerns. Despite expanded self-reliance opportunities, these groups continue to face significant barriers to accessing livelihoods and achieving sustainable outcomes. Resettlement is also prioritized for Rohingya refugees, most of whom remain in immigration detention centres or social welfare shelters and have experienced serious human rights violations including arbitrary detention, extortion and ill-treatment. This population includes a disproportionate number of unaccompanied and separated children and young adults. In addition, urban refugees without legal status, including those at risk of transnational repression or refoulement linked to political opinions, refugees subject to prolonged detention, women and children at risk and those with urgent medical needs requiring intervention unavailable in Thailand, are assessed as having acute protection risks for which resettlement remains the most viable solution.

In **India**, UNHCR estimates that **4,100 refugees** are in need of resettlement. The projected needs reflect a vulnerability-based assessment across all nationalities drawing on protection information recorded through registration and case management processes. Refugees with resettlement needs include Rohingya and Chin refugees from Myanmar, Afghans, Yemenis, Somalis and refugees of other nationalities. UNHCR will prioritize refugees facing acute legal and physical protection risks, including individuals in prolonged administrative or immigration detention, those at risk of arrest for immigration related offences, and refugees facing deportation and refoulement, including individuals who have received "Leave India Notices". Other priority profiles include refugees facing immediate threats to their physical safety, victims of trafficking, and LGBTIQ+ refugees at heightened risk. Women and girls at risk, particularly survivors of gender-based violence or trafficking, or those exposed to other serious gender related protection risks will continue to be prioritized. Additional priority profiles include survivors of violence and torture, children and adolescents at risk, including those exposed to child marriage, child labour, abuse, exploitation, disability, gender-based violence, or prolonged or indefinite detention and refugees with serious medical conditions or disabilities whose needs cannot be adequately addressed in India.

In **Indonesia**, UNHCR estimates that **approximately 2,300 refugees** are in need of resettlement. In 2024-2025, UNHCR conducted a nationwide verification exercise, updating information on vulnerabilities and protection risks, including among refugees in remote

locations, thereby strengthening the evidence base for projections. Refugees in need of resettlement are primarily from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia and Sudan. UNHCR will prioritize refugees with specific and significant protection needs, including individuals with severe physical and mental health conditions. Priority profiles also include women and girls at risk, particularly those facing economic and security challenges with limited family or community protection); single parents with children facing risks due to family separation; and unaccompanied and separated children with limited access to national child protection systems and appropriate shelters. UNHCR will continue to prioritize LGBTIQ+ refugees facing marginalization and harassment, who remain unprotected under Indonesia's anti-discrimination law. Refugees in protracted situations will be considered for resettlement due to the heightened risks associated with prolonged displacement and the limited prospects for local integration. These include single men without family support, who are particularly vulnerable to deteriorating mental health and harmful coping mechanisms.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

Third country solutions for refugees in Asia and the Pacific declined sharply in 2025 compared to 2024, despite continuing needs in the region's host countries: **Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Iran and Pakistan**. In 2025 UNHCR **submitted over 14,200 refugees** for resettlement consideration, exceeding allocated targets but representing a 66 per cent decrease from 2024 when 42,125 refugees were submitted. UNHCR-assisted resettlement departures similarly declined to approximately **7,800 refugees**, a 57 per cent reduction compared to more than 18,300 in 2024. Despite these constraints, resettlement remained a critical tool to address acute protection needs and advance strategic objectives across the region.

Acute protection needs: Across the region, UNHCR continues to pursue resettlement as a critical protection measure for refugees facing heightened risk of refoulement and prolonged deprivation of liberty, while sustaining advocacy to expand access to detained populations and advance durable solutions. In 2025, UNHCR in India gained access to detained refugees and submitted an increased number of resettlement cases, resulting in a higher rate of release.

Advocacy for inclusive protection environments: Resettlement has also been strategically used in the region as a demonstration of international solidarity with major refugee hosting countries, helping to create space for more inclusive approaches. This contributed to **Thailand's** decision in August 2025 to allow camp-based refugees of working age to access legal employment, marking a significant milestone toward greater inclusion and self-reliance for a population that had lived in encampment and long-term dependence on humanitarian aid for decades. While structural barriers remain, including limitations on mobility and family unity, approximately 3,000 registered refugees have since accessed employment.

This progress has reinforced recognition that policies promoting refugee self-reliance not only improve protection outcomes but also lay the groundwork for expanded use of complementary pathways, particularly skills-based pathways, as part of a broader solutions strategy.

Regional solidarity on complementary pathways: In 2025, UNHCR recorded more than 4,380 departures to third countries on complementary pathways from the region, led by **Malaysia** with more than 1,000 departures, **Thailand** with more than 900 departures, and **India** with more than 800 departures. The majority of these were for private sponsorship, primarily to **Australia** and **Canada**, however the total also includes a growing number of refugees accessing expanded opportunities for skilled pathways for education and employment within Asia and the Pacific including to **Australia, Japan, the Philippines** and the **Republic of Korea**.

Australia's train-to-hire pilot initiated in 2025 is an innovative labour mobility pathway, funded by Australia and implemented jointly by IOM and UNHCR. The programme equips refugees in Malaysia with targeted skills aligned to Australian employment market needs, linking them directly with work opportunities. In parallel, the Refugee Student Support Pathway (RSSP), a pilot education pathway launched in 2025, has provided access to tertiary education and a permanent solution in Australia for 20 refugees in India, Thailand and Malaysia, with plans underway to expand the cohort in 2026.

Alongside implementing Asia's first resettlement programme continuously since its launch in 2010, **Japan** has emerged as a leading country in Asia on education pathways, admitting over 360 students and their family members since 2017. Japan has begun to explore labour mobility in light of increasing labour needs, with several refugees admitted in the information and communication technologies sector.

The Philippines has formally institutionalized a safe, regulated avenue for selected Rohingya refugees displaced in South-East Asia to reside in the Philippines for the purpose of pursuing higher education. It ensures that refugees' protection needs are addressed and their fundamental rights upheld, while strengthening skills, self-reliance and long-term prospects. By end 2025, 25 Rohingya refugees have been admitted to the Philippines under this programme.

The **Republic of Korea** recently established its first refugee education pathway in 2025, fulfilling a commitment made at the Global Refugee Forum and marking a significant evolution in the country's role in global responsibility-sharing.

PERSPECTIVES: THAILAND

Coming back to where it all began

“When a young person is truly believed in, their sense of what’s possible expands.”

Khin was born in a refugee camp in Mae Hong Son, Thailand, after her family fled the long-standing conflict in Myanmar. At the age of seven, she was resettled to the United States, leaving behind the community and surroundings that shaped her childhood. Many years later, she would return to the same camp, marking a full circle in her journey. This time, she would return not as a refugee, but as a young woman determined to give back to the community that shaped her earliest years of life.

Khin’s childhood unfolded amid the challenges that come with life at a refugee camp: constrained resources, limited opportunities and the prolonged uncertainty of displacement. Her parents had not had the opportunity to attend school, but they were determined that their children would.

Resettlement gave the family opportunity and hope for a better future. In her new home, Khin worked hard to learn English and often would help her parents with communication from a young age. Like many children from refugee backgrounds, she also grappled with the complexities of identity and belonging.

With persistence and the steadfast encouragement and support of her family, she excelled academically, ultimately earning a place at Harvard University, where she studied philosophy with a secondary degree in ethnicity, migration and human rights. For Khin, education was not only a personal milestone, but also a way to represent voices from her community that are often absent in such spaces.

After studying and working with refugee communities in the United States, she felt a strong connection to return to the Thai-Myanmar border to support the community and actively sought opportunities to do so.

Now 23, Khin has returned to Thailand, this time to help local communities, including the camp where she was born. Walking through the camp again, she recognized parts of her childhood: the layout of her former home, the place where her parents once sold food, and the memories tied to them.

She volunteers with a local organization, WEAVE (Women’s Education for Advancement and Empowerment), supporting programmes that expand access to education and livelihood opportunities for refugees. Alongside her work, she also teaches English online to refugee children. Drawing on her own experience, she supports others navigating similar challenges.

Her journey reflects the longer-term impact of resettlement. By providing safety and access to education, it enables refugees to rebuild their lives and contribute to communities, both in their new countries and beyond.

Looking ahead, Khin hopes to continue supporting her community beyond the field level including through policy-level and institutional change. “I want to be part of that support system and help create the conditions where young people in my community can grow and define their own paths,” she says.



Ethiopia. After surviving torture in Eritrea, Afari refugee man finds safety in a makeshift shelter in Aysaita camp.

© UNHCR/Sona Dadi

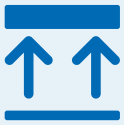
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

The **Regional Bureau for Eastern and Southern Africa** provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement and complementary pathways activities in the region. The Bureau provides coverage for the Republic of Burundi (**Burundi**), the Republic of Djibouti (**Djibouti**), the State of Eritrea (**Eritrea**), the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (**Ethiopia**), the Republic of Kenya (**Kenya**), the Republic of Rwanda (**Rwanda**), the Federal Republic of Somalia (**Somalia**), the Republic of South Sudan (**South Sudan**), the Republic of the Sudan (**Sudan**), the United Republic of Tanzania (**Tanzania**), the Republic of Uganda (**Uganda**), the Mozambique Multi-Country Office (**MCO**) [covering the Republic of Angola (**Angola**) and the Republic of Mozambique (**Mozambique**)], the South Africa MCO [covering the Republic of Botswana (**Botswana**), the Union of Comoros (**the Comoros**), the Kingdom of Eswatini (**Eswatini**), the Kingdom of Lesotho (**Lesotho**), the Republic of Madagascar (**Madagascar**), the Republic of Mauritius (**Mauritius**), the Republic of Namibia (**Namibia**), the Republic of Seychelles (**Seychelles**) and the Republic of South Africa (**South Africa**) and the Zambia MCO [covering the Republic of Zambia (**Zambia**), the Republic of Zimbabwe (**Zimbabwe**) and the Republic of Malawi (**Malawi**).

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS FOR THE REGION
840,600



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE
3.1%

HIGHEST RESETTLEMENT NEEDS



BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

Ethiopia
295,800

Uganda
198,800

Kenya
106,500

BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

South Sudan
282,400

DRC
160,900

Eritrea
138,800

- Displacement dynamics are shaped by a combination of protracted conflicts, new and escalating crises, political instability, climate shocks and structural socioeconomic vulnerabilities.
- The region is hosting more than 23.8 million forcibly displaced persons, including 6.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea.
- With a diverse refugee population, Ethiopia is projected to be the host country with the highest resettlement needs globally, while Uganda is the third overall.
- South Sudanese and Eritreans are the refugees with the highest needs in Ethiopia, while South Sudanese and Congolese have the highest needs in Uganda.
- Sudan is facing one of the most severe humanitarian and displacement crises in the world with movements of refugees into nearby countries in other regions, representing the third highest projected resettlement needs globally and the fifth in the region.
- In the region, resettlement is used for refugees with acute vulnerabilities, specific groups affected by severe risk as well as refugees in protracted displacement with limited prospects for self-reliance. It also reduces pressure on overstretched systems and contributes to easing competition over scarce resources.
- In 2025, the Bureau for Southern Africa was closed, and the Bureau for Eastern Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes was restructured into the Bureau for Eastern and Southern Africa. The region noted the highest number globally in departures.



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025
6,635



DEPARTURES IN 2025
10,296

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

As of February 2026, the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region is hosting more than **23.8 million** forcibly displaced persons, including **6.4 million** refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea, among several other communities. The region includes major refugee-hosting countries as well as several countries of origin, and displacement dynamics are shaped by a combination of protracted conflicts, new and escalating crises, political instability, climate shocks and structural socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Most hosting States in the region are parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. With the exception of the Indian Ocean Islands, all others have established national refugee legislation and/or dedicated government institutions to manage asylum and protection. However, gaps in implementation, reservations to key provisions and evolving policy shifts continue to shape and, in some cases, constrain asylum space. In several countries, restrictions on access to asylum procedures for certain nationalities, along with broader suspensions of refugee registration, have limited access to protection.

Even though there is progress towards inclusion and expanding freedom of movement in some of these countries, encampment policies remain a central feature of refugee management in parts of Eastern and Southern Africa, with varying restrictive practice by countries including **Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia** and **Sudan**. These policies often impose limitations on freedom of movement, access to livelihoods and opportunities for local integration. As a result, refugees are increasingly moving irregularly in search of economic opportunities or basic services and are thus exposed to additional protection risks, including exploitation, arrest and abuse.

Key Situations

Currently, **Sudan** is facing one of the most severe humanitarian and displacement crises in the world. The conflict, which erupted in April 2023 after an escalating political power struggle, has triggered the displacement of over 11.7 million people, including 7 million internally displaced persons making it the largest internal displacement crisis globally as of March 2026. Millions of refugees and asylum-seekers have crossed international borders, primarily to neighbouring countries including South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, as well as countries in West, Central and North Africa. The number of unaccompanied and separated children has increased by 119 per cent since the conflict began, with 19,700 such children noted as of January 2026.

Displacement from **South Sudan** also continues to drive refugee movements across the region. Between February and December 2025, more than 205,000 South Sudanese refugees sought safety in neighbouring countries, while a further 326,000 people were newly displaced within South Sudan. Of those crossing borders, an estimated 76,000 fled to **Sudan**, 50,000 to **Ethiopia** and 34,000 to **Uganda**. These movements contribute to more than 2.4 million South

Sudanese refugees living across Eastern Africa and in the DRC as of March 2026. Displaced populations face acute protection risks, including exposure to gender-based violence, family separation and severely limited access to basic services.

In the eastern **DRC**, despite high-level peace initiatives, insecurity intensified, particularly in South Kivu in late 2025. Heavy fighting and bombardment triggered new displacement, with hundreds of thousands of individuals recorded at entry points in **Burundi** between late 2025 and early 2026, including several thousand returning Burundian nationals. This influx contributes to an already substantial regional refugee population of more than 1.2 million displaced Congolese refugees, living in countries including **Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania** and **Zambia** as of March 2026. Current displacement trends indicate a worsening protection environment and growing humanitarian needs that will require urgent assistance.

Eastern Africa

As of 31 January 2026, **Ethiopia** was host to over 1.1 million refugees and asylum-seekers from **South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan**, the **DRC** and other countries. Children comprise 51 per cent of the refugee population with over 5 per cent of the group noted as unaccompanied and separated children. Refugees face multiple overlapping pressures, including conflict and insecurity, food insecurity and climate-related shocks like floods and drought. While improving with inclusion policies, livelihood opportunities remain limited, increasing the risk of secondary movement and exposing refugees, particularly youth, to exploitation by smuggling and trafficking networks.

Uganda hosts close to 2 million refugees and asylum-seekers as of March 2026, primarily from **South Sudan, the DRC, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia** and **Burundi**, making it one of the largest refugee-hosting countries globally. The country maintains a progressive refugee protection framework that grants access to land and national services, freedom of movement and the right to work. However, prolonged displacement and significant humanitarian funding gaps are placing increased strain on this system. Reduced assistance has led to cuts in food rations and overstretched services in WASH, health, education and protection sectors. Child protection caseworker ratios have risen to 1:155, far above the global standard of 1:25, while gender-based violence caseworkers manage an average of 120 cases per year, creating challenges in service delivery for UNHCR as well as implementing and operational partners.

In **Kenya**, the Government has maintained an open-door policy, granting access to asylum for over 52,000 individuals in 2025, while assuming full responsibility for registration, documentation and status determination with technical support and guidance from UNHCR. Still, an estimated 80-90 per cent of the working-age refugee population faces little or no access to livelihood opportunities, severely constraining their ability to achieve self-reliance and pursue integration. While the asylum backlog was reduced to less than 219,000 in 2025, the average waiting period will likely extend from 4.5 to 7 years. A strategy encompassing simplified procedures is being considered which will gradually address the backlog. Political and economic constraints, compounded by fluctuating donor support, pose uncertainties regarding long-term refugee inclusion. With a 65 per cent increase since 2020, the refugee population, principally from **South Sudan, Somalia** and the **DRC**, further strains national resources leaving many, particularly the most vulnerable, in a dire situation.

Southern Africa

Across the nine countries covered by **MCO South Africa (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and Seychelles)**, key systemic challenges include weaknesses in national asylum frameworks, protracted and backlogged procedures and limited access to livelihoods and essential services. These are compounded by recurring anti-migrant sentiment, increasingly politicized discourse and rising mixed and secondary movements. In **South Africa**, restricted access to asylum for many new arrivals, combined with an appeals backlog exceeding 120,000 cases continues to prolong legal uncertainty. While the Refugee Act of South Africa allows work and access to education, structural barriers remain which curtail the full exercise of these rights in practice. In **Namibia**, constrained freedom of movement, limited socioeconomic inclusion and the absence of naturalization pathways produce protracted vulnerability. In the Indian Ocean States, including **Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and Seychelles**, national asylum frameworks do not exist or are severely limited.

In **Zambia**, the adoption of a progressive National Refugee Policy in January 2024 aimed at strengthening inclusion and advancing legal reform, although some restrictions continue to hinder self-reliance and full socioeconomic inclusion. Continued reliance on assistance remains significant, particularly in Mantapala settlement. As of January 2026, rations have been reduced to 70 per cent of the standard food basket exacerbating food insecurity and economic vulnerability. In **Malawi**, Dzaleka Refugee Camp suffers from severe overcrowding, and funding shortfalls have also resulted in food rations being decreased. Restricted freedom of movement and limited livelihood opportunities exacerbate the situation.

Detention is frequently used in **Zimbabwe** in response to migration-related offences, including irregular entry, exiting the settlement and residing in urban areas without prior government authorization. On an exceptional basis, work and business permits are issued to qualified refugee professionals. However, high costs, extensive procedures and bureaucracy restrict most from obtaining these permits, limiting self-reliance.

Routes-based perspectives

As conditions in countries of asylum become more constrained due to reduced assistance, overstretched systems and policy restrictions, the region is experiencing **rising levels of onward movement**, contributing to major mixed migration routes, including the **Central Mediterranean, Eastern, Southern and Western Indian Ocean corridors**. These movements are shaped by intersecting drivers, including risks to life and freedom, exposure to violence and conflict, and limited access to livelihoods and basic services. The conflict in **Sudan** remains a significant trigger, with newly displaced populations continuing to seek protection both within and beyond the region. Human trafficking and smuggling networks remain a major concern affecting Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees who are travelling along irregular migration routes toward Libya and onward to Europe and are falling victim to debt bondage, torture and sexual exploitation.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

The Bureau promotes resettlement and complementary pathways as part of broader regional approach to protection and solutions, aligned within regional Refugee Response Plans and evolving displacement dynamics.

In 2026 and 2027, resettlement will remain a critical protection tool and durable solution in the region and will be used strategically for refugees facing the most acute protection needs, while also demonstrating international responsibility-sharing with host countries that continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of global displacement. In contexts where safe return is not possible and opportunities for local integration are limited, resettlement provides a vital pathway to safety and stability.

South Sudan. African Development Bank–funded projects transform refugee and host community lives. For Hawa Idriss Osman, a refugee from Sudan, and her friends Shama Osman and Madina Musa, traveling to their farms to harvest is now easier, thanks to the construction of a road linking refugee farmers to their farmlands which has greatly improved safety and mobility.

© UNHCR/Reason Moses Runyanga

The strategic use of resettlement

Resettlement serves both individual protection needs and broader system-level objectives. Refugees in the region are **identified based on acute vulnerabilities or patterns of risk affecting specific groups**, many of whom have spent years, or even decades, in protracted displacement with limited prospects for self-reliance. Resettlement reduces pressure on overstretched host country systems and contributes to easing competition over scarce resources, supporting social cohesion between refugee and host communities.



A key example of the strategic use of resettlement along mixed and onward movement routes is the **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)** in **Rwanda**, established through a tripartite agreement between the Government of Rwanda, the African Union and UNHCR. The ETM facilitates the evacuation from Libya of highly vulnerable refugees, where many have experienced severe human rights violations. In March 2026, over 400 individuals mainly from Sudan and Eritrea were housed in the ETM. The ETM provides a safe environment while durable solutions, including resettlement, are pursued. Sustained resettlement quotas and regular departures are essential to maintaining the effectiveness and credibility of this life-saving mechanism.

In the region, resettlement is also critical for refugees facing targeted persecution, including **LGBTIQ+** individuals, who in many contexts confront criminalization, entrenched discrimination, social exclusion, and violence. National protection mechanisms are at times difficult or unsafe for **LGBTIQ+** refugees to access. In this environment, resettlement provides both a life-saving solution for those at heightened risk and an important avenue for constructive engagement with host governments.

As the war enters its third year, 4.4 million refugees from **Sudan** remain displaced, placing pressure on already stretched asylum systems. Sudan continues to host several hundred thousand refugees from countries such as **South Sudan** and **Eritrea** who depend heavily on humanitarian assistance amid rapidly diminishing resources. With growing pressure on systems and barriers for other durable solutions, resettlement remains essential both for long-standing refugee populations and for those newly displaced by the conflict.

Across the region, resettlement is also strategically relevant along major mixed migration routes, including the **Central Mediterranean, Eastern, Southern and Western Indian Ocean corridors**. Refugees moving along these routes, and particularly unaccompanied children and other vulnerable groups, are exposed to heightened risks of exploitation, trafficking and abuse by smugglers. By offering safe, regular and predictable pathways, resettlement and complementary pathways reduce reliance on dangerous irregular movement and help disrupt smuggling and trafficking networks.

Comprehensive solutions strategies

In the Eastern and Southern Africa region, resettlement is pursued as part of **comprehensive solutions** strategies, that support safe and dignified voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, expand opportunities for local integration and alternative stay, and promote complementary pathways. For Burundian refugees in long-standing camps in **Tanzania** and other countries of asylum, resettlement is applied strategically for individuals with heightened protection risks who remain in need of international protection, while parallel engagement with governments advances voluntary returns and local integration.

For Somali refugees in the region, resettlement complements regional and national roadmaps for return and reintegration to **Somalia**.

In **Ethiopia**, resettlement is embedded within a broader strategic framework that links protection and solutions to national development priorities and international commitments. The approach promotes refugee inclusion, particularly through the **Makatet (Inclusion)** approach, across sectors such as climate action, human settlements and national systems. In this way, resettlement addresses acute vulnerabilities while reinforcing host government commitments, creating space for inclusion initiatives and the development of complementary pathways.

In **Kenya**, the **Shirika Plan**, launched on 28 March 2025, aims to transition refugee camps in Dadaab and Kakuma into integrated municipalities shifting from a humanitarian camp model to promoting self-reliance. Supported by development and innovative financing, the Plan aims to build resilience and economic growth, prioritizing inclusion and socioeconomic integration for refugees alongside the host communities. Under Pillar 6 on Durable Solutions, resettlement is reserved as a tool for refugees whose protection needs cannot be adequately addressed through in-country solutions.

In South Africa, resettlement forms part of a comprehensive solutions framework that includes voluntary repatriation, complementary pathways, while also expanding livelihoods and opportunities for self-reliance. However, resettlement remains essential for refugees who cannot access effective protection due to systemic challenges which expose individuals to risks such as detention and exploitation and for particularly vulnerable groups, including survivors of trafficking, gender-based violence and people with complex medical needs.

Engaging partners in protection and solutions

UNHCR has maintained **strong engagement with a broad range of partners** to advance efforts on human mobility and reinforce the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations within regional and national social protection and development frameworks. Such partners include States, UN Country Teams, the African Union and Regional Economic Communities, such as the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). These sustained efforts have contributed to notable strides in the inclusion of refugees within national systems. Across the region, progressive policies in countries such as **Uganda** (pioneering a settlement-based approach); **Djibouti** (developing frameworks to expand refugees' access to economic and social protection systems), **Rwanda** (advancing socioeconomic inclusion through strengthened national policies) and **Zambia** (advancing policies for long-term local integration) are expanding opportunities for refugee inclusion.

Continued international engagement is particularly important in light of escalating conflict in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and addressing regional instability. Countries such as **Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania** and **Uganda** continue to host large numbers of refugees while managing ongoing arrivals, underscoring the need for partnerships, responsibility-sharing as well as sustained resettlement opportunities alongside support to national asylum systems and inclusion efforts.

Shrinking humanitarian budgets across the region have significantly reduced operational capacity and limited UNHCR's ability to support host governments in responding to protection and assistance needs. In countries such as **Zimbabwe** and **Malawi**, covered by MCO Zambia, reduced funding and a diminished UNHCR field presence have further weakened the ability to work with governments and development partners to advance inclusion and local integration. UNHCR has undertaken structural adjustments to **preserve strategic engagement and technical support**, including the establishment of the MCO Zambia and the consolidation of the former East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes and Southern Africa Bureaux into a single Regional Bureau for Eastern and Southern Africa. These funding cuts also strain responsibility sharing arrangements and making it more difficult to sustain strong, solutions oriented partnerships.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

UNHCR estimates that **840,600** refugees located across nine countries and an additional two MCOs in the Eastern and Southern Africa region will need resettlement in 2027, compared to 701,600 refugees in 2026 (**659,400** in countries in the former EHAGL Region, and those formerly in the Southern Africa Region including **Malawi (10,000)**, **Zimbabwe (5,500)**, **Zambia (17,900)**, **Angola, Mozambique (100)** and **MCO South Africa (8,700)** [covering the Republic of Botswana (**Botswana**), the Union of the Comoros (**the Comoros**), the Kingdom of Eswatini (**Eswatini**), the Kingdom of Lesotho (**Lesotho**), the Republic of Madagascar (**Madagascar**), the Republic of Mauritius (**Mauritius**), the Republic of Namibia (**Namibia**), the Republic of Seychelles (**Seychelles**) and the Republic of South Africa (**South Africa**)]. The **overall 20 per cent increase** is driven by several factors: new and evolving conflicts; heightened risks of exploitation and violence along mixed migration routes during onward movement; restrictive policies in some countries that limit opportunities for self-reliance; and climate-related hazards

UNHCR projects that resettlement needs in **Ethiopia (295,800)** will rise significantly, driven by continued insecurity, conflict-related displacement and persistent protection risks. The rise in refugees needing resettlement in 2027 compared to 2026 is driven by a growing number of individuals with specific needs and those facing heightened protection risks. Recent geopolitical issues and ongoing insecurity linked to conflict, particularly in Amhara, Tigray and Gambella, have increased exposure to violence. At the same time, significant reductions in humanitarian assistance, including food rations and cash support, alongside diminished access to services due to a reduced UNHCR and partner presence, have further deepened vulnerabilities. The projection includes refugees affected by conflict, particularly in Amhara, Afar, Addis Ababa, Tigray and Benishangul Gumuz, where 77,600 refugees experienced severe physical and psychological trauma. Refugees in Alemwach (18,900) and Aftit (8,800) sites have faced prolonged isolation and limited humanitarian access due to insecurity and movement restrictions, with reports of kidnappings. Most refugees in Ethiopia remain in protracted displacement (69 per cent), originating mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen and the DRC, with prospects for safe return remaining limited. Women and girls face elevated protection risks, including 2,300 survivors of gender-based violence, while children and youth under 24 make up more than 44 per cent of the projected number, including 20,000 unaccompanied and separated children.

Resettlement needs in **Uganda** will rise to **198,800** people in 2027, driven by the continued influx of new arrivals, the presence of refugees facing serious protection risks and the protracted nature of displacement, alongside limited prospects for voluntary repatriation and growing socioeconomic vulnerability. These challenges are compounded by declining humanitarian assistance, disrupted access to education, barriers to self-reliance and constraints in accessing adequate medical care or specialized protection services. Priority groups include women and girls at risk, unaccompanied and separated children, persons with medical needs and survivors of violence and torture.

UNHCR predicts that resettlement needs in **Kenya** will increase to **106,500**. Of these, approximately 19,000 are women and girls at risk while another 22,000 are unaccompanied and separated children. Individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) face heightened protection risks and will be in need of solutions through resettlement. The protracted nature of displacement, often spanning decades, combined with limited prospects for safe and dignified return due to conditions in countries of origin, remains a key factor in driving overall resettlement needs.

In **Sudan**, population growth and the further deterioration of the protection environment have led to an increase in projected needs to **86,200** for 2027. Refugees hail mostly from South Sudan, where female-headed households represent 56 per cent of the total refugee population. This group faces heightened risks of sexual violence, domestic servitude and economic exploitation. Resettlement needs in Sudan remain significant for Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees, who lack documentation and face acute protection risks and limited durable solutions. With increasing irregular, onward movements, Eritreans and Ethiopians are vulnerable to arbitrary detention, trafficking and exploitation along the Central Mediterranean Route. In view of shrinking protection space and severe constraints on livelihoods for both groups, resettlement remains a critical intervention alongside complementary pathways.

Resettlement needs in **South Sudan** are projected to further increase to **47,600** in 2027, driven in part by the Sudan Situation and compounded by ongoing vulnerabilities among the refugee population, including survivors of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking and persons of diverse sexual orientations or gender identities. Persistent challenges, such as limited access to justice, inadequate livelihood opportunities, forced recruitment and child abductions, continue to heighten protection risks, reinforcing the importance of resettlement as a critical protection response.

UNHCR projects a small increase in resettlement needs in countries overseen by **MCO Zambia (Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi)** to **35,000**. In **Zambia**, continued arrivals from eastern DRC and limited expansion of local integration prospects, combined with encampment policies, have left many Congolese refugees in protracted situations for over three decades, with heightened risks for single- and female-headed households, including survival sex, teenage pregnancy, and trafficking. In **Malawi**, similar encampment policies have resulted in a large population of long-stayers with acute protection needs, including exposure to trafficking and the lasting effects of trauma and torture. In **Zimbabwe**, around half of the Congolese with resettlement needs are survivors of violence or torture, primarily from the Kivu provinces. While many demonstrate strong educational backgrounds and resilience, encampment policies continue to limit their access to sustainable livelihoods. Across all three countries, individuals of diverse SOGIESC face heightened protection risks due to the criminalization in countries of asylum.

UNHCR predicts a decrease in resettlement needs in **Tanzania (24,000)** in 2027. This projected reduction is largely due to solutions identified for refugees previously pending in the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) pipeline and protection exercises to update data. However, a significant portion of this number, approximately 15,000 individuals, consists of Congolese refugees whose circumstances remain highly vulnerable. The remaining population includes survivors of gender-based violence, female-headed households, children and adolescents at risk and refugees with serious medical conditions.

UNHCR projects a decrease in resettlement needs in **Rwanda (20,100)**. Rwanda continues to rely on resettlement as a key protection tool, complementing its open approach to hosting refugees and supporting the Government's capacity to receive new arrivals from the DRC and



Zambia. Tuyizere Jean Paul has always been a farmer. After fleeing from the DRC he has now rebuilt his life in Zambia through farming also thanks to the country's inclusive policies.

"I have been utilizing my skills to put food on the table and take care of my family," he says.

© UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

other countries of origin, while maintaining the ETM for evacuees from Libya. It is likely that the Sudanese evacuees will represent the largest percentage of evacuees in 2027. Needs are driven by ongoing instability in eastern DRC and focused on populations in protracted displacement.

In **Burundi**, resettlement needs will remain consistent, only slightly increasing to **19,900** in 2027 due to the fluid and prevailing political instability in eastern DRC where the majority of the refugees originate from. Persistent fuel shortages linked to unbalanced trade conditions, high levels of unemployment and poverty, land scarcity and restrictions on refugees' freedom of movement significantly undermine livelihood opportunities and overall well-being of refugees. As a result, refugees remain highly vulnerable to protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary detention and arrests.

In countries covered by **MCO South Africa (Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa)**, it is estimated that **6,500** refugees will be in need of resettlement in 2027. The most urgent cases include individuals at risk of refoulement, survivors of torture, trafficking and severe physical or sexual violence; including single female-headed households with no safe alternatives; unaccompanied and separated children; and persons with life-threatening medical conditions requiring specialist treatment unavailable locally. LGBTIQ+ refugees face targeted violence, extortion, harassment and entrenched discrimination, often with little access to effective protection or safe relocation options. More broadly, refugees have constrained livelihood opportunities, restricted freedom of movement and lack viable pathways to local integration.

In **Somalia**, where 200 refugees are estimated to be in need of resettlement, female refugees face heightened protection risks, including early and forced marriage, gender-based violence, exploitation and domestic abuse. Overall, refugees experience significant discrimination, particularly when it comes to accessing employment, freedom of movement and socioeconomic participation. Many lack adequate documentation, leaving them vulnerable to arbitrary detention. UNHCR will continue to rely on global unallocated quotas to address the most urgent and compelling protection needs.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

In 2025, UNHCR submitted **6,635** refugees from the Eastern and Southern Africa region to **13** resettlement countries, while managing a post-submission caseload of just under **145,000** refugees by the end of the year and ensuring cases remain updated as they wait for departures. During the same period, **10,296** refugees across the region departed via UNHCR-facilitated resettlement, marking an important achievement despite a complex operational environment.

At the same time, **challenges persisted**. As in previous years, the **withholding of exit permits** in some contexts created obstacles to timely departures and raised concerns regarding access to third country solutions. UNHCR, together with resettlement States, continued to engage national authorities and relevant regional and inter-governmental bodies to address these barriers. These efforts aim to facilitate departures while recognizing refugees' fundamental right under international law to leave a country.

This advocacy is significant given the **operational constraints** faced by many operations during the year, including critical staffing reductions, limited resources and competing priorities across complex protection environments. Despite these challenges, operations continued to prioritize solutions for refugees, adapting workflows, strengthening coordination with partners and governments and identifying practical ways to overcome operational obstacles. Teams worked to maintain the pace and quality of case identification, interviews and submissions, while **ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals remained at the center of the response**.

UNHCR found onward movement across borders or within the same country of asylum, detected through biometric information, during resettlement work. Strengthening procedural safeguards through effective use of registration and identity management systems has further enhanced resettlement programme integrity across the region.

In 2025, over 45 per cent of refugees submitted for resettlement by UNHCR from the region were Congolese. Thousands of refugees from Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan were also identified with compelling protection needs and prioritized for resettlement. Efforts at both the regional and country level continued to ensure equitable submissions based on need, without limitations on nationality, reinforcing UNHCR's commitment to protection-driven resettlement.

Complementary pathways have played an increasingly central role in expanding protection space and legal mobility across the Eastern and Southern Africa region, particularly amid constrained resettlement quotas and growing protection needs. In 2025, 23,599 individuals were supported by UNHCR and implementing partners to access complementary pathways. UNHCR recorded approximately 8,197 departures from the region as of December 2025, demonstrating the value of complementary pathways as scalable, responsibility-sharing mechanisms that operate alongside traditional resettlement while mitigating risks linked to irregular onward movement. Data on complementary pathways remain subject to limitations, as many refugees access education, labour mobility, sponsorship or family

based pathways independently through standard migration channels without UNHCR engagement, and movements facilitated outside UNHCR and partner systems are therefore not comprehensively captured.

Education pathways remained a cornerstone of complementary pathways, with 2,020 refugees supported by UNHCR and implementing partners and 273 students departing to higher education scholarship programmes within the region and overseas through university corridors in Germany, Canada, Italy, Mauritius and the United States and via established programmes, such as DAAD African Leadership Scholarship, WUSC's Program, UNICORE, the Duolingo University Access Program and the Kenya Scholar Access Program. **Labour mobility** continued to expand, with 20,733 candidates supported by UNHCR and its partners. Approximately 61 refugees departed on programmes such as Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot, facilitated by UNHCR partners including Talent Beyond Boundaries, TalentLift and Malengo.

Family reunification remained an impactful mobility channel, with about 3,010 departures across Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and the countries covered by MCO South Africa. However, prolonged processing times, restrictive national policies and travel document barriers, especially the absence of machine readable Convention Travel Documents (MRCTDs) in South Sudan and the suspension in issuance in Sudan, continued to delay departures and heighten exposure to harm.

Private sponsorship contributed to 4,797 departures and remained the region's largest documented complementary pathway, driven predominantly by Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees programme and complemented by Australia's humanitarian visa channels.

Across the region, access to **secure, recognized travel documents** for refugees remains a critical enabler to third country solutions and helps strengthen autonomous access. Nonetheless, progress toward MRCTDs remains uneven. **Ethiopia** made significant progress in 2025 towards issuance with an electronic MRCTD prototype in the development phase. Documentation gaps across the region undermine access and scaling of complementary pathways and highlight the urgent need for coordinated investment and engagement, particularly to reinforce national travel document issuance systems and improve practices around validity length and renewability from abroad.

PERSPECTIVES: TANZANIA

A long-awaited opportunity rekindles hope for Amuri and his family

For close to 30 years, Amuri Shaban, a Congolese father of four, had only experienced life in one place, Nyarugusu refugee camp in Western Tanzania. Amuri fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo with his parents and four siblings in 1995 to escape ongoing conflict. Arriving in the camp at the age of 19, he hoped that displacement would be just temporary. Instead, Nyarugusu became the backdrop of a big part of his adult life. Within the boundaries of the camp, Amuri grew from a young man into a father.

In 2025, at the age of 49, he was part of a group of Congolese refugees departing to Australia through resettlement. For most of them, the camp has been the only home they have known after being forced to flee. As they pack their few belongings and say goodbye to their friends and neighbours, leaving behind the dusty paths and makeshift shelters, their departure marks not just a physical relocation, but a profoundly emotional journey.

For Amuri, life in Nyarugusu was a long journey marked by endurance. The early years were filled with uncertainty, but life became extremely difficult after 2020. Services that once supported refugees were drastically reduced due to global budget cuts triggered by the COVID 19 pandemic and later an increasing number of humanitarian conflicts that strained funding. For people like Amuri, this meant fewer opportunities and a sense of life becoming smaller, more constrained.

Looking back, Amuri reflects on the dreams he and his friends had as teenagers: dreams of going back home to the DRC once peace had been restored or being resettled sooner so they could continue their studies and build the lives they had imagined. But in Nyarugusu camp, where higher education opportunities were absent, many of those aspirations felt out of reach. “There were no universities there,” he says, remembering how each passing year was making the hope of further education more distant than ever.



Amuri and his family in an IOM processing center while preparing to start their new life in Australia.

© UNHCR/Maimuna Halifa Mtengela

Amuri’s hopes for a better life outside of the camp felt shattered when he was informed in early 2025 that several countries had been reducing their resettlement opportunities, but then in March, he received long-awaited news: his family had been accepted for resettlement to Australia. “I never thought I would go to Australia as opportunities were limited,” he says. “However, throughout my life, I have been interested in Australia and have been following news about the country.” Now, as he transits to his new home, he carries both the weight of the years in displacement and the hope that a new beginning will allow him to pursue the future he once feared he had lost.

In Australia, Amuri’s priority is learning English to be able to easily interact with his new community. Above all, he wants his children to study and build a better future. “To all the resettlement countries that have open doors to refugees like me,” Amuri adds, “I want them to know that refugees are not a burden. We can work and contribute to the development of the country. I am confident that, together with my family, we will live peacefully in Australia.”

In November 2025, Australia granted its one millionth refugee visa since the commencement of its post-war resettlement programme in 1947, highlighting Australia’s humanitarian commitment. Like many refugees before them, Amuri and his family now look forward to finding a new home in Australia, contributing to their new community and building a better future.



Ireland. Emmanuel Tacima Samuel, resettled to Ireland as a young teenager is now a community Garda

© UNHCR/Aoife Harte

EUROPE

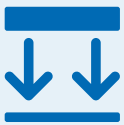
The Regional Bureau for Europe provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement and complementary pathways activities in the region. The coverage of the Bureau includes the Republic of Armenia (**Armenia**), the Republic of Austria (**Austria**), the Multi-Country Office in Belgium [covering the Kingdom of Belgium (**Belgium**), the Republic of Ireland (**Ireland**), the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (**Luxembourg**), the Kingdom of the Netherlands (**Netherlands**), the Portuguese Republic (**Portugal**)], the Republic of Bulgaria (**Bulgaria**), the French Republic (**France**) [covering the Principality of Monaco (**Monaco**)], Georgia, the Federal Republic of Germany (**Germany**), the Hellenic Republic (**Greece**), the Multi-Country Office in Hungary [covering the Republic of Albania (**Albania**), **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Republic of Croatia (**Croatia**), **Hungary**, **Kosovo**, **Montenegro**, the Republic of North Macedonia (**North Macedonia**), the Republic of Serbia (**Serbia**), the Republic of Slovenia (**Slovenia**)], the Multi-Country Office in Italy [covering the Republic of Cyprus (**Cyprus**), the Republic of Italy (**Italy**), the Republic of Malta (**Malta**), the Republic of San Marino (**San Marino**), the Holy See], **the Republic of Moldova**, the Multi-Country Office in Poland [covering the Czech Republic (**Czechia**), the Republic of Poland (**Poland**), the Slovak Republic (**Slovakia**)], **Romania**, the Multi-Country Office in **the Russian Federation** [covering the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus (**Belarus**)], the Kingdom of Spain (**Spain**) [covering the Principality of Andorra (**Andorra**)], the Swiss Confederation (**Switzerland**) [covering the Principality of Liechtenstein (**Liechtenstein**)], the Multi-Country Office in Sweden [covering the Kingdom of Denmark (**Denmark**), the Republic of Estonia (**Estonia**), the Republic of Finland (**Finland**), the Republic of Iceland (**Iceland**), the Republic of Latvia (**Latvia**), the Republic of Lithuania (**Lithuania**), the Kingdom of Norway (**Norway**), the Kingdom of Sweden (**Sweden**)], the Republic of Türkiye (**Türkiye**), **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, and **Ukraine**.

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS
FOR THE REGION

216,200
(TÜRKIYE)



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

-16%

HIGHEST RESETTLEMENT
NEEDS BY COUNTRY
OF ASYLUM



Syria

204,000

Iraq

5,700

Afghanistan

5,000



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

3,623



DEPARTURES IN 2025

3,773

- In January 2026, the European Commission presented the first [European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy](#), setting out the European Union's objectives on asylum and migration for the next five years.
- **Türkiye** hosts over 2.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers, including 2.3 million Syrians under temporary protection and 166,000 people from **Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran** and other countries under international protection.
- While the overall population in Türkiye has declined primarily due to the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 600,000 refugees to Syria, resettlement remains a key instrument of international responsibility-sharing. It also provides an important incentive for the continued efforts of the Turkish authorities in registering and assessing international protection claims.
- The Türkiye operation significantly increased the share of high-vulnerability cases: in 2025, 381 LGBTIQ+ refugees and 323 female-headed households were submitted, which was more than double the equivalent figures in 2024.
- Following the entry into force of the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation (URF) in May 2024, the EU has started its implementation and adopted in December 2025 the first [Union Plan](#) announcing Member States' commitments and number of places available for resettlement and humanitarian admissions for 2026-2027. To date, nine countries have joined the Plan, collectively pledging over 10,400 places.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

The regional protection environment in Europe continues to be characterized by heightened political and operational complexity. The protracted international armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine continues to have far-reaching geopolitical and protection implications, while intensified political debates on migration and asylum are driving significant shifts in policy frameworks and responsibility-sharing arrangements across the region. These dynamics are unfolding against a backdrop of heightened public scrutiny and competing national priorities, increasing pressure on States to reconcile protection commitments with domestic political considerations.

Four years since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of **Ukraine**, humanitarian and protection needs remain acute both inside Ukraine and among Ukrainian refugees across Europe. In 2025, intensified hostilities, increased aerial attacks and strikes on critical infrastructure caused significant civilian casualties and new displacement. These dynamics are expected to continue shaping humanitarian and protection needs both inside and outside Ukraine in 2026. The war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year, continues to drive large-scale displacement with over 3.7 million internally displaced and over 5.9 million refugees recorded globally. The overwhelming majority (5.4 million) are hosted in Europe.

Despite sustained solidarity from European States, some host countries are facing challenges in providing the necessary support and resources. The application of the [Temporary Protection Directive](#), which has been in force in the European Union (EU) since the beginning of the war, is under discussion as countries consider next phase arrangements and potential alternative protection frameworks. Meanwhile, within **Ukraine**, humanitarian needs remain severe, with an estimated 10.8 million people requiring assistance.

The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 has prompted a **notable increase in voluntary returns** with over 1.5 million individuals having returned to Syria by early 2026, including an estimated 600,000 refugees having returned from **Türkiye**. UNHCR continues to coordinate regional efforts to ensure returns are voluntary, safe and based on informed decision-making for those considering repatriation.

Based on [official statistics](#), by mid-2025 a total of 18.7 million forcibly displaced people was recorded in Europe, including 11.8 million refugees (32 per cent of refugees recorded worldwide), 1.5 million asylum-seekers (17 per cent of asylum-seekers recorded worldwide) and 5.4 million internally displaced persons (8 per cent of internally displaced persons recorded worldwide).

According to [EUROSTAT](#), EU+ countries which includes the 27 EU countries plus **Norway** and **Switzerland** received 697,000 first-time asylum applications during 2025, a 26 per cent decrease compared to 2024. This drop in new asylum applications was primarily driven by a significant reduction in claims from Syrians (73 per cent lower) but also due to decreases from other top countries of origin such as **Colombia** (58 per cent), **Türkiye** (48 per cent) and **Afghanistan** (11 per cent). **Germany**, formerly the top destination, experienced a 51 per cent

drop in new applications and lost its position to **Italy**, who only registered a 16 per cent drop in new applications. Among total new asylum claims, the top three countries of origin were **Venezuela** (13 per cent), **Afghanistan** (10 per cent) and **Syria** (6 per cent). Beyond the EU+, asylum applications in the **United Kingdom** reached 100,600 during 2025, a 4 per cent decrease compared to 2024.

The implementation of the [EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) (“the Pact”) is due to take full effect in June 2026 and will introduce significant changes to the European asylum system. UNHCR has been actively engaging with EU institutions and Member States to support the establishment of mechanisms for identification of vulnerable individuals, the inclusion of safeguards in the new border procedures and the strengthening of independent monitoring mechanisms, while also advocating for the minimal use of detention.

Spain. After spending fourteen years in Lebanon, Raed and Noura, found safety in Calella, a small town near Barcelona, thanks to resettlement. With support from local authorities and NGOs, they are now integrating into the community, learning the language, and working toward long-term stability while focusing on creating a peaceful and promising future for their daughters.

© UNHCR/Ébano Stories

Following the entry into force of the **Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation** (URF) in May 2024, the EU has started its implementation and adopted in December 2025 the first [Union Plan](#) announcing Member States’ commitments and number of places available for resettlement and humanitarian admissions for 2026-2027. To date, nine countries have joined the Plan, collectively pledging over 10,400 places. The URF establishes a common approach to resettlement and humanitarian admissions, strengthening safe and legal pathways to protection in the EU. It underscores the role of resettlement and humanitarian admissions in advancing solidarity with countries hosting large numbers of refugees and in laying the foundation for a strategic, predictable and sustainable resettlement system within the EU.



Addressing mixed movements remains a priority, as serious and persistent protection risks, such as expulsions, pushbacks and deaths at sea, continue to be reported. The comprehensive “whole-of-route” approach proposed by the EU and aligned with UNHCR’s **route-based approach** encompassing countries of origin, transit, and destination is essential to effectively address the challenges posed by mixed and onward movements. Expanding access to safe and regular pathways, including resettlement and labour migration, is a key component in addressing the root causes of irregular movements and providing viable alternatives to dangerous journeys.

On 29 January 2026, the European Commission presented the first **European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy**, setting out the European Union’s objectives on asylum and migration for the next five years. The Strategy identifies three overarching objectives: preventing irregular migration and disrupting smuggling networks; protecting people fleeing conflict and persecution while preventing abuse of the asylum system; and attracting talent to support the EU economy. It also outlines a set of priorities to guide EU action in the coming years. The Strategy **reiterates the need for a comprehensive approach to migration and asylum**, requiring States to engage in the external dimension of the Pact as a complement to its internal dimension. It underlines the importance of enhancing partnerships with third countries and the need to facilitate access to legal pathways as key components of this comprehensive approach.

Türkiye

Türkiye hosts over 2.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers, including 2.3 million Syrians under temporary protection and 166,000 people from **Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran** and other countries under international protection. The overall population has declined over the past year primarily due to voluntary repatriation of an estimated 600,000 refugees to **Syria**. Nonetheless, Türkiye continues to host one of the world’s largest refugee populations, and conditions in countries of origin do not permit many refugees, including some categories of Syrians, to safely return.

In 2025, the situation of Syrian refugees in Türkiye reached a pivotal moment, shaped by political transitions in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime, shifting regional dynamics and intensified efforts to support voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns while upholding protection for those who remain. Türkiye reaffirmed its commitment to facilitate voluntary returns, including through “go-and-see” visits between January and July 2025 that allowed Syrians to travel temporarily to Syria, assess conditions first-hand and make informed decisions about return while retaining their legal status in Türkiye. **While voluntary repatriation activities are ongoing, Türkiye continues to provide temporary protection to Syrians, many of whom have heightened vulnerabilities and specific protection profiles meaning they are unlikely to be able to return safely in the short to medium term.**

Since September 2018, asylum-seekers of other nationalities undergo the national refugee status determination procedure conducted by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), without UNHCR’s direct engagement in the processes. Owing to Türkiye’s geographical limitation under the 1951 Refugee Convention, applicants who fled due to events outside Europe are granted “conditional” refugee status, allowing lawful stay while awaiting resettlement. This framework restricts prospects for local integration, even though access to services and employment is foreseen in national legislation.

Persistent economic pressures in Türkiye have deepened hardship for both refugees and host communities. Access to public services has become more constrained, as well as limited referral pathways and increased costs in comparison with previous years that delay care for people with chronic illnesses or disabilities, children and survivors of gender-based violence. As vulnerabilities increase, a growing number of households are resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, including child labour, early marriage, mounting debt, irregular onward movement and, for some Syrians, premature and potentially unsafe return decisions.

For those who continue to seek protection in Türkiye, stronger inclusion, predictable access to rights and services, and viable pathways to durable solutions are essential. These include safe and voluntary return, resettlement and complementary pathways and meaningful opportunities to rebuild their lives where they are.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

Türkiye's refugee response is led by the government under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) which since 2014 regulates asylum procedures and sets out the rights and obligations of people seeking international protection. Guided by a **policy of inclusion and harmonization between refugees and host communities**, which is best exemplified by refugee children's and youth's access to public schooling, including universities, as well as access to services, justice and labour opportunities, the authorities work with UNHCR on registration, asylum procedures and service delivery at national and local levels. Nonetheless, the size of the refugee population, its wide geographic spread and uneven local capacities across 81 provinces, as well as limited funding, continue to strain systems and limit timely access to protection and services.

Since 2011, **resettlement has been critical to help preserve asylum space in Türkiye and contribute to responsibility-sharing by easing pressure on national systems.** However, recent funding cuts have severely affected protection and resettlement activities implemented by UNHCR and its partners. In 2025, reduced resources led to significant staffing losses across government institutions, NGOs and UNHCR, thereby limiting the capacity to provide timely and adequate support to refugees. The discontinuation of UNHCR's cash assistance programmes as of May 2025 — a core protection instrument benefiting more than 2,600 particularly vulnerable refugees at the time of its discontinuation — has further exacerbated vulnerabilities. This discontinuation has directly affected housing security and access to health care, driving already vulnerable households into acute hardship and further exposing them to harmful coping mechanisms, irregular onward movement and risk of premature return. In this context, resettlement for the most at-risk individuals has become even more urgent.

While a significant number of Syrians have voluntarily returned, serious protection risks remain for many Syrians. These include people targeted by non-State armed groups, ethnic and

religious minorities, individuals with specific legal or physical protection needs and women and children at heightened risk. Returns to **Syria** are therefore taking place against a fragile and fluid context that requires a careful and balanced approach. While the international community should support those who voluntarily choose to re-establish their lives in Syria, it is equally important to maintain confidence among host countries and refugees through continued engagement and sustained support, as well as through the provision of resettlement or other solutions for the most vulnerable and/or with high protection needs among those at greater risk for whom return is not viable. **Maintaining this balanced, comprehensive approach to solutions is essential to help prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria and to preserve protection space in host countries.** UNHCR will continue to monitor developments and adjust its assessment of solutions accordingly.

Resettlement remains a key instrument of international responsibility-sharing and provides an important incentive for the continued efforts of the Turkish authorities in registering and assessing international protection claims. UNHCR is working to expand and diversify resettlement opportunities by increasing both the number of resettlement countries and overall quotas, while also promoting complementary pathways so that more refugees can access safety and stability when traditional resettlement places are limited. Upholding and scaling up resettlement and complementary pathways is not only a humanitarian imperative; it is also key to sustaining asylum space in **Türkiye** and ensuring that the most vulnerable refugees are not left without viable protection solutions.

Many refugees and migrants continue to move onwards from **Türkiye** towards **Greece**, **Bulgaria** and beyond in search of safety and better living conditions. While the number of Syrians attempting to reach Europe has decreased following recent developments in **Syria**, Afghans, including many unaccompanied children, continue to be among those on the move. Increasingly, individuals undertaking **irregular onward movements** include persons registered under temporary or international protection in **Türkiye**, suggesting growing pressure on the protection environment and heightened vulnerabilities among affected populations.

Resettlement is therefore essential to secure durable solutions and help preserve asylum and protection space in **Türkiye**, and to share responsibility by easing pressure on the country's infrastructure and services. Alongside resettlement, UNHCR urges States to expand complementary pathways so that refugees in Türkiye can access safe and regular routes to durable solutions, reducing the risks linked to irregular onward movement to Europe. These pathways include (nuclear and extended) family reunification, as well as opportunities for work and education, such as those that resulted in several students travelling from Türkiye to France, Japan and Slovenia through scholarships in 2025.

Resettlement and complementary pathways are essential pillars of a credible route-based approach, including in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the context of the Budapest Process. They deliver tangible solutions along the route, can reduce irregular movements and enable the safe and orderly management of populations awaiting durable solutions.

Scaling up and supporting access to these pathways is as critical as sustained financial support. **Without predictable resettlement places and complementary pathways opportunities** and the necessary resources to maintain processing and specialized capacity in Türkiye, which hosts over 2.5 million of refugees, **efforts to manage movements and advance solutions will remain constrained.** Investing in both access to safe and regular pathways and in the systems that deliver them is therefore both a protection imperative and a strategic necessity.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

UNHCR estimates that in 2027, **216,200 refugees in Türkiye will need resettlement**, which is a reduction from 2026 and takes into consideration the reduced overall refugee population but also their specific needs and vulnerabilities. Afghans, Iranians, Syrians and Iraqis with diverse protection profiles will continue to require resettlement.

While developments in **Syria** since December 2024 prompted many refugees to return, many of the most vulnerable and those with heightened protection needs are unlikely to do so due to the risks they may face upon return. At the same time, the protection environment in Türkiye remains under considerable pressure alongside declining levels of financial assistance, which continue to affect refugees' prospects. In this context, there is a need to increase resettlement opportunities, including **higher quotas, more flexible criteria and faster processing and departures** for refugees at heightened risk.

Refugees in need of resettlement include:

- **Women and girls at risk:** Often single heads of household who have survived sexual violence in their country of origin, during transit or in Türkiye. With the loss of cash assistance, some feel compelled to return to abusive partners only to secure housing and schooling for their children, exposing them to further harm. 32 per cent of resettlement submissions from Türkiye in 2025 were women and girls at risk, compared to 14 per cent in 2024, indicating increased prioritization of refugees of this profile in a situation of reduced resettlement opportunities.
- **Children and adolescents at risk:** Many are out of school, working in dangerous jobs or at risk of early marriage as families struggle with deepening socioeconomic hardship driven by high inflation and a severe housing crisis. 49 per cent of resettlement submissions from Türkiye in 2025 were children, compared to 42 per cent in 2024.
- **Refugees with legal and physical protection needs:** Individuals and families facing direct threats or serious protection risks, including on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. They face major barriers to accessing work and, as support declines, are increasingly pushed into harmful coping mechanisms that heighten exposure to violence, exploitation and ill health. Nearly 400 refugees were resettled from Türkiye in 2025 on account of heightened protection risks due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Being highly vulnerable today does not mean these refugees cannot thrive tomorrow. In a protective resettlement context, once immediate protection risks and socioeconomic pressures are addressed, many refugees have strong potential to rebuild their lives and contribute to their new communities.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

Overall, Europe continued to demonstrate commitments to third country solutions with 16 States engaged in resettlement in 2025. Still, the offered resettlement places have significantly decreased by 62 per cent although major crises causing large population displacements in several regions have prompted calls for greater solidarity. Additionally, reduced funding has exacerbated the vulnerability and precarity of forcibly displaced people in most regions and impacted on the operational capacity of UNHCR, NGOs and partners to respond and assist.

Countries in Europe have faced challenges with limited reception capacity due to multiple crises, including in Ukraine and Afghanistan, straining support for third country solutions. In 2025, the total number of resettlement submissions to Europe amounted to **6,798 persons**, including 5,963 to EU Member States. In terms of departures, **9,789 refugees** were resettled to 16 European countries, including 8,182 to 12 EU Member States

The **EU Pact on Migration and Asylum** stresses the importance to facilitate legal pathways for refugees. In particular, the 2024 Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Regulation reiterates the need for EU member States to act in solidarity with countries hosting large numbers of refugees. It emphasizes the importance of the Projected Global Resettlement Needs as a primary reference for States' resettlement priorities. It also underlines the importance of enhanced collaboration among actors, recognizing UNHCR's crucial role in the process, as well as other actors such as the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA).

Despite advocacy from UNHCR and key resettlement actors in 2025, the number of places offered under the EU's **Union Plan** for 2026-2027 decreased with nine EU countries offering just over 10,400 places (8,300 resettlement and 2,100 humanitarian admission places). Some countries in the EU have opted not to join the Union plan and for maintaining national programmes instead, providing quotas alongside the EU's Union Plan.

The European Commission has maintained its continued financial support to the **Emergency Transit Mechanism** (ETM) established in Rwanda. This remains an essential mechanism to facilitate the evacuation of the most vulnerable refugees in Libya to the ETM, bringing refugees to safety and allowing for care and assistance, pending their resettlement to a third country. UNHCR acknowledges the support provided and calls on more European States to make use of this important mechanism and offer resettlement places for evacuated refugees.

A growing number of European States, as well as civil society organizations, higher education institutions, and employers, are facilitating refugees' access to **skills-based mobility opportunities** to Europe. Several countries now operate dedicated education pathways programmes, and many universities across Europe offer refugee specific or refugee accessible scholarships; this year UNHCR Italy's UNICORE programme has reached 300 refugee students welcomes in Italian universities since 2019. In parallel, interest in labour mobility is increasing; countries including **Italy, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, France** and **Slovakia** have established dedicated multi-actor coordination mechanisms to support

refugee-specific labour pathways or facilitate refugees' access to existing schemes. While arrivals through these pathways remain modest, the systems being put in place are expected to enable larger-scale participation over time.

With a significant number of refugees in need of resettlement globally, and recent developments including reduction in humanitarian funding and resettlement quotas, it is of paramount importance for European States to continue engaging and increase their contribution to help achieve the agreed global target in Roadmap 2030 of resettling 130,000 persons in 2027.

Türkiye

In 2025, **only 3,623 refugees in Türkiye were submitted for resettlement and 3,772 departed**, a steep drop from 2024 (14,320 submissions and 10,756 departures) and a reflection of shrinking global resettlement quotas. This sharp contraction has further curtailed one of the few available tools to address escalating protection risks for vulnerable refugees in Türkiye.

In this constrained environment, UNHCR has had to prioritize even more strictly to ensure that the most at-risk refugees are considered for resettlement. Despite reduced places, the Türkiye operation significantly increased the share of high-vulnerability cases: in 2025, 381 LGBTIQ+ refugees and 323 female-headed households were submitted, which was more than double the equivalent figures in 2024.

At the same time, **funding shortfalls** have eroded the broader protection environment. With reduced resources available to UNHCR and national counterparts, services inside Türkiye are becoming more constrained as most of the limited funding available is earmarked to support voluntary repatriation. As a result, many of the most vulnerable refugees cannot secure safe accommodation, face serious barriers to legal assistance and are pushed into harmful coping mechanisms. Resettlement is therefore more urgent than ever, yet prolonged delays between acceptance and departure, linked in part to housing shortages in resettlement countries, further heighten protection risks.

In parallel, UNHCR expanded efforts in 2025 to open **education pathway opportunities** beyond what was possible in 2024, engaging three new countries and universities to secure new scholarship places for refugee students in Türkiye. This progress came at a critical moment, as severe funding gaps forced drastic cuts to local education grants and scholarship support. These international education pathways now provide continued access to higher education and a vital route to longer-term stability and self-reliance.

PERSPECTIVES: TÜRKIYE

A young girl's dream finds its place

Zehra's resettlement journey marked an important milestone: she was the 100,000th refugee resettled from Türkiye, 10 years after the EU–Türkiye deal began. But her story goes far beyond a number.

Zehra is a 7-year-old girl with a bright spirit and a dream that is bigger than anything she and her family have been through. She loves watching gymnastics videos on YouTube—the kind where athletes flip through the air like they're flying. She watches them again and again, completely hypnotized. And every time, she says the same thing to her mother: "When I go to Ireland, I will become a gymnast." Zehra walks with a prosthetic foot, but she moves forward with confidence. Through resettlement, she and her family have now begun a new chapter in Ireland, one that feels safe and full of possibility.

The family is Shia and Hazara, a religious and ethnic minority in Afghanistan, and they could never take safety for granted under Taliban rule. When they sought safety in Türkiye, they also faced significant challenges: Zehra's father worked in a bakery for long hours for low wages, and the family relied on support from local NGOs to cover basic needs.

Today, the uncertainty of the past has been replaced by the stability of a new home in Ireland. Munire, Zehra's mother, feels that impact every morning. She describes a "strange" but wonderful feeling of waking up with excitement for the day ahead. She felt the difference from the moment they arrived: "It felt so good that someone had already thought of our arrival and our needs before we even came to Ireland. I felt respected and valued."

Currently staying in a reception center in a room with a view of the sea, the family is busy getting to know their new community. "People here are so nice," Munire adds. "When we go out for a walk, people we don't know say 'hello' to us. They make us feel like we are no different from them, as if we have lived our whole lives here."

Munire and her husband are ready to begin again. They are attending language classes and practicing English in the evenings, taking steps towards independence. The children have also adapted very quickly. Zehra is now in the first grade and her younger sister Zeynep is in kindergarten. For Zehra, school is a place of pure joy; she is so excited on school days that she practically runs to the school bus every morning.

Munire's main hope is for her daughters. In Ireland, she hopes her daughters will grow up with choices, confidence and a real chance to become whoever they want to be. Zehra already knows exactly what she wants to be: a gymnast. Munire is planning to support Zehra in finding a gym, finding a coach and finding a way to make her daughter's dream possible. It is a kind of motherhood that Munire did not witness growing up. A kind of childhood Zehra has never had. Her husband feels the same. "We should support our daughters fully," he says. "They deserve a better future than we had."

Zehra's family story is a clear example of what resettlement can achieve. Resettlement does not just move people from one country to another; it gives children the chance to dream and parents the chance to hope again. Beyond its protection benefits, resettlement is about dreams, hope, and the freedom to finally say: "I am home."



Jordan. A Syrian refugee girl in Azraq Camp leads training sessions to raise awareness among girls about online crimes.

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MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

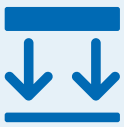
The Regional Bureau for the **Middle East and North Africa** provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement and complementary pathways activities in the region. The coverage of the Bureau includes the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria (**Algeria**), the Arab Republic of Egypt (**Egypt**), the Republic of Iraq (**Iraq**), the Gulf Cooperation Council Multi-Country Office [covering the Kingdom of Bahrain (**Bahrain**), the State of Kuwait (**Kuwait**), the Sultanate of Oman (**Oman**), the State of Qatar (**Qatar**), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (**Saudi Arabia**) and **the United Arab Emirates**], the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (**Jordan**), the Lebanese Republic (**Lebanon**), the State of Libya (**Libya**), the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (**Mauritania**), the Kingdom of Morocco (**Morocco**), other operations in MENA Multi-Country Office [covering the State of Israel (**Israel**), Syrian Arab Republic (**Syria**), the Republic of Tunisia (**Tunisia**) and the Republic of Yemen (**Yemen**)]. The MENA Bureau also maintains functional oversight of the Republic of Türkiye (**Türkiye**) operation for the Iraq and Syria regional responses.

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS
FOR THE REGION

237,700



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

-26%

HIGHEST
RESETTLEMENT
NEEDS



BY COUNTRY
OF ASYLUM

Egypt

105,000

Lebanon

62,200

Jordan

26,200

BY COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN

Sudan

90,100

Syria

79,300

Eritrea

21,100



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

7,356



DEPARTURES IN 2025

8,915

- In the absence of national asylum frameworks across the region, refugees with irregular legal status continue to face risk of arrest, detention, refoulement or other threats to their legal and physical safety.
- Armed conflict, government fragility, inflation and economic decline are deepening the vulnerability of forcibly displaced and stateless people while intensifying conflict and insecurity at the outset of 2026 across parts of the Middle East and Southwest Asia, are placing additional strain with significant population movements already taking place.
- For Syrians, projected resettlement needs have decreased by 60 per cent, largely due to the possibility of voluntary returns and the refinement of parameters around the use of resettlement. Still, UNHCR continues to advocate for a balanced approach to the continued use of third country solutions for Syrians.
- Estimated resettlement needs for Sudanese refugees have increased by just over 25 per cent, driven primarily by the scale and intensity of displacement into Egypt and Libya following the escalation of the conflict in Sudan.
- Throughout the region, resettlement helps provide a solution for those with heightened risk, mitigates dangerous onward journeys, strengthens international responsibility-sharing and supports advocacy for more protection-sensitive policies, including preventing refoulement.
- Although numbers declined, the region noted the second highest number of both resettlement submissions and departures globally in 2025.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

The MENA region faces overlapping political, security and socioeconomic pressures that shape humanitarian needs and constrain the operating environment. Armed conflict, governance fragility, inflation and economic decline are deepening the vulnerability of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

Intensifying conflict and insecurity at the outset of 2026 across parts of Southwest Asia and the Middle East are placing additional strain in countries already hosting some of the world's largest forcibly displaced populations. Significant population movements are already happening in several countries across the Middle East and beyond, including localized and cross-border movements.

These dynamics contribute to an overall deterioration of the protection environment and create substantial challenges for UNHCR and partners in reaching people in need.

The Syria Situation Countries

The political transition in Syria following the fall of the former government has reshaped displacement dynamics and renewed interest in voluntary return, with an estimated 1.3 million Syrians returning from neighbouring countries since December 2024. While voluntary returns are ongoing, the majority of Syrians are expected to remain in host countries in the short-term, requiring sustained protection and assistance alongside return facilitation.

Lebanon. Ammar, Syrian refugee mother talks to her son about Ramadan back in Syria.

© UNHCR/Amine Abou Ghanem



For the over 4.2 million Syrian refugees in Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, the transition in Syria has intensified discussion in host States and internationally around ending Syrian displacement, further shrinking an already limited protection space. **UNHCR continues to advocate for a balanced approach to the continued use of third country solutions for Syrians that considers how strategic use can support both conditions inside Syria and refugee programmes in hosting countries.**

Alongside Syrian refugees, refugees of other nationalities including Sudanese, Iraqi, South Sudanese and Yemeni often find themselves destitute, with limited access to essential services, and are often at heightened risk of detention and deportation.

According to the 2025 Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees (EVAR), around 65 per cent of refugees in **Egypt** are highly or extremely vulnerable, unable to meet basic needs due to limited livelihoods, food insecurity and inadequate living conditions. Challenges in obtaining or renewing legal residency hinder access to health care, education, justice and social assistance, and heighten risks of arrest or detention for immigration-related offenses, which have substantially increased in the early months of 2026. These factors increase exposure to refoulement, particularly for individuals with no identity documentation or at risk of statelessness.

With the internal displacement of over 1 million people between early March to early April 2026, the already constrained protection space in **Lebanon** continues to erode amid a protracted economic crisis and recurrent conflict-related displacement affecting both Lebanese communities and refugees since 2023. Despite these challenges, Lebanon remains the world's largest refugee-hosting country per capita and continues to receive new complex displacement from Syria. Over 100,000 Syrians have entered Lebanon since the political transition in Syria, many living in legal limbo with severely restricted movement and limited access to basic services.

In **Jordan**, operational space is shaped by protracted displacement, drastically declining humanitarian funding and tightening socioeconomic conditions. Reliance on informal work remains significant, exposing refugees to legal and financial risks, such as debt, travel bans and circulations as well as low wages and unsafe working conditions. In the absence of national asylum legislation, refugees are subject to the Foreigners' Residency and Affairs Law, putting them at risk of detention and possible refoulement.

Despite advances to regulate asylum affairs in **Iraq** and a comparatively favourable protection environment, certain profiles, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, continue to face heightened protection risks. Considering escalating hostilities in Northeast Syria and ongoing developments in Iran, the already strained capacities for local integration and protection of refugees — both those currently present and potential new arrivals — are expected to come under additional pressure.

Mediterranean Situation

The conflict in Sudan continues to drive large-scale cross-border displacement, particularly into Egypt and Libya, where Sudanese nationals make up the majority of new asylum-seekers. UNHCR works with multiple actors to bolster identification and response of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in mixed and onward movement flows through **operationalization of a route-based approach**. Some host countries, like Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria, have expanded refugee inclusion and strengthened access to national health, education and

social systems. However, economic pressures continue to affect policies, and statelessness risks, particularly for children born in displacement, remain high where civil registration systems are weak or difficult to access. Overall protection space remains extremely limited and with insufficient access to safe, legal admission pathways, people continue to face trafficking, exploitation, extortion and family separation along mixed movement routes.

In **Egypt**, large-scale arrivals linked to the Sudan crisis have overwhelmed already stretched systems and heightened protection risks. Women, children including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), survivors of gender-based violence, persons with disabilities and individuals with serious medical needs are particularly affected. Many new arrivals have experienced trauma, violence and family separation, increasing the need for protection interventions, including resettlement.

In **Libya**, fluctuating security conditions, militia control and access constraints along key routes hinder humanitarian efforts. Without a national asylum framework, refugees and asylum-seekers are treated under general immigration laws, exposing them to arbitrary arrest, administrative detention and deportation. High numbers remain detained in official centres, including many in need of international protection. Adverse policy decisions, narrowing protection space and barriers to services and assistance, combined with an underfunded response plan for the Sudan Situation, result in increased onward movement.

Mauritania maintains one of the more favourable protection environments, with refugee inclusion in national services and employment. However, rising numbers of refugees and increased mixed movement flows prompted new restrictive legislation that may affect access to asylum and protection.

In **Algeria**, work is underway to develop new asylum legislation. In the absence of a formal system, significant protection gaps remain. UNHCR continues to advocate for the release of asylum-seekers and refugees affected by periodic migrant roundups. In **Morocco**, delays in adopting a national asylum law contribute to protection challenges, including arrests and forced relocations linked to lack of access to national refugee cards.

In **Tunisia**, the absence of a national asylum framework and the ongoing suspension of new asylum registrations severely limit access to legal status, documentation and basic rights. Unregistered persons cannot access minimum services or assistance including basic health care, while additional protection risks persist also for registered refugees and asylum-seekers.

Israel, Yemen, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

In **Israel**, refugees and asylum-seekers are granted only temporary rights, barring prospects for local integration and encouraging onward movement. **Yemen** remains one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with an increasingly fragile protection environment. As overall stability continues to deteriorate, refugees and asylum-seekers face heightened risks of arbitrary arrest, detention, deportation and exploitation, exacerbated by flooding, food insecurity and competition over scarce resources.

In the **GCC**, access to services and employment is contingent on legal stay via work permits. Individuals without valid permits face risks of arrest, detention and deportation, and are generally excluded from public services.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

A sharp contraction in humanitarian funding has significantly affected UNHCR's ability in the MENA region to sustain protection and assistance at previous levels. This decline comes at a time of heightened displacement, new emergencies and growing vulnerability among refugees and asylum-seekers. Against this backdrop, the regional protection strategy remains focused on safeguarding **access to safety and asylum, strengthening protection environments and inclusion in national systems and advancing progress toward durable solutions.**

The deteriorating funding environment, a trend that is expected to continue beyond 2026, is having a direct impact on refugees' lives and increases the need for solutions. With worsening socioeconomic conditions and diminished protection services, more refugees find themselves exposed to heightened risks, unable to meet basic needs or facing legal barriers. At the same time, limited resources restrict the ability to conduct comprehensive protection assessments that help identify those most in need of third country solutions. Reduced spaces combined with increasingly restrictive resettlement criteria, particularly for refugees with high needs, further complicate efforts.

In response, approaches have been adapted and collaboration with existing partners, community structures and other stakeholders has been strengthened. With fewer resources, UNHCR invested more in **partner-led referrals, community based identification mechanisms** and **joint protection screenings** that integrate resettlement considerations from the outset. It further integrated resettlement screening into existing activities, such as cash enrolment, protection casework and community events, to maintain identification despite reduced capacity.

Strategic use of resettlement in the Syria situation countries

Syria has undergone major political, security, human rights and humanitarian shifts since the fall of the former Syrian government in late 2024.

Throughout 2025, most returns were self-organized, while assisted return modalities were gradually established by UNHCR in collaboration with host governments and partners. To better understand refugees' perspectives in this rapidly changing environment, return intentions were assessed three times during 2025. Intentions fell steadily from 27 per cent in January to 18 per cent in May and 14 per cent by December, **indicating that large-scale returns will be gradual, potentially uneven and dependent on evolving conditions inside Syria.**

Many Syrians may not choose or be able to return in the near term due to ongoing protection, legal, socioeconomic and personal considerations. At the same time, others have fled Syria since December 2024 and require international protection and access to a durable solution.

With the situation inside Syria remaining fluid, UNHCR continues to call on all States to keep borders open, uphold the right to seek asylum and fully respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Importantly, Syrian refugees are not a monolithic group; their needs and prospects differ widely depending on their individual histories, protection risks and experiences in displacement. Noting that the groups listed are not exhaustive, certain profiles including members of religious and ethnic minorities, persons perceived to violate strict social or religious norms, persons of diverse SOGIESC, and women and children with complex protection needs continue to express fear of persecution. **Resettlement remains vital for those at heightened risk, for whom return is premature.**

Even as resettlement remains vital for those heightened risk, **the projected resettlement needs of Syrians have decreased substantially, due to increased prospects of voluntary repatriation.** Besides, the resettlement needs of refugees of other nationalities remain at similar, or, in some instances, at heightened levels. Resettlement, therefore, remains both a life-saving protection tool and a critical durable solution for refugees facing acute risks in the host countries.

Importantly, the continued engagement of third countries on durable solutions is a tangible demonstration of solidarity with host governments and communities. Resettlement and complementary pathways also help preserve overall protection space in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Türkiye. These efforts are vital to maintain host governments' confidence in the international system's ability to share responsibility and to support access to rights and services for the refugees who are unable to return in safety and dignity. Sustainable progress hinges on integrating refugees' intentions and decision-making into planning across stakeholders and on the availability of all durable solutions.

Resettlement within the Route-Based Approach in the North Africa Region

In North Africa, mixed movements, shrinking protection space and rising anti-foreigner sentiment are intensifying risks for people on the move. The conflict in Sudan has displaced more than 4.5 million people across its borders, including 1.5 million to Egypt, while deepening socioeconomic pressures and entry restrictions are driving onward movement into Libya or returns to highly precarious conditions. Instability in Mali continues to push people into Mauritania, further straining already limited local resources. The route-based approach remains essential across mixed and onward movement corridors, reinforcing State protection and referral mechanisms, while prevention of statelessness remains a priority.

Across North Africa, government efforts to curb irregular movement increasingly involve arrests, detentions, expulsions and disembarkations, frequently affecting individuals with international protection needs. Protection space has further deteriorated in Mauritania and neighbouring countries, where acute humanitarian needs, limited access to services and scarce livelihood opportunities heighten the vulnerability of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Within this landscape, resettlement and complementary pathways help reduce reliance on smuggling networks, mitigate dangerous onward journeys, strengthen international responsibility-sharing and support advocacy for more protection-sensitive policies.

Despite a volatile and restrictive operational environment, asylum-seekers and refugees continue to access durable solutions through resettlement, humanitarian evacuations, humanitarian corridors and voluntary repatriation.

The availability of these solutions enables UNHCR to advocate with Libyan authorities for continuation of mandate registration and tolerance of over half a million Sudanese refugees. It also aims to support continued dialogue toward strengthening the protection environment, including efforts to advocate open borders for new arrivals in Egypt. In **Algeria**, the departure of refugees on resettlement in 2025 freed up around a tenth of available resources for cash-based interventions, thus allowing reallocation to other refugees in need and easing future pressure on humanitarian assistance.

In **Tunisia**, onward movements across neighbouring countries persist, exposing refugees to severe protection risks. In this context, resettlement remains a primary tool for addressing acute risks faced by refugees in the country, especially where humanitarian assistance cannot adequately mitigate threats to safety. The Government has consistently highlighted resettlement as essential to reducing pressure on overstretched public systems, making predictable resettlement programming critical to preserving protection space.

Building on these country-specific efforts, a key element of the route-based approach is enhancing access to resettlement, family reunification and complementary pathways. Delivering these solutions effectively requires coordinated efforts along the route, with stronger regional coherence in resettlement opportunities across North African countries and in countries earlier in the route.

Yemen, Syria and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries

In **Yemen**, strategic use of resettlement remains one of UNHCR's most effective protection and advocacy tools to help prevent refoulement and address the severe protection risks arising from prolonged instability. Resettlement opportunities support the broader protection environment which is particularly relevant as the country remains a key point along mixed movement routes toward the GCC countries.

Similarly, in the **GCC**, resettlement plays a pivotal strategic role, creating space for engagement with authorities on cases involving refoulement risks. Asylum-seekers transiting at international airports in the GCC can face significant risks of refoulement while in transit.

The resettlement needs of refugees in **Syria** must be understood within the context of protracted displacement, repeated loss of homes and systemic barriers to accessing civil documentation. These challenges place refugees at increased risk of arrest and limits their access to essential services.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

The overall projected resettlement needs across the region have decreased by over 25 per cent since 2026, reflecting significant shifts in displacement dynamics and the availability of other solutions in some contexts. As the region registers ongoing conflict and instability, protracted refugee situations and mixed movement flows, UNHCR projects that approximately **237,700 refugees** in the MENA region will need resettlement in 2027.

For Syrians, projected **resettlement needs have decreased by approximately 60 per cent** compared to last year, **largely due to the possibility of voluntary returns and the refinement of identification parameters around the use of resettlement.** While resettlement remains vital for individuals with heightened protection risks, the reduced population reflects both changing intentions among refugees and a rebalancing of solutions within the broader regional response.

Notably, projected **resettlement needs for Sudanese refugees have increased by just over 25 per cent, driven primarily by** the scale and intensity of displacement into Egypt and Libya following **the escalation of the conflict in Sudan.** These rising needs highlight the growing pressure on host countries and underscore the importance of maintaining resettlement as a key protection tool and responsibility-sharing mechanism.

In North Africa, projected resettlement needs vary significantly across countries, from approximately 105,000 in Egypt to around 450 in Morocco. Within a **route-based approach**, these differences highlight the importance of maintaining resettlement as a strategic tool across the entire route. Otherwise, there is a risk of fragmenting the solutions landscape and weakening the overall effectiveness of the approach.

In terms of profiles with heightened needs, diverse SOGIESC individuals across the region are particularly at risk and are frequently exposed to gender-based violence coupled with severe protection risks stemming from familial or societal threats. Survivors face many challenges in accessing services, dealing with heavy social stigma. Same-sex conduct is criminalized in most countries in the region and often combined with other risks or threats to life in countries of asylum. Individuals of diverse SOGIESC live in fear of harm from their families and communities as well as from the authorities. Furthermore, in the absence of national asylum framework across the region, refugees with irregular legal status continue to face risk of arrest, detention, refoulement or other threats to their legal and physical protection related to their legal and administrative circumstances.

Projected Resettlement Needs per Country

In **Algeria**, UNHCR estimates that 1,730 refugees are projected to need resettlement in 2027. Refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls at risk, survivors of trafficking, refugees with diverse SOGIESC, refugees with disabilities and serious medical conditions, and unaccompanied and separated refugee children continue to be prioritized for resettlement.



Egypt. Nawal is a Sudanese refugee who fled to Egypt with her six children after the death of her husband. Due to financial constraints, she is not able to enroll them all at school, and relies on the aid she receives from UNHCR along with the income she earns whenever she is able to work.

© UNHCR/Adeeba Amiry

In **Egypt**, it is estimated that 105,000 refugees — including 66,000 Sudanese refugees — are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2027. Egypt hosts a diverse, predominantly urban refugee population, many of whom face severe socioeconomic hardship due to the economic crisis and barriers to formal employment. Refugees without valid residency permits face heightened risks of arrest, detention and deportation. 2025 and early 2026 saw a substantial rise in detentions linked to irregular movements and residency violations, especially among Sudanese, Eritreans and, most recently, Syrians. Other risk profiles are refugee women and girls who continue to face serious protection risks, discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence, those with serious medical conditions, children and adolescents facing protection concerns, and survivors of violence and/or torture.

In the **GCC**, 1,700 refugees are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2027. UNHCR is prioritizing refugees with legal and physical protection needs, particularly those facing deportation amounting to refoulement, women and girls at risk, children at risk, refugees with diverse SOGIESC, refugees living with HIV who face serious legal challenges and threats to life, and those who have converted from the Islamic faith.

In **Iraq**, UNHCR estimates that 8,300 refugees are projected to need resettlement in 2027. The office will prioritize women and girls at risk, persons with legal and physical protection needs including SOGIESC individuals, refugees facing imminent risk of refoulement and refugees with serious medical needs.

In **Israel**, 5,300 refugees are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2027. Those prioritized include: single parents, families with children with a disability, persons with chronic untreated illness, survivors of trauma, and persons of diverse SOGIESC. Israel also hosts a small population of Palestinian asylum-seekers, largely persons of diverse SOGIESC and women escaping gender-related violence, such as forced marriage, domestic violence and physical/sexual abuse.

In **Jordan**, UNHCR estimates 26,200 refugees will be in need of resettlement in 2027 primarily from Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Sudan. As a core protection tool, resettlement offers a life-saving

solution for those most at risk, including preventing refoulement, facilitating family reunification for unaccompanied and separated children, securing release from administrative detention, providing solutions for complex camp-based cases who may face freedom of movement and preserving protection space and access to asylum for refugees with a SOGIESC profile and others with heightened protection needs.

In **Lebanon**, UNHCR estimates that 62,200 refugees are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2027, including around 58,200 Syrians and 4,000 refugees of other nationalities. With a growing number of vulnerable Lebanese citizens, absence of an asylum law and limited access to basic services, refugees have been compelled to adopt multiple negative coping strategies for their daily survival. The prevalence and impact of strained national systems and limited protection space have been particularly striking among women, children, and refugees of diverse SOGIESC.

In **Libya**, it is projected that at least 19,000 refugees will be in need of resettlement in 2027. Specifically, the figure reflects the number of forcibly displaced people who present compelling and unmet protection needs - such as individuals with heightened protection risks, UASC, women and girls at risk, single parents and survivors of torture and GBV. This projection is derived from registration data and therefore constitutes a conservative lower bound estimate, given that the majority of Sudanese refugees remain unregistered due to government restrictions.

In **Syria**, UNHCR estimates that approximately 1,000 refugees are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2027. Resettlement addresses serious risks that cannot be mitigated through other means. Prioritization of refugees with complex and interconnected vulnerabilities, including those facing acute protection risks, survivors of violence and torture, individuals with severe medical needs, single-parent households, women and girls at heightened risk, and children facing protection concerns linked to documentation barriers, discrimination, or unsafe living conditions.

In **Tunisia**, UNHCR estimates that 1,800 refugees will be in need of resettlement in 2027. The Office will prioritise women and girls at risk, children and adolescents at risk, including unaccompanied minors, survivors of violence and torture - most of whom are single males (83 percent) who have been exposed to physical and sexual abuse, exploitation, and detention in transit countries - and individuals of diverse SOGIESC.

In **Yemen**, UNHCR estimates that 5,000 refugees are projected to need resettlement in 2027. The population in need of resettlement remains primarily consisting of Ethiopian and Somali followed by Eritrean and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers. Many have lived in Yemen for extended periods under precarious legal and socioeconomic conditions. Female heads of households face heightened exposure to violence and exploitation. Unaccompanied and separated children remain vulnerable to labour exploitation and experience gaps in care. Persons living with medical conditions or disabilities face constrained access to treatment. Individuals facing discrimination linked to personal profiles and health status continue to face elevated protection risks.

In **Morocco**, there are approximately 450 refugees that are estimated to have resettlement needs in 2027 with over half of Sudanese background. Many have faced issues of violence or torture in their country origin, or during transit, particularly in Libya. Others, particularly women, have experienced gender-based violence or human trafficking while unaccompanied and separated children face issues in accessing education and documentation.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

In 2025 UNHCR in MENA **submitted 7,356 individuals** thereby exceeding the annual target. Resettlement **departures from the MENA region totalled 8,915 refugees**. Maintaining the momentum in both submissions and departures supports regional advocacy efforts, highlighting the strategic impact of resettlement on preserving and even expanding protection space in host countries.

Over the past year, the region has undergone a series of major shifts that have directly shaped how UNHCR and partners approach protection and solutions. Despite the difficult operating environment—including shrinking protection space, fluctuating access and growing political and socioeconomic pressures—there were important achievements in advancing strategic priorities and responding to rapidly evolving needs. Across the region, operations demonstrated strong adaptability, recalibrating resettlement planning, strengthening national systems and responding to new emergencies, all while continuing to anchor efforts in protection principles.

At the same time, the region saw a significant increase of Sudanese refugees. This shift highlights how quickly needs can evolve, but also how effectively operations were able to adjust identification, outreach and referral processes to accommodate a rapidly expanding caseload with diverse profiles, including survivors of violence, separated families and individuals with acute medical needs.

The absence of national asylum legislation across the region creates challenges when pursuing solutions to core protection issues, such as refoulement, risk of detention and access to basic services. While several Governments in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Qatar, and Iraq, took positive steps toward establishing national asylum legislation, implementation remains incomplete and impacts access to enablers like refugee travel documents. UNHCR continues to carry out registration and Refugee Status Determination (RSD) across the region. These challenges were further compounded in 2025 by significant resource constraints, which required UNHCR to operate with considerably reduced staffing and funding.

Family reunification and sponsorship pathways remained the most accessible channels, while education and labour mobility pathways offered additional opportunities for individuals with specific profiles. Several operations continue to invest in linking local opportunities for skills enhancement, documentation and counselling to further support access to complementary pathways. These efforts paired with advocacy for refugee travel documents and alongside ensuring continued access to family reunification and sponsorship pathways reduce long-term dependency, expand opportunities beyond traditional resettlement, and reinforce responsibility sharing.

The ability to sustain and even expand durable solutions out of some of the region's most complex operational environments reflects the commitment of field teams, the critical role of partnerships and the growing recognition among States of the importance of third country solutions. Taken together, these achievements illustrate a region that continues to adapt, protect and deliver solutions despite profound and ongoing challenges.

PERSPECTIVES: LIBYA

Resettlement restores hope for the future for a Sudanese family

Enaas* measures time differently now. Not in years or seasons, but in moments that mark change, before the war and everything that came after.

Today, she lives in Libya with her three children after fleeing conflict in Sudan in 2023. The life she once knew has changed. She lost her husband to illness, and later, the war took her parents and siblings. With no support left, she made the decision to leave Sudan in search of safety for her children.

Before the war started, her days were simpler. She was a curious and focused student who was planning to pursue higher education. She fondly remembers the small routines that would bring her family together at home. Every week, her parents would give her and her siblings a little money for treats. While her siblings would prefer to buy sweets, Enaas would choose ingredients to bake and prepare something for everyone to share. Things felt steady during this time.

“I used to feel like a carefree child around them,” she says. “I haven’t felt that way since the war.”

In Libya, she has been trying to build some stability on her own. As a single mother, she takes on informal work when opportunities arise, just enough to cover rent and basic needs. Anything beyond that remains uncertain. Without family support and facing ongoing uncertainty, she and her children remain exposed to difficult conditions.

After arriving, she registered with UNHCR, not expecting what would come next. When she was told that she is identified to resettlement to Canada, she paused and allowed herself to think about what the future might look like.

“This opportunity means the world to me,” she says. “To be able to provide my children with a better life than I have had means everything.”



March 2026 | Tripoli, Libya. Enaas and her children walk together toward the interview room. After fleeing conflict in Sudan, she is working to support her family while awaiting resettlement.

© UNHCR Libya

She wants her children to go to school, to grow up in a place where they feel safe, and to have choices.

The children speak about these choices in their own way: one hopes to become a dentist; another is still deciding what they would like to do in life; the youngest talks about buildings he wants to design one day. Alongside these dreams, they mention smaller things too, such as riding a bicycle, playing football and having a safe space to play. Things that are fundamental for all children, but that displacement has taken away from them.

When they heard about Canada, one of Enaas’s sons asked about maple syrup. He described it as something sweet, something to share, which made the others smile.

For Enaas, it’s these moments that matter. They are small, but they carry something she had almost lost: the sense that her children can imagine life beyond the present.

Enaas is still waiting for the next steps in the resettlement process. But already, something has shifted. She now speaks about the future differently: not as something uncertain, but as something her children might be able to shape, in a place where they can feel safe and can begin again.

*Name changed for protection reasons



Water scarcity is one of the main challenges in Iridimi refugee settlement. A shorter rainy season has led to significantly reduced underground water levels, and the recent massive influx of refugees has pushed the settlement's water system far beyond its capacity.

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WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

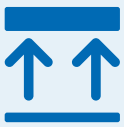
The Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa provides oversight, coordination and support for resettlement activities in **Burkina Faso**, Cameroon Multi-Country Office [covering the Republic of Cameroon (**Cameroon**), the Republic of the Congo (**Congo**), the Republic of Equatorial Guinea (**Equatorial Guinea**), the Gabonese Republic (**Gabon**) and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe (**Sao Tome & Principe**)], the Central African Republic (**CAR**), the Republic of Chad (**Chad**), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (**DRC**), the Republic of Mali (**Mali**), the Republic of the Niger (**Niger**), the Federal Republic of Nigeria (**Nigeria**) and Other Operations in West and Central Africa including [the Republic of Benin (**Benin**), the Republic of Cabo Verde (**Cabo Verde**), the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (**Côte d'Ivoire**), the Republic of the Gambia (**Gambia**), the Republic of Ghana (**Ghana**), the Republic of Guinea (**Guinea**), the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (**Guinea Bissau**), the Republic of Senegal (**Senegal**), the Republic of Sierra Leone (**Sierra Leone**) and the Republic of Togo (**Togo**).

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTED NEEDS
FOR THE REGION

302,000



YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

13%

HIGHEST
RESETTLEMENT
NEEDS



BY COUNTRY
OF ASYLUM

Chad

150,200

DRC

84,800

Cameroon

42,500

BY COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN

Sudan

134,200

CAR

88,150



SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

1,386



DEPARTURES IN 2025

1,823

- Displacement in the region is complex and interconnected, with crises in the Central Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, Sudan, the CAR and the DRC increasingly affecting one another and placing pressure on asylum systems, host communities and national services. Almost 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers are hosted within these five Situations.
- Chad remains the largest refugee-hosting country in the region, accounting for 40 per cent of the total refugee population. It is followed by the DRC with 16 per cent, while Cameroon and Niger each host around 11 per cent. Sudan, the CAR, Burkina Faso and Nigeria are the main countries of origin, together accounting for 77 per cent of the region's refugee population.
- Resettlement is firmly embedded within multi-year protection and solutions strategies that combine voluntary repatriation, local integration and targeted third country solutions. While most countries continue to uphold an open-door policy, this longstanding tradition is increasingly tested by insecurity, political instability and significant pressure on national systems.
- The region faced a continued decline in allocated resettlement quotas in 2025, amounting to a dramatic year-on-year reduction of approximately 74 per cent. The global unallocated quota played an essential role in countries without dedicated quotas.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGION

In West and Central Africa, the protection environment in 2025 and into 2026 is marked by a convergence of conflict, climate shocks, economic strain and dwindling humanitarian resources. Across the region, displacement is complex and interconnected, with crises in the **Central Sahel**, the **Lake Chad Basin**, **Sudan**, the **CAR** and the **DRC** increasingly affecting one another and placing pressure on asylum systems, host communities and national services.

By the end of 2026, the number of forcibly displaced and stateless people in the region is expected to reach 23.1 million, including 13.5 million internally displaced persons and 3.8 million refugees and asylum-seekers. Meanwhile, severe funding cuts in 2025 reduced field presence, emergency preparedness and protection monitoring capacity at a time when needs were rising sharply. **Chad** remains the largest refugee-hosting country in the region, accounting for 40 per cent of the total refugee population. Between 2020 and 2025 Chad's refugee population tripled from around 500,000 to 1.5 million. It is followed by the **DRC** with 16 per cent, while **Cameroon** and **Niger** each host around 11 per cent. **Sudan**, the **CAR**, **Burkina Faso** and **Nigeria** are the main countries of origin, together accounting for 77 per cent of the region's refugee population.

There are five significant displacement situations within the region: the **DRC situation**, the **Sahel Plus situation**, the **Central African Republic Situation**, the **Sudan Situation** (including the CAR and Chad), and the **Lake Chad Basin Situation**. Almost 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers are hosted within these five situations. **Chad**, the **DRC**, **Cameroon** and **Niger** host 78 per cent of the overall refugee population, while only 3 out of 4 maintain a resettlement programme in 2026 with a reduced quota.

In the **DRC**, renewed fighting since early 2025 in North and South Kivu, alongside violence in Ituri, Tanganyika, Tshopo and the former Bandundu provinces, has worsened an already fragile humanitarian situation, with nearly 5.4 million internally displaced persons, close to 4.1 million returnees and more than 214,500 people fleeing eastern areas. Civilians are facing killings, abductions, forced recruitment, arbitrary detention, sexual violence and coercive returns, while sites hosting displaced people and refugee camps have themselves become increasingly unsafe. In northern DRC, additional cross-border arrivals from both **South Sudan** and the **CAR** have further increased pressure on a response already constrained by vast distance and minimal operational presence.

In the Sahel plus region (including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Togo), insecurity remains acute and continues to generate both internal displacement and onward refugee movements. As of January 2026, the six neighbouring countries hosted 323,149 refugees and asylum-seekers originating from **Burkina Faso**. Reduced humanitarian funding has limited protection services and basic assistance, leaving some refugee families reportedly reliant on precarious means of survival, including begging, sending children to work in gold mines or moving onward in search of safety and livelihoods. **Mali** continues to face a complex and protracted protection, security, political and economic crisis. As of 28 February 2026, Mali hosts a total of 291,283 refugees, the majority from Burkina Faso and Niger. Most refugees from Burkina Faso reside in rural sites in the regions of Bandiagara, Ménaka, Gao, Mopti and Tombouctou, often in hard-to-reach and insecure areas. In **Niger**, as of 31 January



Chad. Jacqueline Aissinga teaches the youngest learners at a public primary school, where more than 150 children - both refugees and Cameroonian nationals - share one classroom.

© UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

2026, the operation hosted more than 1 million forcibly displaced persons, including 435,980 refugees and asylum-seekers and 548,386 internally displaced persons, while insecurity in Tillabéry, Tahoua and Diffa continued to expose civilians to abductions, forced displacement and restricted access to essential services.

Other Operations in West and Central Africa are also under mounting strain from the spillover of the Sahel crisis. As of February 2026, around 1.2 million forcibly displaced and stateless people were present across the ten countries covered by the Other Operations in West and Central Africa, including about 169,000 refugees and asylum-seekers originating from Burkina Faso in **Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana** and **Togo**. While these countries have maintained asylum space and functioning institutions, the quality and efficiency of their asylum systems require support, as do their civil registration systems and their efforts on socioeconomic inclusion. Restrictive nationality laws continue to leave hundreds of thousands stateless, including more than 900,000 stateless people in Côte d'Ivoire alone.

More broadly, **climate shocks and food insecurity are compounding conflict-related vulnerabilities in the region**. Food insecurity has escalated sharply, with up to 55 million people projected to face crisis-level hunger during lean seasons, while malnutrition, particularly among children, continues to rise. In Niger alone, around 2.4 million people were projected to face severe food insecurity between June and August 2026. Recurrent floods, droughts and erratic rainfall are destroying crops, livelihoods and essential infrastructure, pushing communities deeper into crisis and increasing reliance on negative coping mechanisms. These pressures are forcing repeated displacement, disrupting access to water, health care and education, and heightening protection risks, especially for women and children. Limited public services, inflation and competition over shrinking natural resources further worsen tensions

and undermine community resilience. Combined with declining humanitarian funding, these climate-driven shocks are eroding local capacities and substantially increasing the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities across the region.

Despite these pressures, there have been important policy advances in parts of the region, including the implementation of **Benin's** asylum framework, **Senegal's** refugee and statelessness decrees, **Guinea-Bissau's** naturalization campaign with 5,000 refugees confirmed eligible and **Liberia's** grant of indefinite residency to 900 former Ivorian refugees in 2025. Yet an increasingly adverse climate toward LGBTIQ+ persons is being observed, linked to the tightening of laws criminalizing homosexuality in several countries across the region.

Overall, the outlook for 2027 in West and Central Africa remains **highly volatile, with rising protection needs, constrained humanitarian capacity and continued pressure** on States that are still demonstrating significant solidarity towards forcibly displaced people.

RESETTLEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS STRATEGIES

The protection function of resettlement will remain central in West and Central Africa in 2026 and 2027.

Across the region, resettlement is firmly embedded within multi-year protection and solutions strategies that combine voluntary repatriation, local integration and targeted third country solutions. **While most countries continue to uphold an open-door policy, this longstanding tradition is increasingly tested by insecurity, political instability and significant pressure on national systems.**

Although voluntary repatriation is being pursued in contexts such as **the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Chad**, half (approximately 25,000) of all returns in the region in 2025 raised serious concerns regarding sustainability, and many refugees still cannot safely return due to unresolved conflict, insecurity or political instability. Prospects for local integration remain limited by weak infrastructure, land scarcity, overstretched public services and constrained State capacities. In this environment, resettlement constitutes an essential alternative for individuals facing high levels of risk, while simultaneously supporting broader efforts to reinforce national asylum systems and reduce dependency on humanitarian assistance.

Furthermore, resettlement also play a strategic role. Beyond addressing the acute protection needs of at-risk refugees, it helps safeguard a humanitarian space under growing strain. **Resettlement strengthens UNHCR's dialogue with governments on access to territory, documentation and protection safeguards**, especially in countries navigating sensitive political expectations. It reinforces advocacy on registration, simplified procedures and the inclusion of groups facing heightened legal or social barriers, including LGBTIQ+ persons, survivors of violence and refugees with specific needs.

In the **DRC**, which hosts over half a million refugees alongside more than 5 million internally displaced persons, resettlement remains a critical protection tool within a highly constrained solutions environment. While voluntary repatriation is pursued selectively for certain nationalities and over 18,000 refugees returned in 2025, ongoing conflict, intercommunal violence, and acute insecurity in eastern provinces continue to generate new displacement and undermine reintegration prospects. Although refugees are entitled to access national education, health and employment systems, the absence of a legal framework for permanent local integration, combined with widespread poverty and deteriorating public services, severely limits sustainable inclusion. In this context, resettlement serves as a targeted response for refugees facing acute protection risks.

Protection risks remain particularly acute for children. Sixty-four per cent of refugee children in the region were out of school in 2025, up from 61 per cent in 2024, leaving them increasingly vulnerable to child labour, early and forced marriage, exploitation and persistent cycles of vulnerability.

In **Niger**, which hosts more than 1 million forcibly displaced persons, including over 435,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, resettlement plays a strategic role within a comprehensive protection and solutions approach anchored in the route based approach. While Niger maintains an open-door asylum policy and an out-of-camp model that facilitates social cohesion and access to basic services, persistent insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin and the Liptako-Gourma region, combined with poverty, food insecurity and climate shocks, continues to limit durable solutions. Following the progressive phase-out of the Emergency Transit Mechanism, resettlement is increasingly focused on those with acute vulnerabilities, reinforcing responsibility-sharing, mitigating protection risks linked to onward movements, and supporting Niger's efforts to maintain a protection-oriented asylum system amid growing regional and operational pressures.

Chad hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, with more than 1.5 million refugees hosted in the country. In the absence of meaningful voluntary repatriation opportunities and with local integration constrained by remote settlement locations, limited livelihoods and overstretched services, resettlement is an essential component of the national protection and solutions strategy. Resettlement primarily targets refugees facing severe protection risks. At the same time, resettlement is used strategically alongside efforts to enhance national inclusion, including initiatives to recognize refugee professionals and strengthen documentation systems. Complementary pathways such as family reunification, education and labour mobility are being explored but remain limited in scale, reinforcing the central role of resettlement as a life-saving solution

In **Cameroon**, which hosts nearly 412,000 refugees, primarily from the Central African Republic and Nigeria, resettlement remains a vital protection tool in a context marked by protracted displacement, limited documentation and shrinking livelihood opportunities. While voluntary repatriation has increased in recent years, with over 27,000 returns facilitated since 2022, many refugees cannot safely return due to targeted, persecution-related risks and ongoing insecurity. Local integration prospects are constrained by limited access to government-issued documentation, informal labour markets, and competition for scarce resources, particularly in urban areas affected by internal displacement. Within this landscape, resettlement provides a critical safety net for the most vulnerable refugees and complements organized returns by ensuring that those unable to return are not left behind. It also works alongside complementary pathways, particularly family reunification and education opportunities, although access remains constrained by documentation and capacity gaps.

Additionally, **significant changes in the funding environment** across West and Central Africa have deeply affected protection delivery and, by extension, the use of resettlement within broader solutions strategies. Many partners also faced similar cuts. These reductions coincided with rising levels of insecurity, increased protection incidents and growing challenges in accessing documentation, basic services and registration systems, placing refugees, particularly women, children and LGBTIQ+ persons, at heightened risk. In response to these pressures, operations have adopted a range of adaptive approaches to sustain protection and resettlement delivery with fewer resources, including greater reliance on community-based protection structures, expanded localisation efforts, early identification mechanisms such as **Chad's** Salama Amana model, and the use of simplified or remote procedures where national capacity is overstretched. These adaptations have allowed UNHCR to preserve the strategic value of resettlement as a life-saving protection tool even as the operational and financial landscape becomes increasingly constrained.

Resettlement: A critical element of the route-based approach to mixed movement

With third country solutions as a strategic pillar of the **route-based approach**, resettlement has an important role to play in the protection response to mixed and onward movements and could be a strategic tool in the region, particularly in **Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger** and **Senegal**. Recent trends along the West Africa Atlantic Route highlight the acute protection risks refugees and migrants face when resorting to irregular onward movement. According to civil society monitoring, the first months of 2025 saw exceptionally high loss of life along this corridor, making it one of the deadliest maritime routes from the region. During this period, well over a thousand people were reported dead or missing, including many women and children, with several boats disappearing without trace. Departures from **Mauritania** accounted for the majority of fatalities, followed by journeys originating in **Senegal** and **The Gambia**, as well as departures along the coastal stretch between Agadir and Dakhla. In contrast, the **Western Mediterranean route** recorded far fewer deaths during the same timeframe, yet remained dangerous.

Between January and June 2025, of 11,400 people who reached Spain from the West and Central Africa region; the largest group were Malian nationals (5,008), 96 per cent of whom were granted international protection upon arrival. Nonetheless, the majority of forcibly displaced Malians, and refugees more broadly, continue to remain within the West and Central Africa region. This reflects the generally favourable legal protection frameworks in neighbouring countries, the resilience and solidarity of host communities and the potential for local solutions. However, limited access to public services along with persistent structural and resource constraints continue to affect both refugees and migrants.

An analysis conducted by the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa of UNHCR registration data for the first half of 2025 indicates that 3,000 refugees and asylum-seekers moved outside their initial country of asylum and subsequently re-registered with UNHCR in another country, representing a 16 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2024. The top five countries from which these onward movements originated were **Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Burkina Faso** and the **Central African Republic**. In this context, resettlement can provide an important alternative to dangerous onward movement for refugees seeking safety and stability. It contributes to **a more orderly and protection-sensitive response to mixed movements** in the region and also aligns with stated migration-management objectives in many destination countries.

PROJECTED RESETTLEMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION IN 2027

In 2027, UNHCR estimates that approximately **302,000** refugees will be in need of resettlement across 15 countries within the West and Central Africa region. This represents an increase of 49 per cent compared to 2026 (202,500), driven primarily by the inclusion of the **DRC** for the first time following its integration into the Regional Bureau in October 2025, the sustained influx of Sudanese refugees into **Chad** and the **CAR**, and continued displacement within the Sahel Plus situation. UNHCR continues to advocate for a progressive, needs-based increase in resettlement quotas, with particular emphasis on countries where the route-based approach is being operationalized and where the strategic use of resettlement can help maintain or expand the protection space.

In **Chad**, an estimated **150,200** refugees are projected to need resettlement in 2027, an increase from 136,300 in the previous cycle. Chad hosts over 1.5 million refugees, including 1.3 million Sudanese nationals, making it one of the largest refugee-hosting countries globally. The continued influx from Sudan since April 2023 has progressively deepened overcrowding in settlements and heightened protection risks. Gender-based violence, including rape, abduction and forced marriage, remains pervasive among women and girls. Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, forced levirate marriages and blood feuds compound these vulnerabilities. Minority ethnic groups who faced targeted violence in Sudan continue to experience heightened risks in the camps and sites of Chad. Children with disabilities face acute isolation and remain unable to access specialized education or adapted infrastructure. Economic hardship drives men and adolescents towards northern Chad and onward to Libya, exposing them to exploitation, forced labour and trafficking, while refugees with diverse SOGIESC face severe threats.

For the first time in the West and Central Africa regional chapter, the **DRC** is included following its integration into the Regional Bureau in October 2025. With a refugee population just shy of 515,000 at the end of 2025, UNHCR estimates that **84,800** refugees will need resettlement in 2027. This estimate is informed by the operation's current identification capacity, which has been significantly reduced following a 46 per cent reduction in budget. The DRC hosts refugees primarily from the **CAR, South Sudan, Burundi** and **Rwanda**, many in protracted displacement for over a decade. Renewed fighting since early 2025 in North and South Kivu, alongside violence in Ituri and Tanganyika, has severely worsened the humanitarian situation. Gender-based violence remains the principal protection risk, with over 163,000 cases documented between January and September 2025. Children face heightened risks of forced recruitment into armed groups and sexual exploitation. The country's health care infrastructure is critically inadequate.

The **Cameroon Multi-Country Office (MCO)**, covering Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe, projects that **42,400** refugees will require resettlement in 2027. The vast majority are refugees from the Central African Republic (82 per cent) and Nigeria (17 per cent). Nearly all resettlement activities take place in Cameroon, which has a refugee population of over 412,000 as of the end of 2025. Approximately 80 per cent of refugees with resettlement needs are women and girls at risk and survivors of violence and torture. Many Central African refugees, displaced in successive waves since 2003, live with permanent disabilities and trauma to the conflict. Resettlement serves both as a gesture of solidarity to the host country and as a safe, legal alternative to dangerous onward movements.

Approximately **13,000** refugees in **Niger** will have resettlement needs in 2027, a decrease from the previous cycle, partly owing to 364 departures through resettlement and complementary pathways recorded in 2025. Refugees from Nigeria represent the largest population with specific needs (9,800 individuals), followed by Malians (2,800) and Sudanese (300). The protection environment remains challenging, with insecurity in the Tillabéry, Tahoua and Diffa regions continuing to expose civilians to abductions, forced displacement and restrictions on movement. Niger remains a critical departure, asylum, transit and destination point along both the Central Mediterranean and West Atlantic movement routes. Resettlement continues to serve as a strategic tool to prevent dangerous onward movements and to address the acute needs of survivors of violence, persons with serious medical conditions, and refugees with SOGIESC profiles.

In **Burkina Faso**, **6,000** refugees are projected to be in need, the vast majority Malian refugees in protracted displacement since 2012, living in areas severely affected by the security crisis, including where humanitarian access has been critically restrained. These are mainly women and children, with complex family compositions that raise specific protection and family unity considerations. While some refugees undertake short-term movements to neighbouring countries for economic opportunities, there is limited onward movement along longer mixed migration routes.

Across the ten countries covered under the **Other Operations in West and Central Africa** (Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo), UNHCR estimates that approximately **2,600** refugees will need resettlement. Across these operations, resettlement remains a targeted protection tool for refugees with acute vulnerabilities, including smuggled persons stranded in the region, minority groups and LGBTIQ+ refugees facing criminalization and societal hostility, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk. With only a small allocation for Senegal, these operations rely primarily on the global unallocated quota to address the most urgent protection needs in the absence of dedicated resettlement allocations.

An estimated **1,900** refugees are projected to need resettlement from **Mali** in 2027, an increase from 1,100 in the previous cycle. As of February 2026, Mali hosts almost 291,300 refugees, the majority from Burkina Faso and Niger. Most refugees from Burkina Faso reside in rural sites across hard-to-reach and insecure areas. The operation aims to make greater strategic use of resettlement to address a rapidly shrinking protection space, compounded by growing strain on local resources and absorption capacity. In the absence of allocated quotas, urgent priority cases are processed using unallocated quota. Identified profiles include survivors of gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices, refugees at risk of undertaking dangerous irregular movements, individuals with diverse SOGIESC whose protection cannot be ensured in Mali, and persons with chronic or severe health conditions for whom adequate treatment is not available.

UNHCR estimates that **1,000** refugees will be in need of resettlement from the **CAR** in 2027, a significant increase from 200 in the previous cycle. The principal refugee populations originate from Sudan, the DRC, Chad and South Sudan. Since April 2023, thousands of Sudanese refugees have arrived, with over 21,700 hosted in Korsi settlement and approximately 14,000 scattered across hard-to-reach locations. The protection space has deteriorated with the protracted refugee caseload under review with a view to identifying possibility of cessation for certain profiles despite UNHCR's advocacy, refugees face restrictions on movement, arbitrary detention at checkpoints, and limited access to documentation. Resettlement quota would contribute to broadening the protection space while addressing the most pressing needs of survivors of violence and refugees facing heightened legal and physical protection risks.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN 2025

Central African Republic. Iman, a 22-year-old refugee from Nyala, fled conflict in 2023 and sought safety in Korsi, Birao. Building on her background as a first-year pharmacology student, she is now actively supporting other refugee women: she leads peer support groups, promotes French language learning, and designs inclusive educational activities for women with little or no formal schooling.

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In 2025, resettlement continued to serve as a vital protection tool across West and Central Africa, with **1,385 refugees submitted**, primarily to Canada and France, and **1,823 individuals departing** to resettlement countries. These achievements unfolded against the backdrop of a steadily growing refugee population, especially in Chad, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The global unallocated quota also played an essential role in countries without dedicated quotas; in the DRC, for example, 22 refugees with high protection needs were submitted under this mechanism. In several operations, including Cameroon, resettlement acted as a targeted protection solution for refugees unable to safely repatriate, even as voluntary return movements continued for others.



Overall, **the year presented considerable obstacles**. Insecurity and access constraints restricted identification and case processing in remote locations while operations that previously utilized resettlement as a protection tool faced limited or no quotas and reductions in resettlement staffing capacity. The changing funding environment in early 2025 further exacerbated budget shortfalls, impacting protection services and resettlement activities across the region. In countries where UNHCR lacks presence, such as Equatorial Guinea, administrative delays affected departures for refugees accepted by resettlement countries.

More broadly, **the region faced a continued decline in allocated resettlement quotas, amounting to an overall reduction of approximately 74 per cent since 2024**. This widening gap had direct implications on strategic planning, including the ability to operationalize the fifth pillar of the route-based approach, access to third country solutions, particularly in Senegal, Mali, Niger and Chad. The limited availability of resettlement places constrained solutions for individuals with protection concerns and documented vulnerabilities.

At the same time, 2025 saw **important positive developments**. In Senegal, enhanced use of proGres between UNHCR and partners strengthened the systematic identification and referral of LGBTIQ+ refugees, enabling more timely protection assessments and resettlement processing. In Niger, collaboration with IOM resulted in the deployment of a mobile medical unit in Diffa, allowing medical examinations required for resettlement to be conducted locally and reducing the security risks associated with travel to Niamey. In Chad, resettlement was integrated into the Amana Salama project, which proactively identifies refugees with heightened protection needs, particularly women and girls affected by conflict-related violence from Sudan.

Complementary pathways also contributed to expanding safe and orderly mobility. In 2025, 40 refugees accessed third country opportunities in Italy, France, Belgium, Canada and the United States through family reunification, education programmes, labour mobility schemes and sponsorship initiatives. Although modest in scale, these pathways supported UNHCR's efforts to provide viable alternatives to dangerous journeys through a third country solution. Their implementation, however, faced challenges due to scarce consular presence requiring refugees to undertake costly and risky travel to neighbouring countries and the widespread **lack of machine readable refugee travel documents** that constrained options for many potential applicants. UNHCR intensified its collaboration with governments, civil society and partners to expand available options, including regional opportunities, while developing tools and guidance to support refugees' autonomous access to complementary pathways and to lay the foundations for more sustainable, predictable systems. As examples, funding to set-up systems to issue machine readable refugee travel documents in host countries and supporting flexible consular modalities would better enable access to complementary pathways.



Smiles all around as Nafissatou and her children begin their new life in Canada.

Photo courtesy of Nafissatou

PERSPECTIVES: CAMEROON

“It felt like a door finally opened; a door I had been knocking on for years.”

For Nafissatou and her family, resettlement has meant more than a new country. It has been a rebirth, a chance to reclaim dignity, rebuild their lives and dream freely.

Nafissatou grew up in Bangui, Central African Republic, where she remembers the smell of freshly fried beignets from her small business and the comforting warmth of her mother’s nearby shop. But in 2013, violence spread across the city, transforming daily life into a constant battle for survival. Nafissatou fled with her children in search of safety, leaving behind the neighborhood and the life she once knew, memories that still linger today.

Arriving in Cameroon promised the family safety, but the challenges did not end there. After facing a divorce, Nafissatou worked tirelessly as a single mother to care for her children, facing each day with determination. Even in moments of despair, she never gave up. Her children were her strength, and for them, she kept going.

In December 2024, more than a decade after they were forced to flee their home, Nafissatou and her children were resettled to Canada. On the night they reached



their new home in Manitoba, her children slept soundly for the first time in years.

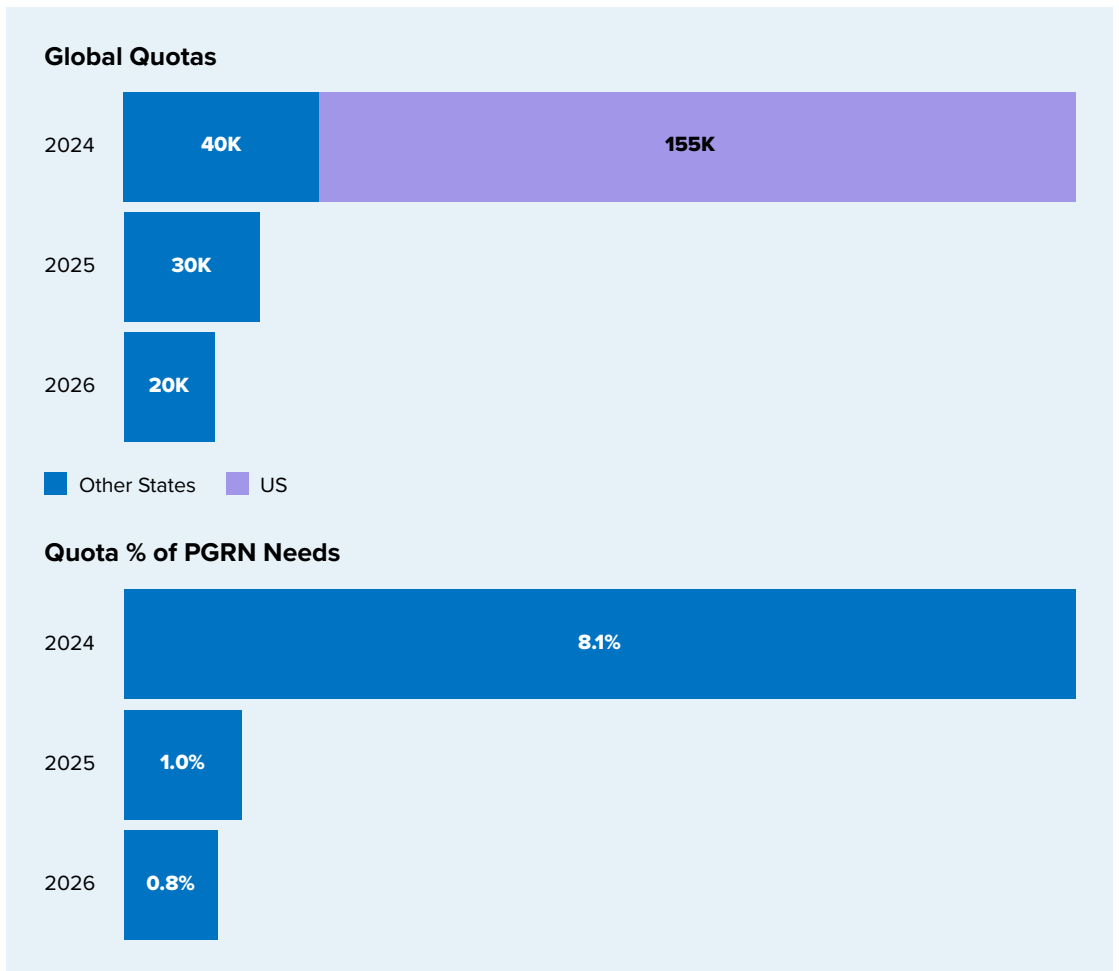
In Manitoba, Nafissatou and her children are slowly building a new life. With help from family members already living in Winnipeg and support from the local community, they felt at home soon after arriving. From day one, the community made them feel welcome including through small gestures such as bringing fruit and cake for the children. The children have returned to school and are adjusting well: they are learning English, making friends and enjoying school routines that bring back the sense of a normal childhood that they were deprived of for years. Nafissatou is also studying English and working towards financial independence so she can provide for her children.

Today, the family enjoys the safety and peace they once longed for. It is this sense of security that they also value the most in their new home in Manitoba. “Here, I can breathe,” says Nafissatou. “Resettlement gave us peace. It gave my children a future. That is everything”.

ANNEX A:

ANALYSIS ON GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT GAPS FROM 2024-2026

	<p>QUOTAS 2024 - 2026</p> <p>244K</p>	<p>QUOTA REDUCTION 2024 - 2025</p> <p>-166K</p>
	<p>RESETTLEMENT NEEDS FOR ALL THREE YEARS</p> <p>ABOVE 2.4M</p>	<p>2026 UNDERCOVERED PGRN NEEDS</p> <p>2.5M</p>



2024 & 2025 QUOTAS / PGRN NEEDS / QUOTA % OF PGRN BY REGION

Region	2024			2025			2026		
	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN
Americas	75,350	106,450	70.8% ●	1,395	179,630	0.8% ●	1,000	172,185	0.6% ●
Asia and the Pacific	40,755	729,992	5.6% ●	11,076	776,530	1.4% ●	6,307	806,695	0.8% ●
Eastern and Southern Africa	36,232	603,953	6.0% ●	5,397	644,520	0.8% ●	3,983	701,630	0.6% ●
Europe	15,192	384,190	4.0% ●	3,310	350,600	0.9% ●	2,966	258,060	1.1% ●
Middle East and North Africa	24,280	464,126	5.2% ●	6,711	703,745	1.0% ●	5,360	322,220	1.7% ●
West and Central Africa	3,255	131,361	2.5% ●	1,035	261,005	0.4% ●	600	266,395	0.2% ●
Total	195,064	2,420,072	8.1%	28,924	2,916,030	1.0%	20216	2,527,185	0.8%

2024 & 2025 QUOTAS / PGRN NEEDS / QUOTA % OF PGRN BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

Countries with fewer than 100 resettlement quotas or projected resettlement needs in 2024 are excluded from the below matrix.

Country of Asylum	2024			2025			2026		
	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN
Algeria	150	1,200	12.5% ●	100	1,200	8.3% ●	100	2,090	4.8% ●
Aruba	210	1,930	10.9% ●	20	1,480	1.4% ●	–	920	–
Bangladesh	11,975	129,000	9.3% ●	4,050	119,300	3.4% ●	2309	125,500	1.8% ●
Burundi	4,100	19,200	21.4% ●	100	19,310	0.5% ●	75	19,715	0.4% ●
Cameroon	980	40,700	2.4% ●	375	42,000	0.9% ●	250	42,395	0.6% ●
Chad	1,200	45,703	2.6% ●	270	110,850	0.2% ●	200	136,250	0.1% ●
Colombia	32,060	30,000	106.9% ●	150	30,030	0.5% ●	100	30,000	0.3% ●
Costa Rica	11,000	3,554	309.5% ●	575	30,130	1.9% ●	600	19,330	3.1% ●
Curaçao	130	1,730	7.5% ●	20	1,400	1.4% ●	–	1,220	–
Dominican Rep.	1,080	5,210	20.7% ●	80	11,490	0.7% ●	–	17,250	–
Ecuador	11,060	12,840	86.1% ●	80	48,000	0.2% ●	125	46,200	0.3% ●
Egypt	4,830	33,000	14.6% ●	2,145	70,000	3.1% ●	2115	90,000	2.4% ●
El Salvador	3,050	1,800	169.4% ●	50	4,200	1.2% ●	10	3,000	0.3% ●
Ethiopia	4,425	192,831	2.3% ●	1,275	265,500	0.5% ●	1205	213,950	0.6% ●
Guatemala	10,650	8,970	118.7% ●	50	14,630	0.3% ●	20	13,200	0.2% ●
Honduras	1,850	3,040	60.9% ●	50	3,050	1.6% ●	20	3,050	0.7% ●
India	1,500	5,020	29.9% ●	200	6,340	3.2% ●	100	6,585	1.5% ●
Indonesia	950	3,150	30.2% ●	320	2,530	12.6% ●	350	1,805	19.4% ●

Country of Asylum	2024			2025			2026		
	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN	Quotas	PGRN Needs	Quota % of PGRN
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	3,650	345,215	1.1% ●	2,150	363,600	0.6% ●	687	348,900	0.2% ●
Iraq	1,375	43,100	3.2% ●	300	27,590	1.1% ●	200	10,740	1.9% ●
Israel	545	7,000	7.8% ●	100	6,905	1.4% ●	100	5,570	1.8% ●
Jordan	8,820	101,884	8.7% ●	1,020	111,330	0.9% ●	750	32,540	2.3% ●
Kenya	2,890	55,315	5.2% ●	640	66,210	1.0% ●	500	79,610	0.6% ●
Lebanon	7,160	250,120	2.9% ●	1,960	468,700	0.4% ●	1350	161,420	0.8% ●
Libya	615	4,500	13.7% ●	731	6,770	10.8% ●	400	9,500	4.2% ●
Malawi	2,250	12,000	18.8% ●	450	14,000	3.2% ●	–	10,000	–
Malaysia	8,900	21,975	40.5% ●	1,880	23,850	7.9% ●	1395	25,165	5.5% ●
Mexico	380	700	54.3% ●	90	1,500	6.0% ●	–	2,000	–
Morocco	250	570	43.9% ●	100	375	26.7% ●	50	450	11.1% ●
Mozambique	300	350	85.7% ●	–	350	–	–	100	–
Namibia	700	2,730	25.6% ●	–	1,100	–	–	600	–
Niger	605	15,460	3.9% ●	200	15,000	1.3% ●	100	13,700	0.7% ●
Pakistan	3,050	133,897	2.3% ●	1,306	178,160	0.7% ●	560	215,000	0.3% ●
Peru	3,130	30,990	10.1% ●	100	28,440	0.4% ●	125	31,335	0.4% ●
Rwanda	7,017	18,850	37.2% ●	1,062	268,40	4.0% ●	1434	24,310	5.9% ●
South Africa	850	4,980	17.1% ●	50	5,900	0.8% ●	35	7,700	0.5% ●
South Sudan	650	14,509	4.5% ●	300	39,900	0.8% ●	50	42,545	0.1% ●
Thailand	10,730	91,500	11.7% ●	1,170	82,500	1.4% ●	906	83,500	1.1% ●
Trinidad and Tobago	650	2,380	27.3% ●	100	2,500	4.0% ●	–	3,205	–
Tunisia	285	900	31.7% ●	230	2,700	8.5% ●	250	2,000	12.5% ●
Türkiye	15,192	384,070	4.0% ●	3,310	350,600	0.9% ●	2,966	258,060	1.1% ●
Uganda	5,375	134,936	4.0% ●	650	160,300	0.4% ●	450	174,100	0.3% ●
United Rep. of Tanzania	5,575	39,530	14.1% ●	400	23,030	1.7% ●	100	42,245	0.2% ●
Zambia	800	1,7142	4.7% ●	70	16,005	0.4% ●	34	17,905	0.2% ●
Zimbabwe	1,300	6,670	19.5% ●	200	5,870	3.4% ●	–	5,530	–



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