

# The ATCR/WGR Newsletter #3

February 2010



**ATCR  
WGR**  
ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS  
and WORKING GROUP ON RESETTLEMENT

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## Enhance commitment for the most vulnerable refugees

By The Swedish Chair

As February comes to its end, the Working Group on Resettlement draws closer. With it come a number of actions that we plan for the remaining four months as chair of the ATCR process.

We finished off 2009 with discussions on how to maximise the effects of resettlement by using it in a more strategic manner. On the 18th of December, resettlement states and UNHCR met in Geneva to discuss what short to long term outcomes could be strived for in certain areas. A summary of these discussions are available at the secure WGR web site for states to review, before being subject to wider distribution. For a handful of refugee situations, we hope to find permanent solutions this year, while many other require comprehensive, long term dedication in order to make a difference. The strategic use of resettlement is something that will require intensified work in the coming weeks and months.

In the second week of March, representatives of the resettlement community will gather in the Romanian city of Timisoara for no less than four resettlement focused meetings. The site for the recently established Emergency Transit Centre, which offers the opportunity to evacuate refugees and provide them with temporary protection on their way to a resettlement state, holds the first Working Group meeting outside of Geneva. The location is well suited for the main theme: how to increase our capability and commitment for those in need of emergency resettlement and evacuation. Flanked by the launch meeting of a joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project on practical cooperation on resettlement among EU Member States, the ECRE Core Group on Resettlement, and a meeting on the resettlement of refugees with medical needs, it looks like it is going to be a busy – and inspiring – week.

In this newsletter, we look closer at the efforts to find durable solutions for the refugees most in need of protection. It may be single women without male networks, severely ill refugees who lack access to medical care, or persons at risk of deportation from a country of asylum. For these refugees, UNHCR relies on states to be able to act quickly. They may need to be able to accept cases on dossier basis, or even evacuate refugees within only a few hours or days. Although many states have the will to support UNHCR in this quest, not all have such flexibility in their programs. We need to find ways to facilitate emergency resettlement, in order to secure protection for those who need it. How this can be done, we have to find out together. Let's make the week in Timisoara a starting point. Pleasant reading!

### The ATCR/WGR Newsletter

was compiled by the Swedish Migration Board, chair of the ATCR and the WGR with kind contributions from states, UNHCR and NGOs. The views in this publication does not necessarily represent the Swedish Government, the UNHCR or other contributors.

#### Title Pictures:

Children at the Timisoara ETC.  
By E Hopfner UNHCR BO Romania

More photos and Refugee stories at  
UNHCR's Flickr Photostream

# Shaping human security

## The Emergency Transit Centre in Timisoara – a model for creating humanitarian space



*Mr Bogdan Aureescu, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania*

Since 1999 Romania has stepped up to ensure the safety of individuals in need of protection. As one of the first countries in the world, it offers human security in the form of an Emergency Transit Centre for refugees about to be resettled. Mr Bogdan Aureescu, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania shares his views on evacuation and the potential role it could play in the protection of refugees.

The concept “human security” started to be circulate in 1994, when it was mentioned in the Human Development Report of the Programme for Development of the United Nations. Its central idea is the need of protecting individuals and communities from global threats, in a complex political and economic context where conflicts, lack of resources, insecurity and disasters have a direct influence over the protection needs of vulnerable individuals. Being increasingly aware of the need for rapid protection solutions, Romania as one of the first states in the world together with UNHCR and IOM, initiated the project of an Emergency Transit Centre, placed in the town of Timisoara.

There were a few past experiences which preceded the creation of this Centre. Romanian authorities had taken prompt and efficient actions to temporarily receive refugees in emergency situations before. Between 1999 and 2002, 4500 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were received in Timisoara and resettled to third countries, as well as 420 Uzbek refugees in 2006 and 38 Eritrean refugees in 2008. The experience of transiting refugees on their way to being resettled contributed to the consolidation and the institutionalization of the ETC project. In May 2008, a Tripartite Agreement was signed between the Romanian Government, UNHCR and IOM on the temporary evacuation in Romania of persons in urgent need of international protection and their onward resettlement, which entered into force in November 2008.

A safe and protected humanitarian space - this is what the Centre stands for and what it tries to offer to 200 refugees with emergency needs, while waiting for their resettlement to third countries. It is of importance in situations where the normal resettlement process cannot take place in the

country of first asylum due to immediate and life-threatening risks which result from acute security considerations, restricted access and/or the risk of refoulement. In such conditions, the Centre offers refugees the protection that makes a meaningful and, in many cases, vital difference in their lives.

The Centre in Timisoara proved to be a viable project, a true instrument for protection, which could not function without the close cooperation of different partners, at different levels: between international organizations and Romanian authorities, between these authorities and resettlement states, between central and local authorities or between state officials and NGOs. In this context, the concept of burden/responsibility sharing reaches a new dimension, having effects at international level. Neither could it function without the sustained commitment and contributions of resettlement states and private actors who provide the necessary resources. In 2009, the Centre needed 1.4 million dollars. Costs are born by UNHCR, through generous contributions of the resettlement states. In 2010, as well as in the years to come, a similar level of support will be needed. This would only represent the proof of a concrete contribution by states interested to offer protection to refugees, joining the efforts made by Romania together with UNHCR and IOM – for creating and maintaining humanitarian space.

There are other states contemplating similar projects or other innovative ideas to help UNHCR carry out its mandate and create the vital humanitarian space it needs. Romania is just one good example but others are already joining us. Recent initiatives by the Philippines and Slovak Republic are most welcome.

Looking ahead, the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania will have a life of its own and become routine. We, for our part, will make sure it continues to help refugee men, women and children in need of international protection reach safety and continues to be a reliable and effective structure of international cooperation.

*Bogdan Aureescu,  
Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania*



### Romania

Romania decided in 2009 to institute an annual refugee programme comprising of 40 places per year, in addition to the transit places offered by Romania through the Timisoara ETC.

FOCUS:



## Out of harm's way

### Shelter and respite for refugees in anticipation of resettlement

Emergency resettlement is a vital tool for UNHCR in seeking protection for the world's most vulnerable refugees. By rapid actions by NGOs and resettlement states, an individual can be evacuated from a life-threatening situation and begin a new life in safety, in only a few days time. While showing both the will and solidarity to resettle these refugees, some states do not have the opportunity to process cases in the country where the individual is residing. In these situations, evacuation and a temporary stay at an Emergency Transit Facility can make the difference.



## The Emergency Transit Centre

By UNHCR, BO Romania

The Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) was established in the western city of Romania, Timisoara in November 2009. Since then, 492 refugees of six nationalities and destined to four different resettlement countries have been evacuated to the Centre. Over three hundred have already travelled on to start a new life in resettlement countries.

Established pursuant to a Tripartite Agreement between the Government of Romania, UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the ETC provides a safe haven for refugees in urgent need of resettlement. According to the Agreement, the ETC can host up to 200 refugees for a maximum period of six months, pending their onward resettlement to a country of permanent asylum.

The Agreement also stipulates the three Parties' roles. UNHCR is responsible for identifying refugees in urgent need of resettlement, providing certification for their refugee status and securing their relocation. UNHCR also makes available the resources needed to cover the costs of food and domestic items, psycho-social support, educational and recreational activities, as well as language training and medical care. For the implementation of most of the above, the Agency works



*Pictures: Photo story from the ETC by the F Hopfner, UNHCR BO Romania*

closely with a local NGO partner, Generatie Tanara.

Refugees identified by UNHCR as being in urgent need of evacuation to the ETC include those who are:

- at immediate risk of refoulement or facing other life-threatening situations
- considered particularly sensitive or high profiled cases
- held in detention for the only reason that they entered or are staying in the country without authorisation and will be released only if able to depart from the country;
- located in a first country of asylum where resettlement processing cannot be completed by resettlement countries, for reasons related to safety and security.

Resettlement countries that have agreed in principle to resettle refugees from the ETC travel to the Centre and conduct interviews, medical checks, cultural orientation sessions and other related activities in safe and secure surroundings.

The centre was designed to provide a place of safety and security for refugees who required emergency evacuation while waiting for onward resettlement – a new home and a future for themselves and their children in another country – but in its short existence it has become much more than that. It has developed into a small community where refugees from various backgrounds mingle and share. And as in all communities it has its moments of joy and sadness – one refugee has died there and three others have been born.

On arrival at the Timisoara airport, refugees are welcomed by UNHCR and IOM staff and taken to the ETC, where they are shown their new living quarters. Bed sheets, tow-



## Voices of evacuated refugees

**A lot has been written about the ETC in Timisoara, but how have refugees who have been resettled from Romania experienced their stay - and their departure? Camelia Nitu, from UNHCR Romania, spoke with some of them.**

*.....*  
A family of Palestinian refugees, who arrived in October 2009 from Al-Waleed, was just about to depart to the USA. What will be the first thing they will do upon arrival?

Wife: "When I arrive, the first thing will be to move in and arrange the apartment. Then I want to learn English, and I hope to find work or to start a business with my husband. My husband wants to travel to all the States and see the whole country – but my son has to study!"

Husband: "I want to have a supermarket. I am not afraid about the money."

How would you describe your experience here in the ETC?

"Everything was very good for us and we are very grateful, but we would have liked to have more freedom of movement outside the camp."

Are they nervous or worried about their departure?

"Nervous, yes, a little bit, but we are not worried... The worries are now only in the past!"

*.....*  
A Sudanese refugee from Iraq (K70 camp) already resettled in Sweden, was interviewed over the telephone. I was curious about how his resettlement turned out.

"I am well. I have received the necessary documents now that allow me to start the Swedish language classes and to look for a job. It was really cold here (laughing), but I knew that already, because I read a lot about Sweden before leaving the ETC. Do you remember how I used to go to the computer room late in the night and read about Sweden? I miss Romania, but I will come to visit you soon."

## Voices cont'd...

A Palestinian refugee from Iraq (Al-Waleed camp) arrived in the ETC in October 2009. He is now destined for resettlement to US. I asked him about his life in Al-Waleed.

"There is no happiness in Al-Waleed. Everything was hard. I was there for two and half years. At that time, I had five daughters and one boy. My little one was born there. I was always scared. I had to marry three of my daughters at a very young age only to get protection for them. They were not ready for marriage, but I thought that was the only way to keep them safe. We had potable water only for one hour per day, so the water was never enough. We received can food once per month. There was medical assistance, but not enough medicines, nor ambulance to transport us in case of emergency. The nearest hospital was at one hour and half distance by car from the camp.

When UNHCR told me that I was going to Romania, it was like you would have taken me from the fire and put me into paradise. Once in the plane, I could not believe my eyes. I felt freedom like a bird..."

Once arrived in the ETC, he says he feels good:

"The life in tents was very difficult: no hot water, no bathroom, you were always facing death from the oil heaters, that had already destroyed 60 tents around us. So once here, I felt so good! Warm rooms, showers, if you get sick, they immediately take you to the hospital, my children could play and go to school... Do I worry now? Why should I worry now? Nobody can harm you here. I am safe."

For the future, he wants to live in peace, in the US. He says he would be really proud to become an American citizen. Does he worry about the future?

"I do not have any money, so to get money I need to find a job - but I will do any kind of job to feed my family, I am not afraid of that."

If you could give an advice to other refugees with regards to the ETC, what this advice will be?

"I would tell them to come, this centre gives you an idea of how Europe is, you could study English and you could get information about other cultures, which will be useful to us once in our new countries."

els, personal hygiene items and nutritious meals are provided by UNHCRs implementing partner. During their stay at the Centre, refugees benefit from cultural orientation activities specific to each resettlement country. Language training and computer lessons have been provided and doctors make regular visits. Transportation to the hospital in Timisoara is available if required.

For children, a well-equipped playground was constructed with assistance from UNICEF and Save the Children. The toys and books scattered around the playroom (donated by the supportive local population), are testament to the fact that the children make good use of the space!

Many refugees have commented on the contrast between their previous situations and what they find at the ETC.

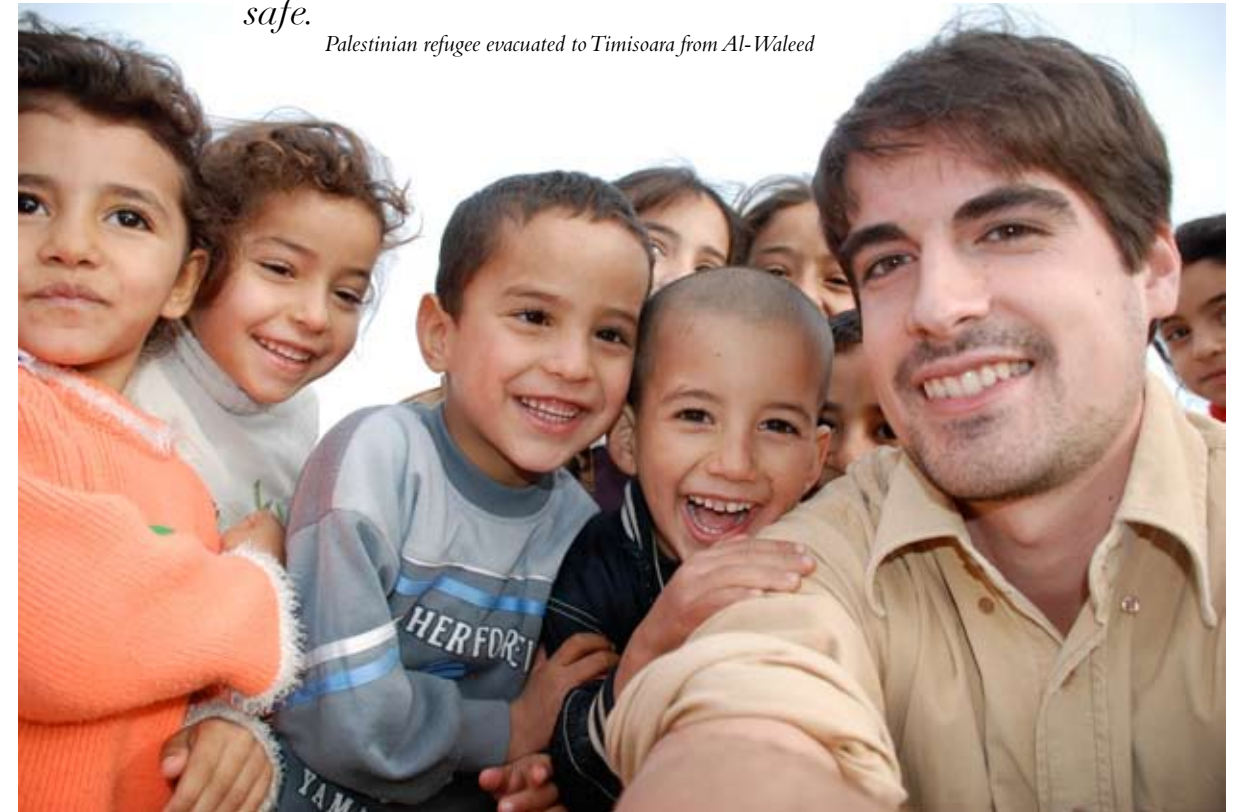
- Here I don't mind the winter or the cold. We're staying in good buildings and the rooms are warm, says Fatuo, a Sudanese refugee woman, when asked about the harsh winter temperatures in Timisoara where she saw snow for the first time. She was one of the first refugees to arrive at the ETC. A Sudanese national from Darfur who had taken refuge in Iraq during the 1980s, she and other Sudanese refugees in Iraq were targeted by different rebel groups and militias and were eventually forced out of their homes. They fled hoping to enter other countries in the region but ultimately had to survive in precarious conditions in a desert camp. The evacuation to the ETC, in addition to providing safety and security for her and her family, also allowed for the complete closing of this camp.

Another group of 227 Palestinian refugees was evacuated to the ETC in spring 2009. They had been living in the spontaneously established Al-Waleed camp when they were denied



*Do I worry now? Why should I worry now? Nobody can harm you here. I am safe.*

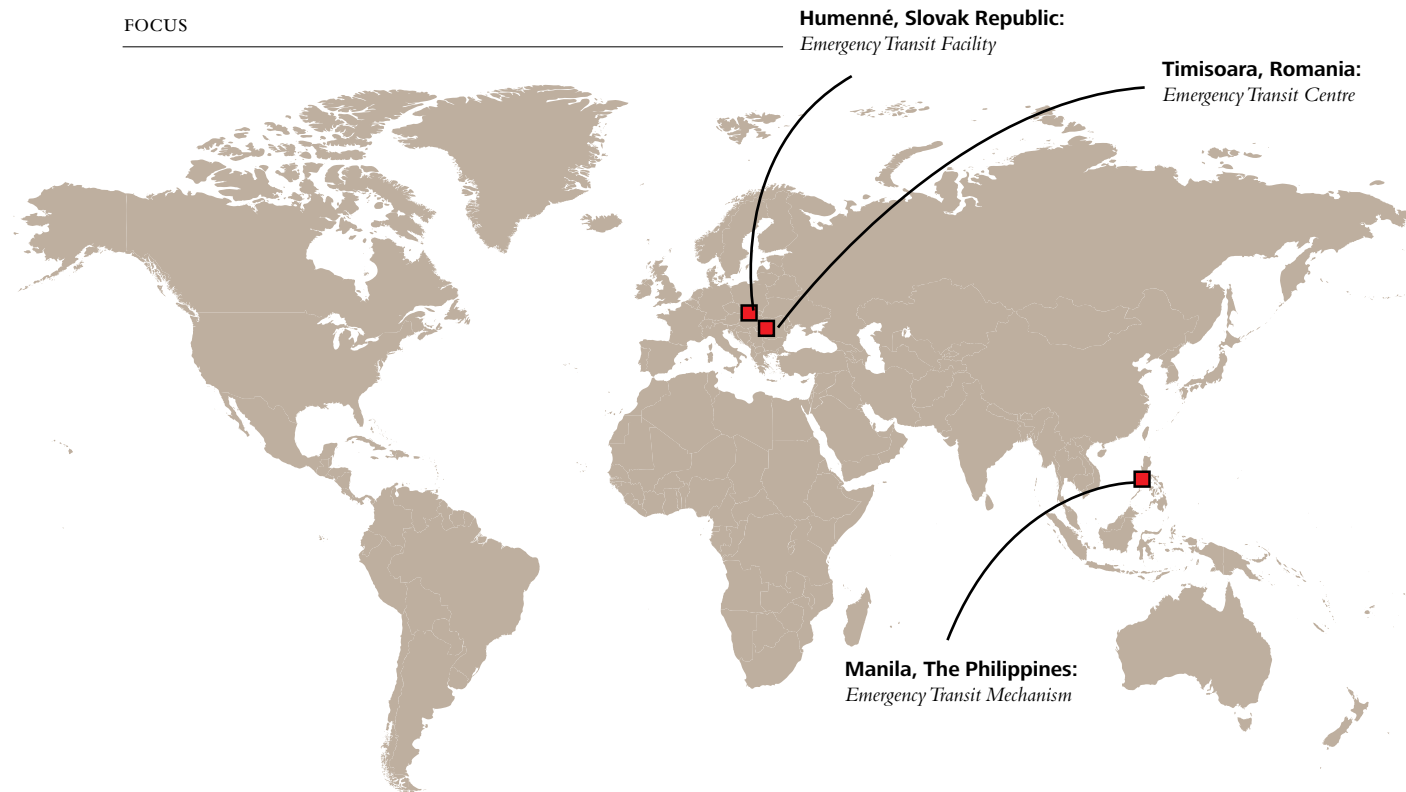
*Palestinian refugee evacuated to Timisoara from Al-Waleed*



entry into the neighbouring country. Having lived in tents under extreme conditions (experiencing temperatures ranging from +50 C in the summer months to subzero temperatures in the winter, living through sandstorms, flooding, snake and rat infestation as well as several fires caused by gas burners that destroyed tents in seconds) they too commented on the safety and security provided by the ETC.

Sara was one of Ethiopian refugees evacuated from Somaliland last summer. Belonging to the Oromo ethnicity, she and fellow Oromo persons were in urgent need of resettlement, some having survived torture and sexual and gender-based violence. Part of the group has now been resettled while the remaining 21 refugees will follow in the coming months. Among the most recent arrivals is a group of seven Sri Lankan refugees who had been in detention facility in Indonesia along with their other 37 compatriots who had been evacuated to the ETC in late December 2009.

*Names were changed for security reasons*



## Beyond Timisoara: Humenné and Manila

By Chair and UNHCR

Apart from the ETC in Romania, two more emergency transit mechanisms have been developed in the Slovak Republic and the Philippines. The cities of Humenné and Manila provide opportunities for an additional number of refugees to transit on their way to resettlement states.

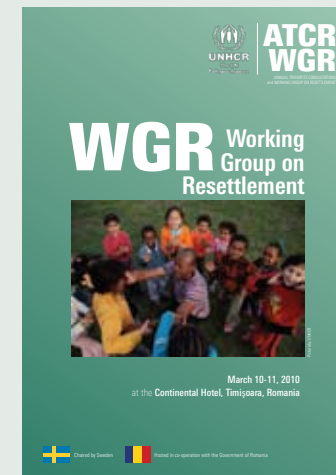
The Asylum Centre in Humenné, in the eastern parts of the Slovak Republic, was taken into use as an emergency transit facility in August 2009. It offers temporary stay for 100 refugees waiting to continue to their final resettlement destination. With NGOs, governmental officers and UNHCR staff, as well

as social workers and a nurse available at the centre, refugees are provided with support and advice. Family rooms and a playground for the children cater for well-being and support of families.

The facility provides the opportunity for resettlement interviews, cultural orientation programs, and other pre-departure preparations on site. In 2009, a total of 374 persons departed from the centre, and as of 8 February 2010, another 64 persons had moved on to begin a new chapter of their lives in a resettlement country.

In addition to the Slovak and Romanian centres, an 'Emer-

gency Transit Mechanism' was established in July 2009 through a tripartite agreement in Manila in the Philippines. This mechanism is much smaller than the other two, having a maximum occupancy of 20 persons. Unlike the other two transit operations which have physical locations made available to UNHCR by the respective governments, in Manila there is currently no centre per se (which is why we refer to it as a 'Mechanism' rather than a Centre) - rather, refugees are housed in temporary accommodation such as hotels while their cases are processed.



## Welcome to the Working Group on Resettlement in Timisoara, Romania

For the first time, the Working Group on Resettlement meet outside of Geneva. On 10th -11th of March, members of the group commence in Timisoara, Romania to discuss evacuation and emergency resettlement. As the date draws closer, we are happy to provide you with more details on the meeting.

### By the Chair

More than 70 delegates, including representatives from 15 different countries, have registered for the upcoming WGR that will take place in Timisoara, Romania, on the 10th-11th of March. 13 NGO delegates will be represented at the meeting, including the Swedish NGO focal point, Caritas.

The meeting is held at the Continental Hotel in Timisoara in co-operation with local and national authorities from Romania. On Tuesday afternoon, 9th of March, delegates who have signed up for a visit at the Emergency Transit Centre (ETC) will have coaches waiting at the front entrance of the hotel. To make sure that you have been registered for the visit, please speak to the Chair staff at the front desk at the hotel upon arrival.

On Tuesday night, the Romanian authorities invite all WGR delegates to a welcome reception at Recas Wineries, a vineyard 30 minutes drive from Timisoara. There will be transfer buses to the Recas departing at 18:00 from the Continental Hotel. The event is hosted by the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, Romania.

The WGR starts at 10:00 on Wednesday 10th of March, at the Continental Hotel. The main topic of the meeting is emergency resettlement and evacuation. Related topics, such as cooperation to increase the capability for resettlement, and emergency resettlement of refugees with medical needs, will be discussed mainly at two separate meetings, held in conjunction to the WGR: On the 8th-9th of March 2010 the launch meeting of the joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project is taking place, and immediately after the WGR the expert meeting on the resettlement of refugees with medical

needs will take place on the 11th -12th of March.

The Swedish Chair strives to increase the participants' interactivity at the WGR meetings, since this is believed to have positive effects on discussions as well as results. On the agenda, participants will therefore find two break out sessions, dedicated to the discussion on how to expand the reach of resettlement through evacuation mechanisms, and on how to facilitate a review of the global consultation process. Together with the break out sessions, there will be the presentations and discussions in plenary. During these two days, the Lions Diamond & Lions Tymes 1266 Clubs and Rotary Club Timisoara Cetate in Timisoara will kindly be providing lunches and coffees for the participants.

On Wednesday night, the 10th of March, the Romanian authorities wish to invite WGR delegates to the National Opera House of Timisoara, not far from the Continental Hotel. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania will host a welcome reception at 18:30 (it is worth to note that while participation is optional, attending guest may wish to adhere to a formal dress code in accordance with local customs). After the reception, the guests are kindly invited by the Prefect of Timis and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the opera. The meeting Agenda, Tour de Table and discussion papers will be posted on the ATCR secure web site in advance of the meeting. Please obtain updated discussion papers before the WGR as copies will not be provided at the meeting.

*We look forward to see you at the meeting.*

► **web link:**  
[Recas Wineries](#)  
[Opera house of Timisoara](#)

## Preliminary agenda:

Working Group on Resettlement, 10th – 11th of March 2010. Subject to change.

### Tuesday 9th of March

#### Pre-WGR meeting activities:

Afternoon	Arrival of delegates, registration at Continental Hotel
16.00	Departing from the Continental Hotel for visits to the Emergency Transit Center (ETC) (transportation provided by Lions Diamond & Lions Tymes 1266 Clubs, Timisoara)
18.00	Welcome reception at Recas Wineries hosted by the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, Romania. Transfer buses to the Recas departing at 18:00 from the Continental Hotel in Timisoara.

### Wednesday 10th of March - WGR

<b>9.00-10.00</b>	<b>Opening and welcome</b> Vasile Blaga, Vice-Prime-minister and Minister of Administration and Interior, Romania Bogdan Aurescu, Secretary of state, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania Carin Bratt, Deputy Head of Division, Ministry of Justice, Sweden, Chair Judith Kummin, Director, Regional Bureau for Europe, UNHCR
10.00-10.30	Coffee (provided by Lions Diamond & Lions Tymes 1266 Clubs, Timisoara)
<b>10.30-11.30</b>	<b>Increased commitment and capability for refugees most in need of resettlement – how must the global resettlement community respond to emergency situations?</b> - Introduction by the Chair, UNHCR and NGO Focal Point
<b>11.30-13.00</b>	<b>Conversation café: Evacuation as a way to widen protection space</b> - Moderated dialogue/panel discussion with representatives from states, UNHCR, IOM, and NGOs on the potential of evacuation, and lessons learned from the use of Evacuation Transit Facilities in Slovakia, the Philippines and Romania. Including participation from the floor
13.00-14.30	Lunch (provided by Lions Diamond & Lions Tymes 1266 Clubs, Timisoara)
<b>14.30-16.00</b>	<b>Break out session 1: Solutions and challenges of evacuation and emergency resettlement</b>

#### Proposed areas of discussion:

- Identification and selection of refugees most in need
  - Multiple purposes of evacuation mechanisms
  - Alternative solutions to evacuation
  - The potential of strategic use of resettlement to increase access to the refugees most in need
- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 16.00-16.30        | Coffee (provided by Lions Diamond & Lions Tymes 1266 Clubs, Timisoara)  |
| <b>16.30-17.30</b> | <b>Update on the increased Strategic Use of Resettlement in Seven Prioritized Situations</b>  |
| 18.30              | A welcome reception and opera show at the National Opera House of Timisoara hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prefect of Timis. |

### Thursday 11th of March - WGR

<b>9.00-9.30</b>	<b>Increasing the capacity of the ATCR/WGR process</b> - Proposal by the Chair of an internal review of methods and format for the consultations
<b>9.30-10.30</b>	<b>Break out session 2: Response on the proposal, identification of next steps</b>
10.30-11.00	Coffee (provided by Rotary Club Timisoara Cetate, Timisoara)
<b>11.00-12.30</b>	<b>Information and follow up session</b> - Q and A on the joint IOM - UNHCR Framework for the Resettlement / Protective Relocation of victims of trafficking - Follow up on the revision of the Resettlement Handbook
<b>12.30-13.00</b>	<b>Concluding remarks by the Chair and UNHCR</b>
13.00-14.00	Closing lunch (provided by Rotary Club Timisoara Cetate, Timisoara)

*Departure of delegates not attending the Expert Meeting on the Resettlement of Refugees with Medical Needs*

**14.00-17.30** **Expert Meeting on the Resettlement of Refugees with Medical Needs.**

### Friday 12th of March

**9.00-17.00** **Expert Meeting on the Resettlement of Refugees with Medical Needs cont'd.**

## Expert Meeting on the Resettlement of Refugees with Medical Needs

Timisoara, Romania 11th - 12th of March 2010

#### By UNHCR

After the close of the Working Group on Resettlement in Timisoara, the Expert Meeting on the Resettlement of Refugees with Medical Needs will take place. The meeting is intended to bring together experts from immigration and health departments in countries of resettlement together with UNHCR and IOM to discuss ways to improve the resettlement of refugees with medical needs. An NGO observer (Caritas Sweden, NGO focal point for the ATCR) will also participate in the meeting.

As part of the larger discussion planned for the meeting on defining and improving policy and practical aspects of resettling refugees with medical needs, the expert meeting agenda includes a discussion on UNHCR's criterion for resettlement on medical grounds and suggestions by UNHCR for the revision of the Medical Assessment Form (MAF). Agenda items also include the discussion paper to be pre-

resented by Canada, and a tour de table on country practices, challenges, and service provision related to resettled refugees with medical needs.

It is our hope that the discussions of this meeting will lead to a more efficient and predictable resettlement processing of refugees with medical needs, and will also lead to greater coherence in resettlement policies and practices in this regard. The conclusions and recommendations of this meeting will be reported at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement which will be held in Geneva on 6-8 July 2010.

### ► Important notice regarding reservations at the Continental Hotel

A few delegates have had problems with the on-line booking for the Continental Hotel in Timisoara. Therefore the hotel wishes to inform all guests that they should expect a written confirmation from the hotel, as the hotel encounters difficulties with the web site. If you have not received a personal confirmation from the Continental Hotel please write to: [rezervari@hotelcontinental.ro](mailto:rezervari@hotelcontinental.ro) and specify which conference you will attend and in what period, to benefit from preferential fees.

We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause you but we strongly recommend you to double check your reservation with the hotel.

*Lena Åkerstedt, The Swedish Chair Team*





**UNHCR**

**Nepal:**

# Over 25,000 refugees from Bhutan resettled

The UNHCR and IOM recently announced that the 25,000th refugee from Bhutan has left camp in Nepal to begin a new life in the resettlement countries.

The resettlement programme in Nepal, one of UNHCR's largest, has been going on since November 2007 and is continuing successfully with the strong cooperation between the Government of Nepal, UNHCR, IOM and the resettlement countries to enable a smooth and effective process.

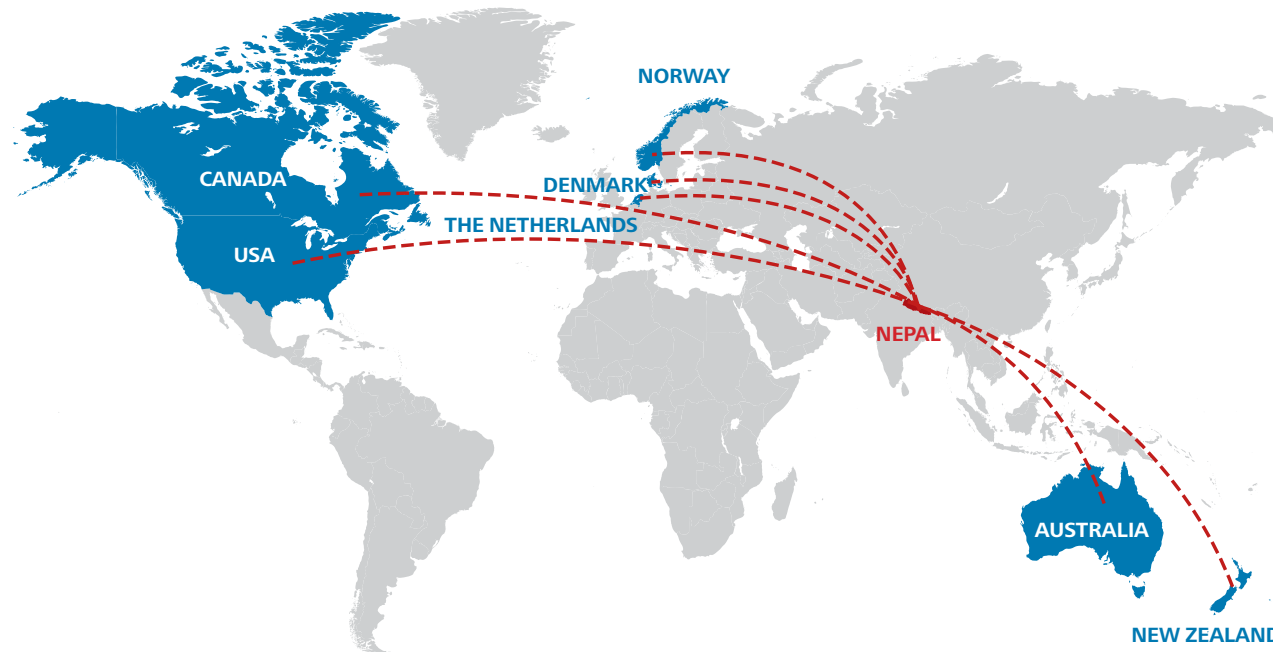
The United States has accepted the largest numbers followed by Australia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

"We have been receiving regular feedback from those resettled. They have written to us about their lives; they are learning new languages, their children are in school and they are happy with their new homes. Of course, they miss family and friends; the start of a new life in a new country is never easy," said Diane Goodman, UNHCR Acting Representative in Nepal.

UNHCR continues to ensure that refugees are able to make free and informed decisions regarding durable solutions. In camps, the UN refugee agency holds regular information sessions, focus group discussions and provides individual counselling. Special information sessions are or-

**Resettled persons from Nepal**

USA	22,060
Australia	1,006
Canada	892
Norway	316
Denmark	305
New Zealand	299
The Netherlands	122
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,000</b>



ganized for marginalised and vulnerable refugees. Refugees are being offered English language classes to prepare for a life in a new country.

IOM works with UNHCR and the resettlement countries to facilitate refugee departures from Nepal. IOM processes cases for resettlement countries, conducts health assessments and cultural orientation courses in accordance with guidelines of the country of resettlement, and organizes all transportation from the refugee camps to final destination.

"The objective is to facilitate resettlement in a quick, efficient and dignified manner," said Sarat Dash, IOM Chief of Mission. "The success of this project is directly attributable to the good cooperation among the Government of Nepal, the countries of resettlement, UNHCR and IOM. This has truly been a team effort."

Some 86,739 refugees from Bhutan remain in seven camps in eastern Nepal. Further, 556 are expected to resettle this year. More than 80,728 refugees have already expressed their interest for resettlement.

From top: Life in Sanischare camp, eastern Nepal. Young refugees from Bhutan attend class in Sanischare camp. Bhutanese refugees from Sanischare camp, arrive in Damak on an IOM bus to begin their resettlement interview process. Seen here, some families which were later resettled to Phoenix, Arizona, USA. Two Bhutanese refugee girls grocery shopping in the United States. Photos by J. Rae and Kashish Das Shrestha (UNHCR)





#### IOM/ICMC/UNHCR ERF-project

An 18 month project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) targeting practical cooperation in EU resettlement.

For more information, please contact:

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Hanno van Gemund of UNHCR:  
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## IOM/ICMC/UNHCR

### Launch of project on practical cooperation in EU resettlement

The launch of a new EU funded project on resettlement will take place on 8th - 10th of March in Timisoara, prior to the Working Group on Resettlement meeting. The project promotes further engagement by EU Member States in resettlement activities and in particular the strengthening of practical cooperation between Member States by drawing on the benefits of a coordinated approach to resettlement. In the project established resettlement countries, such as Sweden and the Netherlands will work together with countries which have started in resettlement more recently, such as France, Romania and Portugal. A few countries that have not engaged in resettlement yet, such as Hungary and Slovakia, participate as well, so they can benefit from the expertise of other participants in case they would decide to engage in resettlement.

Cooperation between resettlement countries is possible in many instances during the resettlement process. Over the past years “twinning” has taken place between established resettlement countries and aspiring resettlement countries, for example in the form of joint resettlement selection missions. The project aims to further explore possible cooperation in pre-departure activities in the countries of asylum, such as health assessments of refugees, pre-departure information provision and cultural orientation training.

With regard to the process taking place upon arrival of the refugees in the resettlement countries, this project promotes information-sharing and networking between all actors involved in reception and (early) integration. Adequate reception and integration of resettled refugees, particularly those with specific vulnerabilities, are key to the success and potential growth of any resettlement programme. Therefore, the engagement of local authorities, local NGOs and local service providers in the reception of resettled refugees in multi-stakeholder forums and strengthening existing coordination fora is another key component of the project. The project will also promote further involvement of the actors in reception of refugees, and of previously resettled refugees, in the pre-departure phase of resettlement, to better prepare all those involved (both the refugees to be resettled and the people who will receive them) for their arrival.

In the first project meeting government officials, representatives of civil society and other resettlement stakeholders of the ten participating EU countries will come together to share their experiences with practical cooperation and to explore the possible cooperation activities in the future.

► [web resource: IOM/ICMC/UNHCR project on the web.](#)

Part of the meeting will take place at the Emergency Transit Centre and will be focused on possibilities for further cooperation at the ETC. At the first project meeting participants will start to develop a plan of action with joint activities that could be performed in the second half of 2010 and in 2011 with support from the project funding. The finalisation of the plan will take place at the second Project Coordination meeting scheduled to take place in Lisbon in June 2010

## Europe (NGO)

### ECRE Resettlement Core Group: committed to make resettlement a success

To be able to work together in the network in a targeted way ECRE decided to set up thematic ‘Core Groups’. One of those is the ECRE Resettlement Core Group, currently bringing together 12 of ECRE’s members that are working on different aspects of resettlement. ECRE’s Resettlement Core Group aims to meet twice a year to discuss important issues and developments and to set out common strategies, incorporating views of ECRE members have in the field of resettlement. The Core Group also drafts documents, for instance on the role of NGOs in Cultural Orientation, Recommendations for a joint EU Resettlement Programme as well as, recently, a mapping out of NGO involvement in resettlement.

Naturally, ECRE and its members are committed to contributing, where possible, to the tripartite process of the ATCR. The areas of focus as set out by this years’ chair of the ATCR – the Swedish Migration Board, are fully subscribed by the Core Group. ECRE and its members remain committed to the goal of enlarging the pool of resettlement places, i.e. the expansion of the number of places and the number of resettlement states.

One of the instruments to enlarge the pool of resettlement places in the EU can be the joint EU Resettlement Programme (ERP) as recently proposed by the European Commission. NGOs, in addition to UNHCR, have a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of resettlement, and therefore should be involved in all steps of the ERP. NGO involvement in resettlement contributes to quality and sustainable resettlement programmes and ownership of resettlement by civil society. ECRE’s resettlement Core Group as well as its separate member organisations wish to emphasise their commitment to continue working with States, UNHCR and other stakeholders to build quality and sustainable resettlement programmes to be able to provide a durable solution to the ongoing plight of all those in need.



ECRE

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), a pan-European network of non-governmental organisations, was set up in 1974 and has ever since been working to promote the protection and integration of refugees based on the values of human dignity, human rights and an ethic of solidarity.

► [web resource: ECRE’s resettlement sub site](#)



Australia

Australia has a yearly Refugee Quota of 13 750 persons.

## Australia (NGO)

### Rohingya Begin New Lives in Australia

With successful settlement as a key objective of Australia's resettlement program, it was anticipated that the new Rohingya refugee caseload was to have many challenges to overcome. Despite their prolonged stay in Bangladesh refugee camps, today many of them appreciate a new and functional life in Brisbane, Queensland.

The Rohingya are a new refugee caseload for Australia. Given their prolonged stay in camps in Bangladesh, it was anticipated there would be many challenges for them to overcome in order to become fully functioning members of their new community. The Australian Government views successful settlement as a key objective of its resettlement program and is committed to ensuring that people resettling in Australia have the support needed to rebuild their lives. As there was a small community of Rohingya in Brisbane, Queensland it was decided that the first groups of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh should settle there.

A great deal of preparation work was done in anticipation of their arrival. A member of the Rohingya community was appointed as a Cultural Support Worker to assist the new arrivals. Staff from health, education and welfare agencies, who would be working with the Rohingya, attended a cultural, social, and political information session. An assessment was made of suitable community support systems, including the location of housing, mosques and schools with English as a second language capability.

Many of the Rohingya arrivals have spent many years in extremely austere and basic living conditions in the camps in Bangladesh. Some continue to suffer from traumatic past experiences and it has taken intensive physical and emotional support and counselling for individuals to begin to regain their health and learn the life skills required for successful settlement in Australia.

The drastic change in their physical living conditions has had a profound effect on the families. Many initially reported suffering anxiety and sadness from the unfamiliar isolation of living in separate houses in different suburbs far from the extended family and community support networks of the camps. With time, however, the families have adjusted to living separately. Many have since expressed appreciation for their new living conditions and have learnt to use public transport or walk to visit each other.

Individuals have had differing experiences of settlement with some families coping well with settlement demands and other families taking longer to adjust. In all cases, however, the Rohingya have shown a remarkable resilience and ability to learn new skills. The recently resettled Rohingya families participated actively in Refugee Week activities in June 2009.

*Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship*



**MAPENDO**  
INTERNATIONAL

*A lifeline for forgotten refugees*

### Mapendo International

Mapendo International works to fill the needs of people affected by war and conflict who have fallen through the net of humanitarian assistance. This commitment is expressed through targeting individuals, families and groups of people overlooked by existing aid programs. Mapendo's independent funding makes the agency flexible and able to quickly address unmet, immediate and emerging needs.

The organisation is named after Rose Mapendo whose story is emblematic of the people Mapendo International strives to help. People who aren't on any list, people who are overlooked by the existing aid world.

## Africa (NGO/UNHCR)

### NGO Resettlement Training in Nairobi, Kenya

At the beginning of December 2009, representatives from NGOs across Africa gathered in Nairobi for a resettlement training led by UNHCR Resettlement Services staff from Geneva. The four-day training brought together twenty NGO staff working in various sectors of refugee assistance in thirteen countries across the continent.

The event, funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, aimed to familiarize the NGO staff with resettlement criteria and processes, and to encourage them to partner with UNHCR in identifying refugees most in need of resettlement from among the populations with which they work.

Representatives from Mapendo International, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and the NGO Focal Point from Sweden were invited as resource persons to assist with the training. Mapendo and HIAS are already engaged in resettlement and were able to share their experiences, best practices and lessons learned with the other NGOs.

In addition to resettlement criteria, the group was trained on using the Heightened Risk Interview Tool (HRIT) to quickly assess levels of risk among refugee populations, determine appropriate follow-up, and prioritize their handling. The Community Services unit of UNHCR's Branch Office

Nairobi coordinated for the group a day of HRIT field-testing while interviewing urban refugees in Nairobi at various locations around the city. The opportunity to put the tool to use in a real field setting was a very moving and poignant experience for the training participants, as they learned first hand about the particular challenges facing urban refugees in Kenya.

As the training wrapped up, several conclusions and recommendations emerged. It was widely agreed that the HRIT is a very useful interview tool that can be easily adapted to different settings. Several small modifications and improvements were suggested by the group. It was also suggested that in order for NGOs to partner more closely with UNHCR on resettlement identification, it would be helpful to have a 'toolkit' of sorts, with referral templates, sample memoranda of agreement, and standard operating procedures.

Above all, the group felt that the training had been invaluable and recommended that more joint trainings of UNHCR and NGO staff be held to harmonize refugee resettle-

*"We had the opportunity to spend several hours with refugees, mainly women from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi and Congo as well as children. Many had been the victims of sexual harassment and abuse, and live in extremely harsh and exploitative situations. Yet the dignity and hope of these women and children, who in spite of their struggles were trying to find some normality in an extremely abnormal situation, was striking. The needs are huge and although UNHCR and its partner organisations are doing their best to alleviate this need, the resources are limited. European NGOs should broaden their partnership with UNHCR and NGOs in Africa in order to bridge the protection gaps, including capacity building and address the issue of resources challenges." George Joseph, Caritas Sweden, NGO Focal Point*



*Pictures by G. Joseph*

ment identification and referral approaches. All agreed that NGOs are key partners in improving the accessibility and equitability of resettlement, by expanding the catchment of vulnerable refugees through NGOs' reach into refugee communities. Already in 2009, NGOs identified and referred over 3,500 (exact figures not known) refugees for resettlement and their role continues to increase. At the conclusion of the energizing training, UNHCR and NGOs expressed a joint commitment to enhancing collaboration across Africa that will lead to more effective refugee protection.

*Amy Slaughter, Mapendo International*

### **The next issue:**

The next issue of the ATCR/WGR Newsletter will be distributed in April 2010.

We aim to publish updates and articles on other developments and activities that are being carried through. If you would like to submit such news from your State or organisation, please send suggested text and pictures to the Swedish Chair [[sweden.atcr@migrationsverket.se](mailto:sweden.atcr@migrationsverket.se)] before 10th of April.



# ATCR WGR

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS  
and WORKING GROUP ON RESETTLEMENT