

Information on Resettlement for Asylum Seekers in Israel

Resettlement occurs where a refugee is assisted to relocate from an asylum country to a third country. Resettlement is used to assist very vulnerable refugees where they are lacking appropriate protection and support.

In Israel, the number of refugees is small in comparison to other countries. Also Israel is a developed country with sufficient resources to support the refugee population. However, UNHCR has assisted in the resettlement of refugees out of Israel as an exceptional measure, often for people in life-threatening medical condition, survivors of torture lacking timely and effective rehabilitation services, children with special needs and women at risk. UNHCR Israel works closely with its local partner organizations to identify refugees who may qualify for resettlement.

This document will provide a short explanation and answers to the following questions:

- 1) Who is eligible for resettlement?
- 2) How does the resettlement referral process in Israel work?
- 3) Resettlement and Fraud

Important to note:

- The resettlement process is long and may take several years. This is why resettlement is not a solution for immediate needs. Even if you are referred for resettlement consideration, you must continue to cooperate with the assistance provided in Israel.
- The final decision of acceptance is **made by the Resettlement Country only**. UNHCR and the referring organisations cannot affect this decision and cannot guarantee you being accepted by the resettlement country. If rejected, UNHCR **cannot** guarantee that you will be submitted to a different resettlement country.

1) Who is eligible for resettlement?

A refugee does not have a right to resettlement. Resettlement is a solution that only applies to refugees in very specific circumstances. There are precise criteria defined by the resettlement countries and UNHCR for a refugee to be considered for resettlement.

To be considered for resettlement through UNHCR, the person:

- must have a particular serious vulnerability for which there is no available solution in Israel;

- must be referred to UNHCR by one of UNHCR partners or a professional service provider (such as a social worker or a doctor), after exhausting all alternatives in Israel. **A person cannot refer him/herself for resettlement;**
- must have a valid refugee claim and must be recognized as a refugee by UNHCR;

2) How does the resettlement referral process in Israel work?

Resettlement cannot be applied for or requested directly by an asylum seeker or refugee. UNHCR resettlement is carried out on the basis of referrals from various organisations in Israel who work with UNHCR to identify the most vulnerable persons who need to be prioritized for the very limited available resettlement places.

These referring organizations are the same organisations where asylum seekers generally receive assistance and support in Israel on a daily basis. Through this regular work with asylum seeker communities, the organisations can identify the most vulnerable individuals. Based on vulnerability and other criteria of the resettlement countries, they may then refer certain asylum seekers for resettlement consideration to UNHCR.

Resettlement referrals are not made by these organisations at the request of the individual, but based on the organization's assessment as to whether resettlement is the suitable solution for a particular asylum seeker.

NO SELF REFERRALS ARE ACCEPTED FOR RESETTLEMENT. UNHCR cannot accept direct requests from refugees to be resettled.

Resettlement and fraud:

- UNHCR never charges refugees for resettlement or, for that matter, for any services it provides to refugees, asylum-seekers, or other persons of concern to the organization. **All UNHCR services are free of charge.**
- Any person, including a UNHCR employee, or organization claiming to be able to help a refugee with resettlement in return for money or favours must be reported to the UNHCR office immediately. The reporting could be done through the UNHCR Complaints Procedure (attached) or addressed to a strictly confidential UNHCR email address – ISRTEReport@unhcr.org.
- Similarly, a refugee must not attempt, under any circumstances, to bribe any person working for UNHCR in any capacity. Such an attempt will have serious consequences for the refugee concerned, including criminal penalties under applicable national law.

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