

## AUSTRALIA TAKES ON LEADERSHIP OF RESETTLEMENT DIALOGUE AS UNHCR APPEALS FOR MORE SUPPORT

In response to growing displacement and resettlement needs globally, the UN refugee agency pleaded with states to expand and speed up resettlement processes and to increase opportunities for refugees to find long-term safety through other migration pathways. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi issued this appeal at the 2023 [Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement \(ATCR\)](#), a global gathering of over 250 delegates held in Geneva from 26-28 June. At ATCR, delegates heard that the number of refugees identified by UNHCR as being in urgent need of resettlement in 2024 had grown to 2.4 million – a 21% increase on the previous year's projection. In 2022, fewer than 4% of refugees in need were able to access resettlement, with resettlement departures at 57,483 persons. This was less than 0.2% of the global refugee population at the end of 2022.



Noting that the expanded role of refugee representatives meant the consultations were no longer only tripartite (i.e., UNHCR, governments and NGOs), ATCR delegates voted to rename the annual gathering the 'Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways' (CRCP) in recognition of its expanded representation and focus. In the ATCR closing session, the chairing role was handed from Ireland to Australia. RCOA will work with the Department of Home Affairs, the CRCP Refugee Advisory Group and UNHCR to plan a series of meetings, which will include a working group meeting in Australia in early 2024 focused on post-arrival settlement support and the main CRCP meeting in Geneva in June 2024.

### 1. High Commissioner calls for more resettlement within strengthened protection framework

High Commissioner Grandi spoke about the challenges facing the world today, with a compelling need for the international community to step up in response to new displacement crises (Ukraine and Sudan) while retaining commitments to finding solutions for populations from Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo experiencing increasingly protracted displacement. Echoing comments made in previous years, 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 more emphasis on those at greatest need. As well as providing a lifeline of hope and protection to those facing extreme risks, Mr Grandi emphasised the need for resettlement to play a considered role in relieving the pressure on host countries and strengthening broader protection frameworks.

Mr Grandi called for greater attention on the protection of refugees who won't be resettled and for governments and civil society to continue to work together to build momentum to expand refugees'

access to complementary migration pathways – through community sponsorship, labour mobility, education pathways, sports pathways, humanitarian corridors and family reunion. In this, the Philippines was acknowledged for opening up a higher education pathway for Rohingya refugees, as were countries which provided safe migration pathways for Ukrainians over the past 12 months.

## 2. Global resettlement outcomes, needs and priorities for 2024

ATCR provided an opportunity for delegates to hear about global resettlement needs, priorities and achievements from the perspective of the UN refugee agency. As in previous years, UNHCR released its [Projected Global Resettlement Needs](#) document at the 2023 ATCR. In this, UNHCR nominated **2,420,072 refugees as in need of resettlement** in 2024 – a 21% increase on the previous year’s estimate of 2,003,982. The large increase in needs reflects the growing number of refugees worldwide, which had its largest yearly increase ever on record (from 27.1 million in 2021 to 35.3 million at the end of 2022), and the concerning trend of new emergencies and protracted refugee situations globally.

Those in priority need included 735,314 refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, 729,992 in Asia, 464,126 in the Middle East and North Africa, 384,190 in Europe (predominantly Türkiye), and 106,450 in the Americas. The most significant change in needs compared to last year was in the Asia region, with resettlement needs from this region nearly doubling from last year’s projection of 383,010.

Table 1: UNHCR projected global resettlement needs in 2024, by region

Region or sub-region of asylum	Total 2024 projected resettlement needs	%
Sub-Saharan Africa regions combined	735,314	30.3
<i>(East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes)</i>	<i>(559,791)</i>	<i>(23.1)</i>
<i>(West and Central Africa)</i>	<i>(112,350)</i>	<i>(4.6)</i>
<i>(Southern Africa)</i>	<i>(63,173)</i>	<i>(2.6)</i>
Asia	729,992	30.2
Middle East and North Africa	464,126	19.2
Europe	384,190	15.9
The Americas	106,450	4.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,420,072</b>	<b>100.0</b>

For 2024, UNHCR retained the same five **priority situations for resettlement**. As in recent years, UNHCR is encouraging resettlement states to maintain a strong focus and provide quotas to address the needs of refugees amongst these situations:

- **Afghan Situation** - There are 5.2 million individuals from Afghanistan living as refugees or in a refugee-like situation in the Asia region, primarily in Pakistan and Iran. UNHCR has identified 497,000 Afghans in need of resettlement. Coordinated efforts towards durable solutions are being conducted within the framework of the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(SSAR\)](#), whose objectives include “preserving protection space in host countries, including enhanced support for refugee-hosting communities, alternative temporary stay arrangements for the residual caseload, and resettlement in third countries.”
- **Rohingya Situation** – Since early 2021, political upheaval and conflict in Myanmar have resulted in new displacement, adding to the already protracted situation of refugees from Myanmar throughout Asia. This includes over one million Rohingya refugees in the region, particularly Bangladesh, Malaysia and India, as well as the over 150,000 Karen, Karenni and other ethnic minorities from Myanmar in Thailand, Malaysia, India and elsewhere in the region. UNHCR have identified 240,993 refugees from Myanmar in priority need of resettlement – including 129,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh – and are calling for large-scale group resettlement programs from Bangladesh and Thailand.
- **Venezuelan Situation** - Approximately 106,500 refugees in the Americas region are projected to be in need of resettlement in 2024, with Venezuelans accounting for 75 per cent of these needs. Major host countries include Peru, Colombia and Ecuador.

- **Syria situation** - Over 464,000 refugees are estimated to be in need of resettlement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Syrian refugees account for 86 per cent of the region's needs as the Syrian crisis extends to its 13th year. Syria tops the resettlement needs list by country of origin for the eighth consecutive year.
- **Central Mediterranean Situation** – UNHCR have identified over 474,000 refugees to be in need of resettlement across 15 countries of asylum in the East and Horn of Africa Region, West and Central Africa Region and North Africa Region.

Table 2: Global refugee resettlement needs for 2024, by country of origin and asylum<sup>1</sup>

Top 10 countries of origin			Top 10 countries of asylum		
1	Syria	753,854	1	Türkiye	384,070
2	Afghanistan	496,657	2	Iran	345,215
3	South Sudan	250,739	3	Lebanon	250,120
4	Myanmar	240,993	4	Ethiopia	192,831
5	Democratic Republic of Congo	146,702	5	Uganda	134,936
6	Eritrea	89,520	6	Pakistan	133,897
7	Venezuela	78,664	7	Bangladesh	129,000
8	Somalia	77,238	8	Jordan	101,884
9	Sudan	60,853	9	Thailand	91,500
10	Central African Republic	57,720	10	Sudan	83,215
	All others	167,132		All others	573,404
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2,420,072</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>2,420,072</i>

As well as laying out needs and priorities, the [Projected Global Resettlement Needs in 2024](#) document reported achievements for the previous year. UNHCR reported a significant **increase in the number of refugees submitted for resettlement** to different states in 2022, with submissions made for 116,512 people from 93 countries of asylum. This is almost double the 63,190 submissions made in 2021 by the agency, although still below what was achieved in 2016.

Table 3: UNHCR resettlement submissions by region of asylum, 2016 to 2022 (persons)

Region of asylum	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 <sup>2</sup>
East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes	34,785	18,039	27,119	24,393	9,179	16,517	30,131
Southern Africa	4,981	1,836	3,666	3,861	1,371	3,098	6,864
West and Central Africa	4,212	1,632	5,623	4,133	1,858	1,748	3,915
Asia	20,657	7,983	5,796	5,719	2,654	4,855	21,300
Europe	29,447	17,413	16,135	17,572	6,109	12,283	20,406
Middle East and North Africa	67,723	27,231	21,542	23,964	16,469	20,188	37,148
The Americas	1,401	1,054	1,456	2,029	1,894	4,501	9,413
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163,206</b>	<b>75,188</b>	<b>81,337</b>	<b>81,671</b>	<b>39,534</b>	<b>63,190</b>	<b>116,512</b>

As with previous years, the number of **refugees resettled as a result of UNHCR referral was significantly below the number of resettlement submissions made** – with only 58,457 departures reported.<sup>3</sup> Overall, refugees resettled through UNHCR-referred processes accounted for just over half of all resettlement arrivals reported by states.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics taken from Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2024 [online database](#), accessed 24 July 2023.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR's Projected Global Resettlement Needs document no longer reports UNHCR submissions in table form. Statistics on submissions by region have been taken from regional narratives in the [PGRN 2024](#) report, with some discrepancy in regional and consolidated totals.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcr-global-refugee-resettlement-needs-grow-2024>

<sup>4</sup> State reporting of resettlement arrivals include those referred through programs like Australia's Special Humanitarian Program, where referral is by a proposer in Australia.

Table 4: Resettlement arrivals by referral type, 2016 to 2022

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Resettlement arrivals referred by UNHCR	126,291	65,108	55,680	63,726	22,800	39,266	58,457
Resettlement arrivals reported by states	189,291	102,715	92,424	107,729	34,383	57,436	114,242

While **resettlement arrivals globally increased in 2022** on the previous year, the number was still below what was achieved in 2016 when the international resettlement response to displacement from Syria was at its height. Of the 21 countries that received resettled refugees in 2022 (through both UNHCR and other referral processes), Australia was ranked third with 17,325 arrivals, behind Canada (47,550) and the United States (28,945). Refugees resettling in Canada, the United States and Australia made up 82% of all resettlement arrivals in 2022, with Canada’s program accounting for 42.6% of global resettlement numbers.

Table 5: Resettlement arrivals by country, 2022<sup>5</sup>

Country of resettlement	Arrivals	Country of resettlement	Arrivals
1. Canada	47,550	12. Switzerland	611
2. United States of America	28,945	13. Ireland	201
<b>3. Australia</b>	<b>17,325</b>	14. Denmark	150
4. Germany	4,458	15. Romania	88
5. Sweden	3,740	16. Belgium	71
6. Norway	3,124	17. Korea, South	67
7. France	3,045	18. Italy	63
8. Netherlands	1,394	19. Japan	35
9. United Kingdom	1,188	20. Argentina	10
10. Spain	1,111	21. Uruguay	5
11. New Zealand	1,061	<b>Total</b>	<b>114,242</b>

### 3. Importance of refugee representation recognised in re-naming of ATCR

Chaired by Government of Ireland, [Nasc Ireland](#) (as NGO co-chair), the ATCR Refugee Advisory Group and UNHCR, the 2023 ATCR had greater refugee representation than any previous ATCR event. More than 40 delegates of lived refugee experience participated as official refugee delegates or on NGO or government delegations. The decision to drop ‘Tripartite’ in renaming this annual gathering the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways recognises the **fundamental importance of refugee representation in this global dialogue**.

Represented on nearly all panel discussions as speakers or moderators, the refugee delegates delivered a powerful joint statement (see appendix for full statement) in which they urged states, UNHCR and NGOs to prioritise the inclusion of refugees within their structures and throughout all their activities, from planning to active participation and evaluation, reminding delegates that “solutions always fall short in terms of efficiency and legitimacy if they do not fully engage and incorporate the insights and leadership of those directly affected”.

Delivered by ATCR Refugee Advisory Group (RAG) co-chair Mustafa Alio, **the refugee statement** drew attention to the consequences of a lack of safe migration pathways, acknowledging the tragic loss of lives of refugees seeking protection and perishing at sea. The RAG called for renewed international efforts to address root causes of displacement, drew attention to the inequity of international responses to different crises and the need for continued support for refugees in protracted displacement contexts, and for the streamlining of administrative procedures to reduce waiting times. The desperate need to expand resettlement and other complementary pathways was also highlighted, including for vulnerable populations (unaccompanied minors, survivors of torture or trauma, women at risk and the LGBTQI community) and to uphold the sanctity of family by ensuring timely family reunification.

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR 2022 Global Trends statistical annex, data table 15



**Eight refugee representatives** participated in ATCR from Australia, four of whom joined as members of the Australian delegation (Beny Bol OAM, Helena Hassani, Sayed Momtaz Shah and Mohammed Yassin) and four as members of the global ATCR Refugee Advisory Group (Noor Azizah, Apajok Biar, Najeeba Wazefadost and Joseph Youhana). These representatives were active through the three days of the ATCR, presenting, moderating and raising issues from the floor.



*Left: Members of the ATCR Refugee Advisory Group stand up to have their work acknowledged, including Joseph Youhana (second from left) and Noor Azizah (fourth from left) from Australia. Right: Members of the Australian delegation (from right): Mohammed Yassin (refugee representative), Sandra Elhew Wright (SCOA), Sayed Momtaz Shah (refugee representative), Paul Power (RCOA) and Helena Hassani (refugee representative).*

President of the Queensland African Communities Council **Beny Bol OAM** was one of four panellists on the final day plenary focused on “Named sponsorship and resettlement”. Beny spoke powerfully about the impact of named sponsorship programs like Australia’s Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) in enabling families to reunite and for communities to grow in ways that strengthens and facilitates settlement outcomes. In recognising the limitation of a lack of SHP places, Beny described the notable differences between humanitarian entrants who have been able to sponsor loved ones and those who have not, with those able to reunite seeming stronger, healthier and more resilient. Beny acknowledged the important partnership between communities and the Australian government in initiatives like the SHP, where costs are shared.



*Left: Beny Bol OAM speaks on panel on named refugee sponsorship. Right: Beny asks a question from the floor at session on resettlement needs and the Central Mediterranean region.*

Representing the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, Sydney-based **Najeeba Wazefadost** spoke on a plenary on ‘refugee perspectives on the resettlement process and access to complementary’ about the need for expanded access to education pathways for refugees, advancements being made in countries like the Philippines and Japan, but also challenges that need to be overcome to unlock access to this important complementary pathway for more refugees. Alice Springs-based ATCR Refugee Advisory Group co-chair **Apajok Biar** closed the first day of the gathering by facilitating a

Q&A session with the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs. In this session, Apajok drew out key insights from the Assistant High Commissioner, who spoke about the devastating consequences of a massive short-fall of funding to support refugees in host countries and how resettlement states can work cooperatively to ease pressure. **Joseph Youhana**, also a member of the RAG, moderated a session on “ensuring equitable resettlement in the face of crises response” in which speakers from the Spanish, Canadian and German governments discussed responses to recent humanitarian crises and the challenges of ensuring equity and consistency in immigration policies and practices in the context of crisis.



Left: Apajok Biar facilitates Q&A with Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs. Right: Joseph Youhana draws out government speakers at session on equitable responses to crises.

**Sayed Momtaz Shah** from Adelaide presented on a panel focused on resettlement and the Afghan situation, speaking about Australia’s response to the Taliban takeover in 2021 from his experience supporting Afghan evacuees as a senior case manager at AMES in South Australia. Melbourne-based **Mohammed Yassin** presented on a session on ‘Monitoring and evaluating resettlement integration outcomes’, speaking powerfully on the need for settlement programs to be agile, adaptive, holistic, and aimed at achieving sustainable change. In this, Mohammed called for improved evaluation methods, better model development, centralised and de-identified datasets that include self-assessment data, and that, above all, “the voices of refugees must guide our policies” (read more about Mohammed’s presentation [here](#)).



Sayed Momtaz Shah (left) and Mohammed Yassin (right) speak as panellists at sessions on the Afghan situation and how to improve monitoring, evaluation and design of settlement programs.

Perth-based Global Manager of [Pathway Club](#), **Ali Wawi**, was one of the virtual speakers at ATCR this year, speaking at a session on “financing the expansion of third country solutions” about how this innovative refugee-led initiative contributes to addressing financial barriers facing refugees accessing labour mobility schemes.



#### 4. NGOs echo refugee concerns about equity in resettlement

A **joint NGO statement** coordinated by Nasc Ireland and delivered by its CEO, Fiona Hurley, echoed some of the key themes in the refugee statement (full statement in appendix). In particular, the global NGO community called on greater attention to **equity in resettlement responses**, acknowledging that “while there have been many positive examples of adaptive and effective crisis responses across resettlement countries in recent years, inequity has arisen between different cohorts of displaced people”. The statement also called on commitments from all stakeholders to support **meaningful refugee participation**, including in the co-design of policy and programs around complementary pathways.

Among the NGO community’s eight key points was a call for states to retain the integrity and focus of resettlement efforts by ensuring that **complementary pathways are additional to resettlement programs**, and that other migration pathways for refugees are durable and access facilitated through coordinated efforts to address the issue of travel documents. NGOs encouraged states to consider and implement **innovative and sustainable partnerships** with civil society and other community organisations, fostering a whole-of-society response and harnessing the expertise of different actors to address issues such as access to housing. The need for **longer-term integration supports** and **more effective monitoring and evaluation** of resettlement and integration programs was highlighted, as was **greater investment in departure countries** to bolster identification systems and pre-departure supports in countries of asylum, including working with, and appropriately resourcing, NGO and refugee-led organisation partners globally.

A number of Australian NGO representatives (including RCOA, SCoA and SSI) contributed to the drafting of the global NGO statement and to the planning of and success of this year’s ATCR. **Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) CEO Paul Power** was active on the ATCR Reform Committee that had worked over the previous two years to strengthen the coordination and focus of the meetings and the engagement of different stakeholders in ATCR processes. Paul spoke with RAG member Anila Noor on the outcomes of this reform process, which included the renaming of the meeting and the introduction of some hybrid sessions to enable virtual participation. **Rana Ebrahimi** from **Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) Australia** spoke as a panellist on a session focused on “Addressing barriers in the reception and integration of individuals with diverse needs”. Rana drew on the extensive experience within MYAN Australia’s network to talk about refugee young people’s settlement experiences and the need for intersectional approaches.



Left: RCOA’s Paul Power speaks about the outcomes of the ATCR reform process with RAG member Anila Noor. Right: MYAN Australia Director Rana Ebrahimi presents on panel on inclusion of young people.

Following the official close of ATCR, a series of side meetings also featured Australian NGOs, with colleagues from **Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB)** co-leading the work of the Global Taskforce on Refugee Labour Mobility, and Lisa Button of **Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA)** speaking at a EU-Passworld side event on “Engaging Communities in Education and Labour Pathways” and how CRSA and TBB have collaborated in finding innovative solutions to supporting refugees coming through Australia’s skilled refugee pilot with much-needed settlement support.

## 5. Consultations focus on key areas of resettlement policy and practice

The overarching theme of the 2023 ATCR was “**Learning in Crisis: Building Solutions Together**”. This was reflected in the agenda, which explored topics including how to approach equitable resettlement in the face of crises. While breakout sessions gave delegates an opportunity to hear about population- or region-specific needs and responses with regard to UNHCR’s five priority areas (see Section 2), broader discussions focused on **how to expand resettlement and other migration pathways**, including how to grow resettlement programs in states with more modest programs (see Table 5), how to finance and create multi-stakeholder collaborations to expand complementary pathways, and how momentum on resettlement and complementary pathways can be harnessed through [joint pledges](#) leading up to the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023.

A number of sessions explored **practical challenges and approaches to resettlement and integration**, such as the role of art and sport in mental health and integration, addressing barriers to reception and integration for refugees with diverse needs, evaluation and monitoring of integration outcomes, and the implications of technology innovations for refugee case management. A main plenary on **accommodation solutions**, moderated by Andrew Kiley from the Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division in Australia’s Department of Home Affairs, provided a showcase of housing initiatives from Ireland, Canada and the United States. These presentations highlighted that the challenge of access to and affordability of accommodation for resettled refugees is one felt in many different countries, putting Australia’s own housing crisis into a broader global perspective. The initiatives showcased how NGOs, governments, the private sector and community groups have found ways to access under-utilised housing stocks, share information, and develop promising programs. [Refugee Housing Solutions](#), for example, is a US initiative aimed at expanding access to quality housing for refugees and newcomers by facilitating connections to real estate agents and landlords willing to rent to refugees.

## 6. Australia’s team at the 2023 ATCR

Australian delegates at the 2023 ATCR included the following **refugee representatives**: Apajok Biar, Joseph Youhana, Najeeba Wazefadost, Noor Azizah (ATCR Refugee Advisory Group), Beny Bol, Sayed Momtaz Shah, Helena Hassani and Mohammed Yassin (Australian delegation). **NGO representatives** were Paul Power, Louise Olliff (RCOA), Sandra Elhelw Wright (Settlement Council of Australia), Rana Ebrahimi (MYAN Australia), Paris Aristotle (Foundation House), Rose Dash (Multicultural Australia), Yamamah Agha (SSI), Nic Batch (Red Cross), Graham Thom (Amnesty International), Steph Cousins (Talent Beyond Boundaries) and Lisa Button (Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia). The **Department of Home Affairs** was represented by Andrew Kiley, Kelly Gwyn, Andrew Rose and Laura Thomas.

RCOA thanks the Department and each of the NGOs participating in the ATCR for their financial support for the participation of Australia’s refugee representatives.





**ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS ON RESETTLEMENT – JUNE 2023**

**REFUGEE STATEMENT**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, with a heart filled with both hope and pain, I stand before you as a representative of the Refugee Advisory Group. My spirit is ignited by the tales of resilience, bravery, and indescribable tribulations endured by millions of refugees worldwide. Their stories embody the depth of human suffering and the unwavering hope that drives them forward.

As refugees seeking asylum and resettlement, we have experienced firsthand the fears and hopes that propel these desperate journeys. We have also tasted the immense relief and gratitude that come when given a chance at safety. We are not just numbers or statistics; we are individuals – mothers, fathers, children, and elders – all with dreams and aspirations akin to yours.

Amidst this discourse, it is imperative to address the paramount challenges refugees face, we cannot overlook the vital role of access to third-country solutions. These solutions offer more than just a lifeline to those uprooted by conflict and persecution; they enable refugees to contribute to their adopted societies, including cultural enrichment, economic growth, and an exchange of ideas, all reflecting the transformative power of humanitarian action and global solidarity.

Simultaneously, the painful reality of refugees risking and losing their lives while seeking protection and perishing at sea like the recent Mediterranean tragedy tugs at our collective conscience, casting a stark light on the dangers they face when safe resettlement pathways are lacking. These tragic losses underscore the urgency to bolster and broaden safe resettlement channels, striving to prevent further loss of life and provide refugees the chance for a fear-free existence. Ultimately, our shared goal should be creating a world where refugees find solace, security, and the opportunity to rebuild their lives amidst compassionate and steadfast support.

As we delve deeper into the multifaceted issues surrounding refugee resettlement, it is crucial to transition our focus towards exploring various topics and recommendations put forth by the Refugee Advisory Group and other refugee leaders from different parts of the world. These recommendations aim to enhance third-country solutions and call upon stakeholders to be fully aware of the pressing challenges at hand. By engaging in a comprehensive dialogue that encompasses these vital aspects, we can collectively pave the way for more effective, compassionate, and sustainable solutions that uphold the rights and dignity of refugees.

**A. First and foremost**, let us recognize that in our efforts to increase access to third country solutions and overcome the challenges that arise, it is imperative that we also confront the root causes of displacement. We cannot engage in discussions solely focused on resettlement without addressing the undercurrents that tear families apart and compel individuals to abandon their homes in search of safety and freedom. Poverty, conflict, persecution, and environmental degradation are among the complex factors that drive people to flee. It is our responsibility to confront these injustices with unwavering empathy and determination. Merely addressing the symptoms of displacement is not sufficient; we must confront the root causes head-on.

By prioritizing poverty alleviation, promoting peace, and championing human rights, we pave the way for a world where displacement becomes a relic of the past. Let us embark on this collective journey, fueled by our shared commitment to building a future where every individual finds solace, security, and the opportunity to thrive.

**B. It deeply pains us** to witness how the needs of refugees in ongoing and past crises are often overshadowed or neglected when the global community focuses solely on new or seemingly more appealing crises. We cannot allow these new challenges to further torment the already vulnerable refugees who are caught in the arduous process of resettlement. While gratefully witnessing encouraging expedited visa processes for new crises, the global community should not let old and ongoing crises face longer wait times as human and political resources are diverted to situations that have more news converge.

It is essential to recognize that these delays represent more than mere numbers or statistics; they represent lives put on hold, dreams shattered, and hopes slipping away. It is both our moral imperative and in our best interest to ensure that these individuals do not bear the brunt of new crises, but instead find solace and safety in a world that often fails them. We must prioritize the well-being of refugees, irrespective of whether their situations are ongoing or past, and ensure that their needs and rights are respected and addressed.

By acknowledging the importance of continuity and compassion in our approach to refugee crises, we can strive to build a more inclusive and empathetic global community. Let us stand together and work tirelessly to ensure that the ongoing and unresolved situations faced by refugees are not overshadowed or neglected, but rather receive the attention and support they deserve. Only then can we create a world where all refugees are afforded the opportunity to rebuild their lives and find a sense of belonging and security.

**C. Having recognized the challenges faced by refugees** in ongoing and past crises, we must also acknowledge the complex administrative procedures that further complicate their journey towards resettlement. These procedures create a maze of despair, testing their resilience and shaking not only their faith in humanity but also their faith in the world. Waiting times, which often stretch into an average of over 20 years according to UNHCR, subject them to prolonged uncertainty that takes a severe toll on their mental and physical well-being.

Waiting for extended periods not only affects refugees individually but also carries catastrophic consequences that extend beyond their immediate well-being. It is important to stress that the loss of faith in humanity and the hope for a better life can lead to profound emotions of disillusionment, despair, and even desperation.

These emotional struggles can have far-reaching effects, encompassing social, economic, and political ramifications that transcend borders. Therefore, it is essential to address the lengthy waiting times and provide not just timely and efficient solutions for logistical matters, but also the necessary mental health support and resources.

By streamlining administrative procedures, reducing waiting times, and offering the necessary support and resources, we can restore their faith in a decent future. This not only benefits refugees themselves but also fosters stability, compassion, and resilience within the global community.

**D. Building on the previous points**, it's obvious that resettlement and complementary pathway programs hold the promise of a new beginning, a chance for refugees to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. However, the current quotas and commitments by governments fall far short of the need. We must rise above complacency and advocate for increased quotas to resettle more refugees, especially those trapped in protracted situations or facing acute protection needs.

While UNHCR's Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2023 report indicated that over 2 million refugees are in need of resettlement globally, millions more are eligible for resettlements in the absence of alternative durable solutions, underscoring the inadequacy of current quotas. It is not enough to offer token gestures of support; we must demonstrate unwavering solidarity and commitment to those in desperate need of our attention and support.

**E. Furthermore, Climate change remains a deeply concerning driver of displacement**, contributing significantly to the growing number of refugees in need of protection and access to solutions in third countries. Year after year, its impact leads to forced displacement, exacerbating the global refugee crisis. Urgent action is required to address this pressing issue and provide assistance to those affected by the consequences of climate change.

It is crucial to recognize the continuous rise in climate-induced displacement and prioritize efforts to support and protect these vulnerable populations seeking refuge in other nations.

**F. In addition to urgently addressing quotas**, we must unleash the full power of compassion by exploring and establishing transformative complementary pathways. These pathways, including labour mobility, humanitarian visas, private sponsorship programs, education pathways, and family reunification, provide not just additional opportunities, but lifelines of hope that empower refugees, giving them the chance to rise above adversity and unleash their talents to uplift their host communities and leave an indelible mark on our collective human story. By embracing and

expanding these visionary pathways alongside the essential traditional avenues for resettlement, we unleash the potential for a world that thrives on inclusivity and prosperity.

Increasing quotas for resettlement and complementary pathways is not just an act of benevolence; it is an investment in our collective future. By enabling refugees to enhance their skills and contribute to their host countries, we foster economic growth, cultural diversity, and social cohesion. Let us recognize that our arrival is not a burden but an opportunity—an opportunity to enrich societies, challenge preconceptions, and build bridges of understanding.

**G. Family reunification is not a mere bureaucratic procedure;** it is the mending of shattered bonds and the restoration of love, trust and belonging. Let us advocate for simplified procedures, reduced waiting times, and increased support to navigate the complex requirements of family reunification. We must ensure that families torn apart by displacement are swiftly and compassionately reunited.

By honouring the sanctity of family, we provide refugees with the foundation they need to rebuild their lives and find solace in the embrace of loved ones.

**H. In the face of vulnerability,** let us prioritize the resettlement of the most vulnerable populations. Unaccompanied minors, survivors of torture or trauma, women at risk, the LGBTQI community, and those with severe medical conditions need our unwavering support and protection throughout the resettlement process.

Their unique needs and experiences demand special attention and care. It is through our commitment to their well-being that we restore their faith in humanity and provide them with the chance to heal, grow, and thrive.

**I. Legal assistance and protection services are the lifelines of justice and dignity.** Every refugee deserves access to legal aid, documentation support, and protection from exploitation and abuse. Let us ensure that no refugee is left vulnerable to the injustices of an unfamiliar legal system.

By providing legal assistance, we empower refugees to assert their rights, seek justice, and rebuild their lives on a foundation of fairness and equality. Let us be their allies in the pursuit of justice.

**J. Education, employment, and social integration in resettlement countries** are vital components of a comprehensive third country solution for refugees. Strong integration programs play a crucial role in facilitating these aspects and ensuring the overall success of the integration process.

When we talk about education, it goes beyond simply providing refugees with access to schools and classrooms. It involves creating tailored programs that recognize the unique needs and challenges faced by refugees. By offering language courses, vocational training, and academic support, these initiatives equip refugees with the necessary tools to navigate their new environment and build a brighter future for themselves and equally for their hosting communities.

In parallel, employment opportunities specially the meaningful opportunities are essential for refugees to achieve self-sufficiency and economic independence. Integration programs should focus on bridging the gap between refugees' existing skills and the local job market. This can be done through skills training, job placement services, and entrepreneurship support. By connecting refugees with meaningful employment, we enable them to support themselves and their families, enhancing their sense of dignity and belonging.

Lastly, education and employment alone are not enough. Social integration programs are equally crucial to foster a sense of belonging and create inclusive communities. Such programs aim to break down barriers and stereotypes, promoting interaction and understanding between refugees and the host population. They also facilitate cultural exchange, community engagement, and social support networks, enabling refugees to build relationships, establish connections, and feel accepted. By nurturing inclusive societies, we create environments where refugees can not only survive but also thrive, making the most of their potential and talents

**K. Awareness campaigns and education initiatives to compact polarization** are not mere gestures; they are the catalysts for change. State actors more than others should challenge negative



stereotypes, dispel misconceptions, and foster acceptance, not ignore them for political gain. By promoting understanding and empathy, we break down the walls of fear and prejudice.

Let us create spaces for dialogue, where diverse voices can be heard, understood, and celebrated. By nurturing acceptance, we lay the groundwork for a society that embraces diversity as its greatest strength.

**L. The refugee leadership ecosystem**, consisting of refugee leaders and refugee-led organizations, holds immense value and plays a crucial role in the effectiveness and legitimacy of resettlement complementary pathway programs and policies. It is essential to acknowledge the immense resilience, innovation, and expertise present within this ecosystem and actively harness it to its full potential.

Refugee leaders bring invaluable insights and lived experiences that can significantly contribute to the development and implementation of third-country solutions. From the initial envisioning of resettlement actions, including programming and policies, to the allocation of resources and the monitoring of these initiatives, the involvement of refugee leadership is paramount. By ensuring that refugee leaders have an equal seat at the table, we can shape more informed, inclusive, and contextually relevant approaches.

Third country solutions will always fall short in terms of efficiency and legitimacy if they do not fully engage and incorporate the insights and leadership of those directly affected. By embracing the refugee leadership ecosystem, we move towards more comprehensive and sustainable solutions that empower refugees and strengthen the overall refugee response system.

**In conclusion**, we, refugees, are not just figures on the news, we are living, breathing testaments of the human spirit's extraordinary resilience in face of adversity. Each of us carries a story, a spark of hope, a vision for a world more just, compassionate, and united. We aren't asking for a favor, but for our rights to life, safety, and dignity. We don't seek pity, but partnership, as we journey towards a new dawn.

As we stand at this crossroad, let us remember that the world's greatness is not measured by its wealth, or its armies, but by how it treats the most disadvantaged amongst us. The mark of true leadership and strength lies not in our ability to ignore the suffering of others, but in our resolve to acknowledge it, face it, and do everything within our power to alleviate it.

The world's refugee crisis is not an isolated problem, nor is it a burden to be carried by a select few. It is a global challenge, a test of our collective morality, our shared humanity.

In us, you will find artists, engineers, farmers, trade workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, and countless other roles, filled not just with potential but with a burning desire to give back, to contribute, to make our adopted lands our own. We are not here to take away, but to build, to create, to enrich. In our hands, our hearts, and our dreams, lies the promise of new perspectives, new ideas, and a resolve born of hardship that never wavers, never falters.

So today, let our voices not just echo in this hall but resonate across the globe, let them penetrate the thick walls of apathy and prejudice, and stir the hearts of those in power. Our plea is simple. We seek more than just existence; we seek life. We plead for more than just sympathy; we seek action!

**Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ACTR) 2023**

**NGO STATEMENT**

**Introduction**

We, the participating non-governmental organisations of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ACTR) 2023, offer the following policy recommendations to actors involved in refugee resettlement, reception and complementary pathways.

Today, the global resettlement community finds itself in challenging times. Successive crises of recent years have leant themselves to pauses in resettlement activity and emergency adaptations of traditional programmes. The short interval between the displacement of large groups of people with humanitarian needs from Afghanistan and Ukraine put pressure on systems already impacted by the pandemic. These issues occur against a backdrop of unprecedented numbers of forcibly displaced people around the world<sup>6</sup>, and both new and ongoing protracted conflicts. These challenges are further exacerbated by a housing shortage and cost-of-living crisis affecting many regions worldwide.

As we strive for sustainable and equitable solutions to these issues, and ultimately aim to increase resettlement and complementary pathway quotas ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, the NGO community urges the following policy recommendations be adopted:

**Recommendations**

**1. Additionality**

It is extremely encouraging that new community sponsorship and complementary pathways programmes are in development globally. However, we note that a number of these programmes have not yet achieved additionality to the resettlement quota. Additionality is an important principle that ensures obligations to those arriving under needs-based resettlement programmes are met, and creates an incentive for community members to assist in expanding resettlement opportunities. The development of new sponsorship programmes and complementary pathways should not result in a reduction in the number of resettlement places offered by state authorities.

We also encourage the implementation of named sponsorship, in particular to facilitate family reunification and offer targeted support for cohorts with diverse needs, such as the LGBTQI+ community. However, for States exploring the possibility of introducing named sponsorship, it is important that it is implemented in addition to other existing pathways, such that each pathway is sustainable and does not take away from the resources of other pathways. Ultimately, additionality offers States the ability to expand and deepen its crisis response.

**2. Equity**

While there have been many positive examples of adaptive and effective crisis responses across resettlement countries in recent years, inequity has arisen between different cohorts of displaced people. For example, Ukrainian arrivals are met with faster processing times for State supports and social welfare than other arrivals. We applaud the efficiency in offering supports to those fleeing Ukraine, but we encourage that these successes be applied to all arriving cohorts. Additionally, certain political ideologies in some States have given way to a difference in policymaking aims between asylum seekers and other cohorts of arrivals. We condemn the limiting of access to asylum, including through externalisation policies. Finally, we continue to be concerned about equitable

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<sup>6</sup> 1 See UNHCR data on numbers of those forcibly displaced at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

access to resettlement across various countries of asylum and regions globally, knowing that resettlement resources are often concentrated in a limited number of “high yield” locations, while leaving others with little or no access.

### **3. Durability of Status and Travel Documents**

As education and labour pathways develop globally and greater use is made of humanitarian admission and other temporary visas, we are mindful of the importance of ensuring those arriving under such pathways are provided durable status in their country of arrival. We echo UNHCR’s recommendation in this regard to provide travel documents to individuals benefitting from education and labour pathways, and the means to eventually secure passports in their country of arrival. Durable status will be particularly important once the study period ends or the individual looks to find a new job. It allows for renewable re-entry, which may be essential for visiting family members, travelling for work or petitioning for family members to join them. Finally, durable status acts as a guarantee against *refoulement*.

### **4. Partnerships**

We encourage States to consider and implement innovative and sustainable partnerships both with civil society organisations and other organisations in the community, fostering a whole-of-society response and harnessing the expertise of different actors. State resources and NGO expertise from the ground can complement each other well. In addition, we urge States to be creative in who they seek partnerships with as they seek to increase quotas and broaden reception systems. Successes have been seen in partnerships with businesses in the private sector, and well as non-typical community groups like sports organisations.

We can also see the success of partnerships in seeking to source housing solutions. Many countries are exploring partnerships with faith-based organisations and rural communities in order to increase the supply of affordable housing. We urge States to think creatively in considering solutions to housing shortages.

Finally, a whole-of-society response has knock-on impacts. We have seen that the more people involved in welcoming refugees to their community, positive public narratives around refugees organically form and grow. This is an important element in leading governments to create more refugee-friendly policies, as well as to counter xenophobic ideologies.

### **5. Refugee Participation**

The importance of refugee participation and inclusion in resettlement policy has been acknowledged in recent years. We urge States and other stakeholders involved in refugee resettlement and complementary pathways to continue considering innovative ways to meaningfully include refugees in the design, implementation and evaluation of all resettlement and complementary pathway programmes. We particularly welcome initiatives supporting refugee-led organisations to lead or co-create the development of complementary pathways.

### **6. Long-term Integration Supports**

We encourage States to be mindful of the need for long-term integration supports. There can be difficulty accessing integration supports once a designated integration period ends or upon leaving a temporary reception centre. We have seen how critical continued access to mental health supports is for resettled refugees. Long term supports may be particularly important for individuals with diverse needs or facing intersectional barriers. We urge States to develop reception systems that are flexible, adaptable, and that recognise diverse needs while also recognising that groups of refugees with diverse needs are not homogenous groups. The aim should be for a person-centred and individualised approach, with long-term supports in place. Given the current housing shortage faced by many resettlement countries, we also encourage States to meaningfully consider how to improve integration supports for those facing extended stays in temporary accommodation centres.



## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

We have noted there is a lack of in-depth data regarding resettlement programmes and integration. The success of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes cannot only be measured by numbers alone but also by integration outcomes. As resettlement programmes grow and complementary pathways are developed, we urge States to implement longitudinal studies and in-depth data collection, such that programmes outcomes can be continuously monitored and adapted in line with necessary improvements. We note the importance of involving all stakeholders including resettled refugees, at all stages of monitoring and evaluation. As well as improving programme resiliency from lessons learned, such studies will in turn lend themselves to important information for the global resettlement community, as detailed comparative data can be created across resettlement countries.

## **8. Investment in Departure Countries**

In many ways, we see a strong emphasis on programme and policy needs in destination countries, but less attention on the parallel systems needed in departure countries. To ensure equitable access to resettlement for those who need it, we must bolster identification systems and pre-departure supports in countries of asylum, including working with, and appropriately resourcing, NGO and RLO partners globally. Similarly, in many contexts around the world, refugees need a wide range of supports in departure countries in order to access and navigate complementary pathways. To meet the ambitious goals of *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030*, we encourage proportionate investment in departure countries to keep up with improvements in destination countries.

## **Conclusion**

Ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, we, the NGO community, are mindful of the need to drive resettlement pledges. We encourage States to do so in a way that is equitable, sustainable, and resilient to future crises. We acknowledge the progress being made by initiatives such as the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, the Global Task Forces for Labour Mobility and Education, and the Global Family Reunification Network, and urge that an equal effort be made to rally stakeholders around resettlement pledging. Given the goal of the *Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030* that 3 million people will have found protection under resettlement and complementary pathways by 2030, actions to strengthen resettlement programmes and introduce additional pathways are essential.