

UNHCR APPEALS FOR SUPPORT AS REFUGEES NEEDING URGENT RESETTLEMENT EXCEED 2 MILLION

The UN refugee agency UNHCR pleaded with resettlement states not to forget refugees in protracted situations across Africa, the Middle East and Asia when 250 delegates from across the globe gathered in Geneva for the 2022 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). For the first time in the ATCR's 28 years, the number of refugees identified by UNHCR as being in urgent need of resettlement exceeded 2 million – a 36% increase on last year's projection. In 2021, just 57,436 refugees were resettled. The number of refugees resettled after referral by UNHCR was 39,266, just 2.7% of the 1.445 million refugees identified as needing resettlement in 2021 and less than 0.2% of the global refugee population.

High Commissioner calls for protection and expansion of resettlement

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, spoke about the challenges being faced as this year's war in Ukraine has pushed the number of people displaced globally past 100 million. Mr Grandi told ATCR delegates that the triple impacts of the war in Ukraine – on food security, energy and inflation – are beginning to bite everywhere. Praising international generosity towards much-needed support of people displaced by the war in Ukraine, he said UNHCR and other agencies are struggling to fund operations for refugees elsewhere. "I'm constantly given assurances that all resources and attention for Ukraine are additional, but they are not I hope they will become so by the end of the year."



Bijan Kardouni, a refugee representative of STARTTS, speaks on the ATCR panel discussion on the empowerment of LGBTQI refugees.

Mr Grandi emphasised the need for more resettlement places, noting that even small advances are useful – and called for faster decision-making on resettlement applications, speedier departure of refugees accepted for resettlement, and greater emphasis on supporting the inclusion of refugees after they arrive. He spoke of the importance of protecting resettlement spots, encouraging states to keep the commitments to refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan additional to existing resettlement commitments.

Referring to Australia's offshore processing policy and the European Union's failed plan in 2016 to swap refugees with Turkey, Mr Grandi said resettlement should not be a substitute for states living up to their responsibilities to offer asylum to refugees. "Resettlement becomes in some proposals almost part of the externalisation – a quid pro quo. That is something we cannot agree with," he said, adding that it is important to delink asylum and resettlement processes.

Mr Grandi also called for greater attention on the protection of refugees who won't be resettled and for governments and civil society to work together to keep building momentum for refugees' access to complementary pathways – through community sponsorship, labour mobility, education pathways, sports

pathways, humanitarian corridors and family reunion. Responding to a question from Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) about how resettlement states can encourage and assist host states to improve the protection of refugees who won't be resettled, Mr Grandi said it was important to have significant resettlement quotas so that host states feel that they are genuinely being supported through responsibility sharing. He said UNHCR was able to negotiate more effectively with states neighbouring Syria when each of these states was seeing 20,000 or 25,000 refugees resettled each year, and that we collectively need to become better at leveraging packages of solutions which are strengthened with larger resettlement quotas.

Refugee delegates call for a permanent Refugee Co-Chair

Chaired by the US State Department, Refugee Council USA, the ATCR Refugee Advisory Group (RAG) and UNHCR, the 2022 ATCR had greater refugee representation than any previous ATCR event. The 250 delegates present included more than 35 delegates of lived refugee experience as official refugee delegates or on NGO or government delegations. Australia was represented by 17 delegates – two representatives of the Department of Home Affairs, eight NGO representatives and seven refugee representatives.

Represented on nearly all panel discussions as speakers or moderators, the refugee delegates delivered a [joint statement](#) in which they urged states, UNHCR and NGOs to continue to prioritise the inclusion of refugees within their structures and throughout all their activities, from planning to active participation and evaluation. They called for the ATCR process to establish a permanent Refugee Co-Chair and transition from a tripartite to a quadripartite process (UNHCR, states, NGOs and refugee representatives).



Ahmad Shuja Jamal, who was a senior government official in Afghanistan until his evacuation last year to Australia, chairs the opening ATCR plenary session on emergency resettlement responses.

Noting that the global refugee population has more than doubled since 2012 and global resettlement needs have increased by more than 80%, the refugee statement said that resettlement had shrunk by more than half. The COVID pandemic had disproportionately impacted refugees, leaving many struggling to find durable solutions and suffering significant health and mental health consequences.

Delivered by RAG representative Rez Gardi of New Zealand, the refugee statement acknowledged the global support for Ukrainian refugees as “a heart-warming reminder of our shared responsibilities and the power of collective action”. “This presents an opportunity for growth and recommitment to tackle challenges that face all refugees, no matter where they’re from or how they look. This is also an opportunity for States to recommit to providing legal and safe pathways to entry so that refugees are not forced to resort to alternative pathways that pose various risks to their safety and well-being.” Crisis responses should not come at the expense of other refugee groups nor should access to safe durable solutions be dependent on race, religion, or ethnicity. The RAG statement condemned the illegal deportation of refugees and called on states to uphold access to a fair and full asylum process for all refugees while supporting their inclusion, integration and participation in society. States were urged to increase their resettlement quotas, shorten resettlement processing times and increase opportunities for resettlement through community sponsorship and other complementary pathways.

Like refugee delegates from around the world, Australia’s refugee representatives were active through the three days of the ATCR, presenting, moderating and raising issues from the floor of the conference. Ahmad Shuja Jamal, a special advisor to RCOA who was evacuated from Afghanistan in August 2021, chaired the opening plenary on international resettlement responses to the crises in Ukraine and

Afghanistan. Bijan Kardouni, a refugee representative of the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), shared his experiences of seeking protection and his current role in education and advocacy in a session on the empowerment of LGBTIQI refugees. Chair of the National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group (NRAAG), Shabnam Safa, spoke about the development of the new model of community sponsorship in Australia from her perspective as a community development officer for Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia. Apajok Biar, a member of the ATCR Refugee Advisory Group based in Darwin, chaired the plenary session on the role of meaningful refugee participation in policy and governance.

NGOs echo refugee concerns about equity in resettlement

The [joint NGO statement](#), coordinated by Refugee Council USA and delivered by its CEO, John Slocum, echoed many of the concerns in the refugee statement, including the condemnation of states' externalisation of their responsibilities to protect refugees and concern about discrimination within resettlement processes. "While we applaud the flexibility of States in responding to emergency resettlement situations, particularly in the cases of Afghanistan and Ukraine, we strongly believe that other refugee populations fleeing from conflict internationally – Ethiopians, Rohingya, and Syrians, to name a few – should receive equal attention," the NGO statement said. "The principle of equity – equal protection for populations of heightened risk – should be a cornerstone of the global resettlement system."

The NGO statement argued that emergency refugee protection and resettlement responses should be additional to existing resettlement commitments, as should the admission of refugees through community sponsorship and complementary pathways such as labour mobility, education, family reunion and humanitarian channels. States should show more flexibility in providing refugees greater access to these pathways, ensuring that these options include settlement and legal support and a path to permanency.

The NGOs joined the High Commissioner and the refugee statement in expressing opposition to states entering into agreements to relocate certain asylum-seekers to third countries and investing heavily in preventing refugees from reaching their borders. "The states involved in this externalization of asylum policy abrogate their responsibility to protect particular groups of refugees and expect other states to step in to provide durable solutions, including through the reallocation of scarce resettlement places. The right to asylum is universal and states should not pick and choose who they will accept based on factors other than their need for protection."

States, NGOs and international organisations should work together, the NGO statement said, "to leverage the 'teachable moments' provided by such crises as Afghanistan and Ukraine to call attention to other emergency (and protracted) situations around the world, such as those in Ethiopia, Yemen, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Syria". The statement called also for refugee-led organisations to be given greater opportunities to shape public policy and contribute to international dialogue including through the ATCR, calling on states, NGOs and international organisations to employ more people with lived experience as experts in refugee protection.

Global resettlement needs for 2023

UNHCR released its [2023 Projected Global Resettlement Needs](#) document at the 2022 ATCR, nominating 2,003,982 refugees as being in urgent need of resettlement (a 36% increase on the previous year's estimate of 1,473,156). Those in priority need included 662,012 refugees in Africa, 417,200 in Turkey, 463,930 in the Middle East and North Africa, 383,010 in Asia and 77,830 in the Americas.

Table 1: UNHCR projected global resettlement needs, 2023

Region or sub-region of asylum	Total 2023 projected resettlement needs	%
East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes	485,241	24.2%
Southern Africa	60,561	3.0%
West and Central Africa	116,210	5.8%
Asia	383,010	19.1%
Turkey (Europe region)	417,200	20.8%
Middle East and North Africa	463,930	23.2%
The Americas	77,830	3.9%
Grand Total	2,003,982	100.0%

In putting the case for a substantial increase in resettlement, UNHCR said the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and discrimination faced by the world's refugees. "Increased risk of refoulement, detention and dangerous onward movement along with rising incidences of gender-based violence and refugees resorting to negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour, child marriage and survival sex, were noted across the globe. Refugees and other displaced persons faced further marginalization, stigmatization and xenophobia from local communities amongst instability and growing competition for increasingly scarce resources in many host countries," UNHCR noted in its *Global Resettlement Needs* document. Ongoing conflict and insecurity prevented many refugees from returning home in safety while efforts to become self-sufficient in countries of asylum were undermined by "weak, overstrained or non-existent asylum systems". This left resettlement as the key tool for the international community to protect refugees most at risk.

In 2021, UNHCR submitted 63,190 refugees for resettlement to 23 resettlement states. While this was an increase on 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic had the greatest impact on movement across borders, this was well below any of the previous five years.

Table 2: UNHCR resettlement submissions by region of asylum, 2015 to 2021 (persons)

Region of asylum	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes	32,392	34,785	18,039	27,119	24,393	9,179	16,517
Southern Africa	4,203	4,981	1,836	3,666	3,861	1,371	3,098
West and Central Africa	2,275	4,212	1,632	5,623	4,133	1,858	1,748
Asia and the Pacific	21,620	20,657	7,983	5,796	5,719	2,654	4,855
Europe	18,833	29,447	17,413	16,135	17,572	6,109	12,283
Middle East and North Africa	53,331	67,723	27,231	21,542	23,964	16,469	20,188
The Americas	1,390	1,401	1,054	1,456	2,029	1,894	4,501
TOTAL	134,044	163,206	75,188	81,337	81,671	39,534	63,190

As with previous years, the number of refugees resettled as a result of UNHCR referral was significantly below the number of resettlement submissions – just 39,266. While resettlement arrivals increased in 2021 on the previous year, the number was less than a third of that achieved in 2016 when the international resettlement response to displacement from Syria was at its height.

Of the 20 countries receiving UNHCR-referred refugees in 2021, Australia was ranked 14th with just 350 arrivals, well behind the United States (11,554), Canada (5,825), Germany (5,363), Sweden (5,036) and Norway (2,875). Even New Zealand (519) received more UNHCR-referred refugees in 2021. However, a comparison with the resettlement arrivals figures recorded in the statistical annexes for *UNHCR Global Trends Report 2021*¹ (see [Table 10](#)) shows that the Australian Government reported 3,343 refugee resettlement arrivals during the 2021 calendar year, with the bulk of resettlement to Australia occurring through processes which do not involve UNHCR. Canada resettled an even greater number (around 14,500) through non-UNHCR processes in 2021, overwhelmingly through its large-scale community sponsorship scheme. Canada easily had the largest overall resettlement program, with 20,403 arrivals in 2021 – 36% of the global total of 57,436.

Table 3: Resettlement arrivals, 2015 to 2021

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Resettlement arrivals referred by UNHCR	81,891	126,291	65,108	55,680	63,726	22,800	39,266
Resettlement arrivals reported by states ^{2*}	107,479	189,291	102,715	92,424	107,729	34,383	57,436

UNHCR's key priorities for resettlement

For 2023, UNHCR has increased the number of priority situations for resettlement from two to five. As in recent years, UNHCR is encouraging resettlement states to maintain a strong focus on the resettlement of:

- **Syrian refugees**, with 777,791 people identified as needing resettlement, nearly all of them in five host countries: Turkey (384,000), Lebanon (260,690), Jordan (69,500), Iraq (34,670) and Egypt (13,050). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disastrous impact on these host countries, exacerbating poverty, unemployment and food insecurity. Competition for jobs and access to social services has undermined social cohesion and worsened relationships between host communities and refugees.

¹ See Table 15 (Resettlement arrivals of refugees 2021) of UNHCR Global Trends 2021 annex - <https://www.unhcr.org/2021-global-trends-annex>

² As recorded in the statistical annexes to annual UNHCR Global Trends publications

- **Refugees in the Central Mediterranean Situation**, including 15 countries along the Central Mediterranean route and Rwanda. UNHCR has identified 394,600 refugees in need of resettlement in response to the movement of refugees across the Sahara Desert into North Africa and via sea routes towards Europe. Many of the people on the move are refugees from protracted situations, driven onwards by political instability, limited resources, and lack of opportunities. On the journey, many suffer abuses including extreme violence, forced labour, rape, prolonged confinement in isolation, sleep deprivation, starvation, dehydration, and kidnappings or trafficking.

Three additional refugee situations given new priority are:

- **Afghanistan Situation:** The mass forced displacement resulting from the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 has prompted UNHCR to reassess options for people who have fled the country, including people previously assessed as ineligible for international protection. UNHCR has assessed more than 250,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan (150,268) and Iran (105,400) as facing heightened protection risks and needing resettlement in 2023, as well Afghan refugees in Turkey (12,800), Indonesia (1,800), India (1,070) and Malaysia (848).
- **Rohingya Situation:** Noting that Rohingya people have experienced decades of systematic discrimination, statelessness and targeted violence in Rakhine state in Myanmar, UNHCR has identified more than 100,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Malaysia and other host countries as being in need of resettlement in 2023.
- **Venezuelan Situation:** With countries in Latin America and the Caribbean hosting around 5 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants (84% of the global total of more than 6 million), considerable numbers of Venezuelans remain in an irregular situation and face complex protection issues. As a result, UNHCR has identified 58,463 Venezuelans as needing resettlement in 2023.

Table 4: Global refugee resettlement needs for 2023, by country of origin and asylum

Top 10 countries of origin			Top 10 countries of asylum		
1	Syria	777,791	1	Turkey	417,200
2	Afghanistan	273,955	2	Lebanon	268,360
3	Democratic Republic of Congo	190,414	3	Pakistan	150,468
4	South Sudan	177,586	4	Uganda	125,403
5	Myanmar	114,066	5	Ethiopia	108,001
6	Somalia	66,309	6	Iran	107,400
7	Central African Republic	63,749	7	Bangladesh	92,000
8	Eritrea	59,622	8	Jordan	86,000
9	Venezuela	58,463	9	Tanzania	79,260
10	Sudan	56,875	10	Sudan	72,272
	All others	165,152		All others	497,618
	Total	2,003,982		Total	2,003,982

ATCR member states formed the Priority Situations Core Group (PSCG) in 2019 as a multilateral forum on resettlement and complementary pathways for refugees in identified priority situations. The PSCG focused initially on the Syria and Central Mediterranean situations. With the United States and Canada co-chairing since June 2021, the PSCG has expanded its scope to include the Afghanistan situation, facilitating a two-day Adjudicators Meeting online for resettlement practitioners and relevant specialists from 16 states in May 2022.

Australia's team at the 2022 ATCR

Australian delegates at the 2022 ATCR included the following refugee representatives: Apajok Biar and Joseph Youhana (ATCR Refugee Advisory Group), Shukufa Tahiri (supported by Department of Home Affairs), Shabnam Safa (NRAAG), Samia Mohamed (AMES Australia), Bijan Kardouni (STARTTS) and Ahmad Shuja Jamal (RCOA). NGO reps were Paul Power (RCOA), Sandra Elhelw Wright (Settlement Council of Australia), Rana Ebrahimi (MYAN Australia), Paris Aristotle (Foundation House), Christine Castley (Multicultural Australia), Yamamah Agha (SSI), Melika Sheikh-Eldin (AMES Australia), Vicki Mau (Red Cross) and Graham Thom (Amnesty International). The Department of Home Affairs was represented by Andrew Kiley and Shaun Choon. RCOA thanks the Department and each of the NGOs participating in the ATCR for their financial support the participation of Australia's refugee representatives.

UNHCR STATISTICS ON RESETTLEMENT SUBMISSIONS AND ARRIVALS

In its *Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2023*, UNHCR provides a series of statistics on resettlement submissions and departures in 2021 which provide insights into how resettlement states are responding to UNHCR requests to resettle refugees.³

Table 5: UNHCR-referred resettlement in 2021 by priority category

UNHCR priority category	Cases submitted	% cases	Persons submitted	Acceptance rates
Normal	13,339	81.1%	55,173	89.0%
Urgent	2,874	17.5%	7,399	85.0%
Emergency	230	1.4%	618	88.0%
TOTAL	16,443	100.0%	63,190	

Table 6: UNHCR-referred resettlement in 2021 by submission category

Category	Cases submitted	% cases submitted	Persons submitted
Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs	6,135	37.3%	22,821
Survivors of Violence and/or Torture	5,202	31.6%	19,630
Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions	741	4.5%	3,876
Women and Girls at Risk	2,742	16.7%	8,109
Children and Adolescents-At-Risk	1,216	7.4%	6,836
Medical Needs	366	2.2%	1,795
Family Reunification	41	0.2%	115
Others/Unspecified	0	0.0%	8
TOTAL	16,443	100.0%	63,190

Table 7: Acceptance rates of UNHCR submission in 2021, by country of origin (cases, not persons)⁴

Country of origin	Cases submitted	Cases accepted
Syria	5,034	91.0%
Democratic Republic of Congo	3,151	94.5%
Eritrea	1,165	95.5%
Sudan	1,018	92.5%
Myanmar	689	97.4%
Afghanistan	665	92.7%
Somalia	581	90.2%
Guatemala	520	97.7%
Venezuela	400	100.0%
South Sudan	387	82.9%
All others	2,833	47.5%
TOTAL	16,443	91.7%

Table 8: Resettlement departures by region of asylum, 2015 to 2021

Region of asylum	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes	18,781	33,858	13,610	15,388	18,774	4,831	9,585
Southern Africa	3,602	3,756	1,610	1,706	1,342	501	1,442
West and Central Africa	1,633	1,311	610	2,233	4,132	990	1,197
Asia and the Pacific	29,677	26,091	12,052	8,057	7,651	3,131	2,419
Europe	8,334	16,192	15,199	9,125	10,617	4,061	7,401
Middle East and North Africa	18,972	44,240	21,213	18,428	20,036	8,346	16,424
The Americas	892	843	743	743	1,174	940	798
TOTAL	81,891	126,291	65,037	55,680	63,726	22,800	39,266

³ Note that submissions, acceptances and departures do not necessarily occur within the same calendar year.

⁴ "Cases" refer to an individual or a family unit, with many cases involving more than one person.

Table 9: Resettlement departures in 2021, by country of origin and asylum

Rank	Country of origin	Refugees resettled	Rank	Country of asylum	Refugees resettled
1	Syria	17,519	1	Turkey	7,382
2	DR Congo	8,031	2	Lebanon	6,246
3	Sudan	3,185	3	Jordan	4,374
4	Afghanistan	1,506	4	Egypt	3,729
5	Eritrea	1,471	5	Rwanda	2,506
6	South Sudan	1,116	6	Tanzania	2,115
7	Somalia	1,045	7	Kenya	1,517
8	Myanmar	994	8	Uganda	1,451
9	Iraq	964	9	Ethiopia	1,090
10	Ethiopia	412	10	Malaysia	977
	All others	3,023		All others	7,879
	TOTAL	39,266		TOTAL	39,266

Table 10: Resettlement arrivals by receiving state, 2021

Country of resettlement	Arrivals referred by UNHCR	Arrivals referred by receiving states ⁵
Argentina	0	16
Australia	350	3,343
Belgium	960	963
Canada	5,825	20,403
Denmark	57	59
Finland	997	995
France	1,827	-
Germany	5,363	2,458
Iceland	57	57
Ireland	55	55
Italy	0	503
Lithuania	15	-
Netherlands	448	467
New Zealand	519	573
Norway	2,875	3,638
Portugal	301	299
Romania	80	75
Spain	521	521
Sweden	5,036	6,695
Switzerland	831	1,045
United Kingdom	1,595	1,591
United States	11,554	13,675
Uruguay	0	5
TOTAL	39,266	57,436

⁵ See Table 15 (Resettlement arrivals of refugees 2021) of UNHCR Global Trends 2021 annex - <https://www.unhcr.org/2021-global-trends-annex>

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT – JUNE 2022

REFUGEE STATEMENT

I Introduction

We, the Refugee Advisory Group (RAG), are pleased to have been directly involved in the planning and organizing of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) again this year, alongside the Co-Chairs: the United States Government, the NGO Focal Point, Refugee Council USA, and UNHCR.

This marks the second year that the Refugee Advisory Group has been involved in the ATCR throughout the planning phase since this practice was first implemented in 2021 by the then Co-Chairs: the Swiss Government, and the Swiss Refugee Council.

As millions of refugees around the globe, who are desperately seeking solutions to their daily needs and challenges, we are determined to find equitable, accessible, and durable solutions for those in need of protection. We welcome this opportunity to strengthen refugees' collaboration with States, UNHCR, NGOs, and other stakeholders within the ATCR community by meaningfully participating in this important dialogue on third country solutions.

Thank you for carving the space for refugees to contribute to the discussions consistent with Paragraph 34 of the UN's 2018 Global Compact on Refugees: "responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist." With the pandemic beginning to recede, and in keeping with this year's ATCR theme of "Rebuilding and Emerging Globally", we hope that, together, we can produce positive outcomes through collaborative approaches to global resettlement.

II Meaningful Refugee Participation

The ATCR began in 1995 and, 26 years later, in 2021 we collectively challenged the "tripartite" nature of the consultations by recognizing refugees as an integral partner in these discussions.

Refugees have gone from participating on an ad-hoc basis in the ATCR to now having a seat at the planning table alongside the Co-Chairs and helping to shape and co-design the agenda and identify priorities for discussion. The Representatives of the Refugee Advisory Group have participated voluntarily in weekly meetings with the Co-Chairs and directly contributed to decisions related to the planning of the WGR and ATCR including making decisions related to the themes and agenda. This year we have over 35 refugees attending including as part of the refugee delegation, NGO delegations, and as part of the official state delegations for the US and Canada. Beyond participation in the consultations, we have refugees as expert speakers contributing through their skills, experiences, and expertise on the majority of the panels throughout the ATCR toward the goal of a better global response system through the realization of meaningful refugee participation.

We endorse the Global Refugee-led Network's definition of meaningful refugee participation: "When refugees – regardless of location, legal recognition, gender, identity and demographics – are prepared for and participating in fora and processes where strategies are being developed and/or decisions are being made (including at local, national, regional, and global levels, and especially when they facilitate interactions with host states, donors, or other influential bodies), in a manner that is ethical, sustained, safe, and supported financially."ⁱ

It is important to note how historic this shift to refugee inclusion really is, and how far the process has come in such a short time. There was no discussion of direct refugee involvement in ATCR 15 or 20 years ago, but now the ATCR process is the leading mechanism within the global refugee regime to make real the commitment to meaningful refugee participation. All partners in the ATCR can take pride in this.

In particular, we recognize the role of the Co-Chairs of ATCR over the last four years: the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, and the United States for their efforts to support the meaningful participation of refugees and to champion the inclusion of refugees as a permanent part of ATCR activities and processes, for which all relevant stakeholders have responsibility. Collective investment in refugee participation is integral to constructive conversations.

To this end, we urge States, UNHCR, and NGOs to build on the work that has been done and continue to prioritize the inclusion of refugees within their structures and throughout all their activities by developing

mechanisms to promote the meaningful participation of refugees throughout the entirety of the process from planning to active participation and evaluation. We urge States, in particular, to include more representatives with lived experiences who can offer perspective, skills, and knowledge to their national delegations to all meetings of the global refugee regime, as demonstrated by Canada and the US. We also urge all partners to be inclusive in their hiring and selection practices to include refugees from marginalized groups regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background. Refugees at the ATRC should not be ‘otherized’. Rather, their participation should be intentional and grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression policies and practices.

Over the last year, the Refugee Advisory Group has focused on developing and strengthening our mechanism to ensure sustainability, legitimacy, and credibility. We developed a Terms of Reference and have transitioned from the Refugee Steering Group to the Refugee Advisory Group. The Terms of Reference bring more clarity on the appropriate number of members and duration of membership, feasibility of activities, and the best means to ensure knowledge transfer between members.

We recommend that the systematic and transformative engagement of refugees be formally embedded in the ATRC, through the establishment of a permanent ‘Refugee Co-Chair’, thus transitioning from a tripartite to a “quadripartite” process. This would represent a significant development in the role of refugees in the governance of one aspect of the refugee regime, namely the ATRC. The transition from the “ATCR” to the Annual Quadripartite Consultations on Resettlement — the “AQCR” — would embrace the importance of collaboration and partnerships as the foundations of the consultations, promote transparency, and stimulate the development of new and innovative ways to solve problems and improve resettlement for refugees.

III Resettlement

Refugee situations have increased in scope, scale, and complexity. Forcibly displaced persons — including refugees — now constitute more than one percent of the world’s population.ⁱⁱ Adding the accelerating climate crisis to the equation, that proportion is expected to grow to close to 15 percent by 2050, with the number of displaced individuals reaching 216 million according to some estimates,ⁱⁱⁱ or even potentially topping one billion.^{iv}

The global refugee population has more than doubled since 2012. At the end of 2021, the total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee their homes due to conflicts, violence, fear of persecution, and human rights violations was 89.3 million. This is more than double the 42.7 million people who remained forcibly displaced at the end of 2012.^v

With that, came a projected 80% increase in resettlement needs. During this same period, various challenges slowed resettlement on a global scale, and the number of individuals who have been resettled shrunk by more than half. If the collective international response is failing now — with depressingly low resettlement numbers exacerbated by the pandemic and ineffective local integration strategies — the situation will only become more desperate in the years to come.^{vi}

While the refugee regime was established to ensure protection for refugees and to find a solution to their plight, refugees globally face significant constraints on their rights and now wait an average of 20 years for a solution.^{vii}

Refugees, like other vulnerable groups, have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to processing delays, refugees around the world have struggled to find durable solutions and have suffered significant health and mental health consequences. The COVID 19 pandemic brought resettlement programs to a halt across the globe. While we’re encouraged to see travel restrictions being lifted, we are wary of the delays and backlogs the pandemic has caused and the consequences it could have on vulnerable refugees for years down the road.

Since the pandemic, there has been a record low number of resettlements globally. In 2022, as of April, there had been only 15,042 departures,^{viii} despite UNHCR estimating that immediate global resettlement needs for 2022 increased to 1,473,156 persons.^{ix} The number of places for resettlement offered by States continues to fall far short of the global needs.

We implore States to adopt innovative tools to speed track their resettlement programs, shorten their processing times, and increase their annual quotas. The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to various emergent situations around the world highlighted the need for more equitable practices around refugee selection. This is an opportunity for States to recommit to tackling challenges that face all

refugees no matter where they come from or how they look. We urge States to increase their resettlement quotas in the next few years to compensate for the record-low resettlement numbers which were exacerbated by the pandemic.

We further call on States to expand refugee resettlement schemes by prioritizing the most vulnerable, taking account of UNHCR's submission criteria, making ambitious pledges to welcome more refugees, and improving anti-fraud measures throughout case management processes with the support of UNHCR.

a) Complementary pathways

We are encouraged by the growing momentum for complementary pathways – thanks to the meaningful participation of refugees in this conversation. We hope that this growth will not detract from resettlement for protection needs. We urge States to expand their immediate use of complementary pathways through education, family, labor, and humanitarian channels with accessibility and equity in mind. Individuals entering through these channels should be granted equal access to resettlement, legal, health, and income support. The expanded use of complementary pathways should not detract nor take away from resettlement allocations for those in need of protection.

b) Community Sponsorship

We have seen huge mobilization of communities banding together to sponsor and welcome refugees fleeing conflict in the wake of the Afghanistan and Ukraine crisis. With a successful 40+ year history in Canada, this is an opportune moment for states to further promote community sponsorship so more refugees can be resettled in addition to the traditional humanitarian settlement programs. The global need for resettlement is rapidly increasing while pathways to resettlement remain scarce, and exacerbated by COVID-19. States should harness this untapped potential and desire of everyday citizens to play a practical and meaningful role in addressing the global refugee situation and expand their annual humanitarian intake by including community sponsorship as a pathway to resettle more refugees.

c) Creating Welcoming Communities with Intentionality

Successful resettlement hinges on continuous investment in newcomer-serving spaces to ensure that they are providing sustainable services. Many refugees lack access to long term support upon arrival in their third countries. We urge partners to work collaboratively to ensure that refugees and displaced persons have access to language learning, settlement and income support, and meaningful community connections. We also ask States and NGOs to ensure their hiring practices reflect the diversity and newcomer demographics in their communities so that the services they provide are culturally relevant to the newcomers in their areas.

d) Expanding Solutions which include Internally Displaced Persons and Stateless Persons

As the Refugee Advisory Group, we recognize and acknowledge that internally displaced persons and stateless persons are often left out of discussions on global solutions, despite the reality that the total number of forcibly displaced people encompasses refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people.

With conflicts around the world on the rise, humans will continue to seek pathways to safety. It is imperative that the international community do more to develop and expand durable solutions, to ensure people can realize their right to protection, without harm, especially in countries of origin. Finding durable solutions to displacement within countries is also critical in addition to resettlement opportunities and complementary pathways.

Addressing root causes of forced displacement such as poor governance, disregard for rule of law, human rights violations, transitional terrorism, ethnic cleansing, discrimination, political instability, the unequal share of natural resources, election fraud and malpractices, climate change, and extreme poverty must be a priority to all stakeholders in this room.

States and other stakeholders should leverage all available pathways to respond to the urgent protection needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons, and their urgent access to protection. Specifically, we urge all States to broaden the definition of the nuclear family, expand opportunities for community sponsorship, and develop and expand innovative complementary pathways like economic and educational mobility opportunities for refugees.

Greater international solidarity and responsibility sharing is required to ensure that we all step up efforts to advance solutions to forced displacement including for internal displacement and statelessness.

IV Non-discrimination

The Refugee Advisory Group would like to extend its gratitude to states which took immediate measures to respond to emergency crisis situations. The global support for Ukrainian refugees has been a heart-warming reminder of our shared responsibilities and the power of collective action. We witnessed how many countries corrected decades of debilitating processes to deliver a speedy response to the Ukrainian crisis. This presents an opportunity for growth and recommitment to tackle challenges that face all refugees, no matter where they're from or how they look. This is also an opportunity for States to recommit to providing legal and safe pathways to entry so that refugees are not forced to resort to alternative pathways that pose various risks to their safety and well-being.

Global response to crisis situations should not come at the expense of other refugee groups, nor should access to safe durable solutions be dependent on race, religion, or ethnicity. Many refugees are still in countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece, Libya, Niger, and many others and receiving very little attention or media coverage. In clear breaches of domestic and international law, we also witnessed the inhumane treatment of black and brown refugees at the border while fleeing Ukraine, and refugees being returned to unsafe countries of origin or stripped from their residency permits. These instances highlight the need for equitable responses to all individuals fleeing dangerous situations regardless of their race, faith, ethnicity, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

Those who escaped their countries of origin on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender fluidity, expression, and identity, as well as sex characters face discrimination on many levels, including death sentences by governments in some regions of the world, and in many ways face the phenomenon of being a minority within the minority. They are often met with homophobia, transphobia, and overall discrimination in their transit, host, and final destination countries and are grossly mistreated in their own communities. As a result, they receive little to no support in their communities and are often the victims of violence and physical and sexual abuse that they have no space to even report. The ingrained "shame" is so deep for them that even asking for help could lead to criminalizing them.

Mainstreaming Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) considerations in responses are essential to ensure that every person gets access to the safety and support that they require. Age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, belonging to ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous status, and other characteristics may lead to additional barriers to obtaining documents to access basic services, and in the worst case can put people at risk of harm and violence.

V Inhumane Deportation of Asylum Seekers

We strongly condemn recent attempts to illegally deport asylum seekers from the United Kingdom for processing in Rwanda. This partnership between the United Kingdom Rwanda is unlawful and incompatible with the Refugee Convention. Further, it does not contain adequate safeguards to guarantee international protection. Seeking asylum is a human right. However, in practice, policies such as these mean that asylum seekers will be treated as criminals.

Rwanda, whose own human rights record is under scrutiny, is not safe for transferred asylum seekers and there is a risk that some people could be returned to countries from which they had fled, in breach of the principle of non-refoulement under international law.

States remain the first duty bearers of international protection, and we call on you to uphold access to a fair and full asylum process for all refugees while supporting their inclusion, integration, and participation in society and to formally end the deportation of asylum seekers.

VI Climate-induced displacement

Climate change is already disproportionately affecting those experiencing forced displacement. The impacts of climate change are vast, and they worsen living conditions for internally displaced persons and refugees. Not only does the climate crisis exacerbate challenging living conditions, but it causes environments to be unsuitable for human life in the long term. If climate change is not addressed immediately, we can expect interrupted access to water, limited production of food, and mass movement away from hostile environments before the end of this century.^x If people cannot eat, cannot drink, and cannot sustain their families' lives, they will be forced to move and seek refuge elsewhere.

These situations are already occurring. Extreme weather events like hurricanes and landslides are becoming more common, affecting the most vulnerable among us. Only last year, extreme rain triggered

a landslide in Cox Bazar, claiming the lives of 6 refugees in Rohingya Camp 10.^{xi} Incidences like this one are horrifying reminders of how beholden human life is to the conditions of their environments.

Long-term trends of drought and water acidification will also continue to worsen and become more common if action is not taken immediately. The inevitable conflict for control over scarce resources must be avoided by taking steps now to protect our Earth.^{xii} This is an unprecedented issue that the global refugee regime has never had to grapple with in its 70+ year reign, but these modern problems require new solutions that bring together those in need and those in positions to help.^{xiii}

States must invest more to mitigate protection needs and decrease the impact of climate change on lives. Their actions must be prompt, focused on sustainable “green” solutions, and considerate of vulnerability and sexo-specific needs.

VII Conclusion

With new challenges facing global resettlement, we, the Refugee Advisory Group, commit to contributing to the ATCR in meaningful ways through our collective knowledge, skills, and perspectives to help advance collaborative approaches to refugee protection and global resettlement.

We view the challenges that have faced the global refugee regime in recent years as opportunities for advancement and recommitment to tackling current and future challenges associated with forced displacement, collaboratively.

Working in partnership with leaders with lived forced displacement experiences has huge potential to leverage effort and investment. This is an opportunity for all actors within the ATCR community to transform how they partner with the refugees in order to advance joint efforts during this global crisis, and beyond.

The Refugee Advisory Group comprises a group of people with lived experience as refugees including, global, regional, and national refugee-led networks as well as independent and local refugee advocates. The Refugee Statement was further developed after receiving input from refugee delegates to the ATCR from around the world.

ⁱ Global Refugee-led Network, “Meaningful Refugee Participation as Transformative Leadership: Guidelines for Concrete Action”, December 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/61b28b734/meaningful-refugee-participation-transformative-leadership-guidelines-concrete.html>

ⁱⁱ UNHCR, “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2021”, June 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021>

ⁱⁱⁱ World Bank, “Climate Change Could Force 216 Million People to Migrate Within Their Own Countries by 2050”, September 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/09/13/climate-change-could-force-216-million-people-to-migrate-within-their-own-countries-by-2050>

^{iv} Baher Kamal, “Climate Migrants Might Reach One Billion by 2050”, August 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-migrants-might-reach-one-billion-2050>

^v UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2021, supra note ii.

^{vi} R-SEAT, “End the tokenism. Give refugees a voice on our own futures”, The New Humanitarian, December 2021, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2021/12/15/give-refugees-a-voice-on-our-own-futures>

^{vii} Gil Loescher, *Refugees: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2021.

^{viii} UNHCR, “Resettlement Data January - April 2022”, <https://www.unhcr.org/resettlement-data.html>

^{ix} UNHCR, “Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2022”, <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/60d320a64/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2022-pdf.html>

^x UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2021, supra note ii.

^{xi} Islamic Relief Worldwide, “Devastating Landslide Claims Eight Lives In Cox’s Bazar”, July 2021 <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/devastating-landslide-claims-eight-lives-in-coxs-bazar/>

^{xii} UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2021, supra note ii.

^{xiii} UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2021, supra note ii.

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT (ATCR) 2022

NGO STATEMENT

We, the participating non-governmental organizations (NGO) of the 2022 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), held in Geneva 20-22 June 2022, offer the following policy goals to governments, international organizations, and other actors involved in refugee protection and resettlement.

Introduction

Much has changed in the world since the 2021 ATCR, with resulting effects on the global refugee resettlement system. While the COVID-19 global pandemic has begun to recede, humanitarian crises worldwide are increasing, placing further strains on the system.

As protracted refugee crises around the globe have continued to fester, new emergencies of forced displacement resulting from the end of the war in Afghanistan and the beginning of conflict in Ukraine have significantly increased the need for refugee protection and resettlement worldwide.

To compound matters, these new challenges come after a multi-year period in which global refugee resettlement has severely slowed due to the pandemic and, in some cases, political ideology. As a result, the capacity of governments, NGOs, and international organizations to adequately respond to these new crises has been weakened.

Given these new realities, the 2022 ATCR theme, “Reemerging and Building Globally” is timely. While there are new challenges to confront, there also are new opportunities to explore which, over time, could make the global refugee resettlement system more efficient and protective of a larger number of refugees.

Equity

While we applaud the flexibility of States in responding to emergency resettlement situations, particularly in the cases of Afghanistan and Ukraine, we strongly believe that other refugee populations fleeing from conflict internationally – Ethiopians, Rohingya, and Syrians, to name a few – should receive equal attention.

The principle of *equity* – equal protection for populations of heightened risk – should be a cornerstone of the global resettlement system. This includes equity in the following areas:

One nationality versus other nationalities. One nationality resettled in an emergency situation should not replace, or unreasonably delay, the resettlement of other nationalities in need.

Segments of a population who fled recently versus those who fled earlier. During an emergency situation, the refugees from a certain country who have resided outside of the country in protracted situations should not be replaced by the immediate resettlement of refugees who are only recently fleeing conflict in their country. For example, while Afghans in-country certainly required immediate evacuation, Afghans living outside of the country also require protection and as a result should not be pushed to the back of the resettlement line.

Refugees of one profile over another. Refugees with equally heightened protection needs should not be neglected in favor of refugees with certain profiles, such as those who worked for the resettlement country during a conflict. In addition, refugees deemed to have greater integration potential should not be prioritized over those in greater need.

Refugees in one location versus refugees in another location. Too often, refugees are prioritized for resettlement simply because they are easily accessible. Refugees in need of resettlement should have access to it regardless of where they happened to flee.

Refugee Protection status versus non-protection status. Resettled refugees should always be granted the appropriate protection status, irrespective of the scheme under which they arrive, or the crisis from which they have fled. We are deeply concerned to see that protection status is not being granted to people arriving through pathways developed in response to the situations in Afghanistan and Ukraine.

We also urge host governments to increase protection measures for refugees approved for resettlement but who continue to languish in dangerous situations for months or years, as they often can be at the height of vulnerability during this time.

Additionality

State commitments to the protection of refugee populations, including via resettlement, should not be forsaken as a result of the need to respond to unforeseen emergency resettlement situations. Refugees resettled under emergency circumstances should be counted *in addition* to resettlement commitments nations have made to other segments of a population or other populations globally.

The principle of *additionality* also should be applied to persons who relocate through complementary pathways. Refugees admitted through complementary pathways should be over and above resettlement quotas for a given country of resettlement and should not be a reason to reduce resettlement quotas in future years.

Expanding the use of complementary pathways. The use of labor, educational, family, and humanitarian legal channels, known as *complementary pathways*, as an alternative protection mechanism for refugees should be expanded. States should show more flexibility in permitting refugees to access these channels. In many situations, NGOs are particularly well positioned to assist and support refugees in accessing these pathways.

Complementary pathways should not be viewed, however, as a replacement for a robust resettlement program, which is designed to serve those most in need of protection. Complementary pathways should supplement the resettlement system by providing additional avenues of protection for refugees with special skills and academic credentials.

Moreover, refugees who enter under complementary pathways should be afforded social and legal supports provided to refugees who enter through a resettlement program, including a path to permanence.

Expanding the use of sponsorship. Similarly, an emerging innovation in refugee resettlement is the use of sponsorship—both community and private—as a way to resettle more refugees. Sponsorship can increase the capacity of a nation to receive refugees, build support for refugees in the community, and facilitate their integration into the society.

We urge states to continue to support and expand these options while maintaining governmental support for refugee resettlement.

Externalization

We are troubled by the recurring practice whereby states enter into agreements to relocate certain asylum-seekers to third countries and invest heavily in preventing refugees from reaching their borders.

The states involved in this *externalization* of asylum policy abrogate their responsibility to protect particular groups of refugees and expect other states to step in to provide durable solutions, including through the reallocation of scarce resettlement places. The right to asylum is universal and states should not pick and choose who they will accept based on factors other than their need for protection.

Encouraging public support for refugees

In certain emergency situations, such as in Afghanistan and Ukraine, the media coverage has been extensive, leading in most countries to increased public involvement in welcoming and supporting the populations.

While we are encouraged by this development, we are concerned that other refugee crises and refugee populations around the world do not receive the same coverage or attention. Without media attention and the political pressure that it can generate, many refugee populations languish in the pipeline for years.

States, NGOs, and international organizations should work together to leverage the "teachable moments" provided by such crises as Afghanistan and Ukraine to call attention to other emergency (and protracted) situations around the world, such as those in Ethiopia, Yemen, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Syria. We also should work together to discourage discrimination against certain refugee populations, particularly those in Africa.

Regardless of media coverage, governments should show the same urgency toward protracted refugee crises as they do toward emergency resettlement situations.

Protecting vulnerable refugee populations around the world

Refugees with special vulnerabilities around the world require protection, including resettlement support. Unaccompanied children, the disabled, the LGBTQI community, the elderly, victims of gender-based

violence, and vulnerable women with children require special attention due to their vulnerabilities and should be prioritized in the resettlement system.

States should provide appropriate social services to these refugees in order to facilitate their full integration into their new homes. The number of states which accept highly vulnerable refugees should be increased, so that the responsibility does not rest on a few states.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the protection and reunification of families and urge states and international organizations to employ a broad definition of a family unit.

Enhancing the involvement of refugees in policy-making

Refugees who have navigated the resettlement process are in a special position to advise governments, NGOs, and international organizations on how to improve the humanitarian aspects of their refugee protection policies, including their resettlement systems. Not only can they do so on a consultative basis, but also through their professional positions.

Refugee-led organizations also should be looked upon to shape public policy and contribute to the international dialogue. They also can be instrumental in helping refugees access available pathways.

We encourage governments, NGOs, and international organizations to continue to involve participants with lived experience in the ATCR process, but also to take the next step and employ them as experts in refugee protection.

Expanding protection mechanisms for persons displaced by climate change

The impact of climate change on global displacement continues to grow, with over 200 million expected to be displaced by 2050. Some island nations face devastation and elimination in the foreseeable future, while portions of other nations are becoming uninhabitable.

While climate displacement is not in itself grounds for refugee protection, there may be instances where climate change has exacerbated the vulnerability of refugees who otherwise qualify for resettlement. States also should find and develop mechanisms for protecting those displaced by climate change, including humanitarian avenues and other complementary pathways.

Support for the Third-Country Solutions for Refugees: Road Map 2030 and the ATCR Reform process

2021 marked the last year of the *Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*, born out of the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. We support the continuation of this process as a part of the *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Road Map 2030* as a way forward toward growing the global resettlement system and meeting the needs of refugees around the world.

We also support the work of the ATCR Reform Committee, which will make its final recommendations for changes to the ATCR in 2023. We look forward to reshaping the ATCR into a more inclusive, interactive, and diverse process in the future.

Conclusion

With the global pandemic abating and the number of refugees and displaced persons on the rise, the global resettlement field is at a crossroads. States, international organizations, and NGOs, diminished in their capacity by the pandemic, now face new challenges.

At the same time, emerging innovations in the resettlement field can help increase the capacity to help meet these challenges. The expanded use of complementary pathways, community and private sponsorships, and improved technology and communications is imperative.

Furthermore, NGOs can play an important role in assisting refugees to access complementary pathways and resettlement slots, while the private sector can help facilitate resettlement through donations, in-kind contributions, and employment assistance.

As NGOs committed to the protection of refugees around the world, we pledge to work with states, international organizations, and other global actors to create more flexibility and capacity in the global resettlement system. As the refugee crises of Afghanistan and Ukraine have demonstrated, states can show flexibility and respond quickly to emerging challenges when backed by public support and political will.

As tripartite partners, we have an opportunity to move beyond a business-as-usual approach and expand third country solutions for refugees in the years ahead.