

The ATCR/WGR Newsletter # I



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

The ATCR/WGR Newsletter
is published by the Chair of the Working
Group and the Annual Tripartite Consulta-
tions on Resettlement in cooperation with
the NGO Focal Point and the UNHCR.



Hope On the Border *p. 10*

Growth of Resettlement
Swedish Priority for 09-10 *p. 3*

A Look Back At ATCR '09 *p. 6*

Working Group October Meeting *p. 8*

UNHCR Appeal For Somali Refugees in Eritrea *p. 12*

Activities Update from States, NGOs and UNHCR *p. 14-18*



Sweden

A country of 9 million inhabitants, Sweden has had a resettlement programme since the 1950s and is currently welcoming 1 900 resettled refugees each year. Sweden also receives app. 25 000 asylum seekers per year, mainly from Iraq and Somalia.

INFORMATION FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the ATCR/WGR Newsletter

Dear colleague,

It is a pleasure to present to you the very first issue of the ATCR/WGR Newsletter, published and distributed by the Swedish chair. It is our hope that the newsletter will help channel and distribute information on resettlement in an inspiring and accessible format.

When accepting the chairmanship of the ATCR process, we were warmly welcomed and at the same time warned of this rather demanding assignment. *A Global Consultation Process* is, quite rightly, an extensive forum to manage. As chair, we hope to be able to keep an eye on as many current developments and activities as possible, and to share this with you. However, we only have so many eyes and ears. We therefore welcome your contributions to coming issues, may it be big or small, ideas or fully formulated articles. Our aim is to merge practical information on upcoming events with inspiring good practices and articles with shifting focus.

In this issue we focus mainly on the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) about to meet in a few weeks. We also look back upon the 15th Annual Tripartite Consultations (ATCR) that were held in Geneva in the beginning of the summer. In addition, you will find an article on the resettlement of Palestinians from camps in Syria and Iraq, together with reports from conferences and meetings and updates from UNHCR, governments and NGOs.

We wish you a pleasant reading.

With regards from the Swedish Chair

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 NGO's. The views in this publication does not necessarily represent the Swedish Government, the UNHCR or other contributors.

Title Picture:

Palestinian refugee children from Baghdad living in no mans land between the Iraqi and Syrian border at Al Tanf Refugee Camp.

UNHCR, J. Wreford, January 2007

More photos and Refugee stories at UNHCR's Flickr Photostream

► [web resource: UNHCR Flickr Photostream](#)

Growth of resettlement priority for Swedish chair

Enhanced global commitment and capability for resettlement

More states willing to resettle refugees and more refugees resettled in existing programmes: this will be the focus of the activities in the Working Group and Tripartite Consultations in the coming year under the stewardship of Sweden.

By The Swedish Chair

As the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement drew to a close earlier this summer, Sweden assumed the chair of the Annual Consultations and the Working Group, with a first scheduled meeting to take place in Geneva on 14th of October 2009.

“It is a privilege for us to take part in developing the process on the global consultations on resettlement,” says Oskar Ekblad of the Swedish Migration Board. He, together with colleagues from the Swedish authorities, will oversee and manage the meetings of the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) in the fall and spring as well as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) in summer. While much of the work is focused on facilitating discussions on resettlement through the meetings, the chair has also traditionally set a topical agenda in accordance with the consultative process moving forward. For Sweden it was a natural choice to focus on the enlargement of resettlement in order to bridge the gap between the need among refugee populations and the existing national quotas.

“Sweden is a small country and will never be able to contribute with the number of resettlement places that larger resettlement states can, but we do believe that virtually all states can work together to contribute to solving refugees' need to access protection,” says Ekblad. We hope that the ATCR/WGR can act as a catalyst and rally support and new places among existing, emerging and yet-to-be resettlement states.

The timing of the Swedish Chair also coincides with the Swedish Presidency of the EU. During the fall of 2009 Sweden will preside and steer the work of internal EU negotiations as well as act as the European voice in international fora. One of the priorities of the presidency is to set in place a new policy programme for the area of justice, liberty and security, dubbed the Stockholm Programme. A common asylum system for Europe looms on the horizon and the external dimension of such a system includes prospect for increased resettlement to the Union. The potential for growth of refugee resettlement in the Union is clear but the road ahead still uncertain.

For further information on the Stockholm Program and the Swedish EU Presidency please log on to the Presidency web site:

► [web link: www.se2009.eu](http://www.se2009.eu)



The Swedish Migration Board

The Swedish Chair of the ATCR/WGR is managed by the Governmental agency the Swedish Migration Board. The Board is the central authority in Sweden for asylum examination, reception, return, migration and citizenship. The Swedish Migration Board - in consultation with the UNHCR and the Ministry of Justice - each year decide on the priorities for the Swedish Resettlement Quota.

“The challenge is not only to create an EU resettlement programme that can receive political support among the EU member states, but to create a resettlement programme that actually contributes to the global refugee protection mechanism and that makes a difference for the individuals concerned,” stated the Swedish Minister for Migration, Tobias Billström, at the recent Sigtuna Conference, thus summing up aims as well as the challenge for an EU-wide resettlement programme.

The enlargement of the resettlement community in Europe is of clear interest to the Swedish chair, but it is an equally important goal for the ATCR/WGR to remain a truly global process of consultations and discussions that can lead to concrete outcomes.

The Chair’s theme - Enhanced global commitment and capability for resettlement - will form part of the agendas for the three meetings to come and it is the hope of the chair that the issue of enhanced commitment can be discussed with a strong focus on strategic dividends from resettlement. New strategies, where resettlement might have a minor role in numbers but could play a key role in achieving solutions to refugee crises, will be discussed. Furthermore, cooperative measures, such as core groups or joint activities, are of particular interest in the coming months as states find ways to maximize their efforts and reach as many refugees as possible.

In order to further the discussion among States, NGOs and international organisations, the Chair is also looking to expand the WGR/ATCR process beyond the three meetings. The newsletter that you are reading is part of that endeavour, as is further use of ad-hoc meetings, bilateral consultations and joint missions to host countries. Working closer with NGOs is another priority.

Sweden will have ten months to move the issue of global commitment for resettlement forward.

“It is an ambitious venture but one we are very keen on pursuing,” says Ekblad. “However,” he continues, “we strive to keep the issues of protecting people at the heart of the matter and to not lose sight of the persons that rightfully should benefit from all our efforts – the individuals of the unsolved refugee situations in the world.”

The Swedish Chair:



Oskar Ekblad,
Swedish Migration Board

Oskar has worked with the Asylum Examination division of the Swedish Migration Board since 2001. Since 2008 he oversees the Swedish Resettlement Programme as well as asylum examinations in the southern part of Sweden. His background is in Law with a specialisation in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law



Denise Thomsson,
Swedish Migration Board

Denise has been working at the Resettlement Section of the Migration Board since 2008. She manages a Swedish resettlement network and develops pre departure communication to resettled refugees within the framework of two ERF funded projects. Denise is trained within social and cultural analysis.



Lena Åkerstedt,
Swedish Migration Board

Lena has been working in the field of Asylum examinations since 2002. She currently works as an expert advisor to the Director for Asylum Examination and Resettlement.

Caritas Sweden to coordinate the voices of the civil society

By Caritas Sweden

Approximately 60 representatives of NGOs participated in the ATCR in Geneva in 2009. We hope to continue this ongoing dialogue and discussion and to facilitate the exchange of information in the ATCR process in order to find durable solutions for refugees around the world. As the NGO Focal Point, we want to bring forth the experiences, knowledge and ideas of civil society to promote resettlement, not only in numbers but also in quality and sustainability. We look forward to a fruitful cooperation between governments, UNHCR and NGOs as we work towards finding lasting solutions for our fellow human beings.

We keenly support the theme of the Swedish Chair: increasing commitment and capability for resettlement. As part of this, we support strengthening the existing structures of the WGR and ATCR and making the voice of all partners involved in resettlement heard in order to reach constructive solutions. NGOs have an important role in resettlement in many parts of the world, on an operative level, by influencing public opinion to create support, as well as by increasing and strengthening the capacity of the government to welcome more resettled refugees. In this context, working together can only strengthen the effort and increase results.

We work together with the other NGO networks such as Caritas internationally, ICMC, CCME, ECRE and American, Canadian, and South Pacific NGOs. In Europe we are a part of the ECRE resettlement group. We have regular consultations both in policy and operational issues as well as with public awareness campaigns. We also have a long history of cooperating closely with UNHCR in different parts of the world. The NGOs taking part in ATCR communicate regularly through the website www.refugeeresettlement.net.

We believe that work in the resettlement area, together with the Swedish Chair, governments, UNHCR and our NGO partners, ultimately boils down to individual human beings and their families with their hopes and dreams of finding a sustainable life for themselves and their community. In most cases these are people fleeing their country of origin, through no fault of their own, because of the violation of their fundamental human rights. International society owes it to these fellow human beings to find lasting solutions to start a new life. Resettlement is one such lasting solution and many countries in the world have the capacity to increase its share of responsibility. As part of civil society, together with governments, we hope to work towards increasing public awareness and support of the plight of the refugees in order to expand resettlement capacity.

► [web link:
www.refugeeresettlement.net](http://www.refugeeresettlement.net)



Caritas Sweden

Caritas Sweden is a member of the worldwide network of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 164 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working to build a better world for the poor and oppressed in over 200 countries and territories. The tasks of Caritas Sweden include migration, integration, asylum and anti-trafficking issues. Resettlement of refugees is one of the main areas of concern for Caritas, and Caritas promotes refugee resettlement through advocacy, policy analysis, networking and information exchange in Sweden and internationally. Caritas is a member of the Swedish resettlement network together with representatives from municipalities, the County Administrative Boards, the Swedish Migration Board and UNHCR where we try to raise awareness of resettlement needs and issues of integration.

The NGO Focal Point:

George Joseph,
Caritas Sweden



George has spent the past thirty years working with refugee and asylum issues, including resettlement both internationally and nationally, within UN institutions and NGOs. He has worked both on a policy level as well as in the field with refugee situations in Africa, Central Asia and in the Balkan states.



Marie Eidem,
Caritas Sweden

Marie has spent the past few years working with detainees and focusing particularly on the effect of detention on vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees. Although a relative newcomer to the specific resettlement issues, she is committed to supporting this important cause.

A total of 54 state representatives and 26 NGOs met in Geneva on the 30th of June to take part in the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). Together with colleagues from the UNHCR, IOM and the EU, Palais des Nations was once again turned into a site for international discussions and development of the resettlement issue.

ATCR 2009

Looking back at the 15th Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement

By Denise Thomsson, The Swedish Chair

Nearly 200 participants took their seats in Geneva between the 30th of June and 2nd of July, at the largest ATCR to date. Representatives from more than 30 states, 38 NGOs, and 11 international organisations as well as specially invited guests attended the meeting.

United Kingdom, chairing the event, presented encouraging developments from throughout the year. This included introducing snapshots on the integration of Iraqi refugees in resettlement states as well as guidelines for twinning and experience sharing, among other good practices. The chair theme of Integration was highlighted from various angles in several breakout groups involving the discussion of managing expectations of refugees and receiving communities, measuring integration outcomes, and the impact of the financial crisis.

The UNHCR Resettlement Service presented developments taking place in 2008-2009 as well as priorities and challenges for the coming year. After updates from the states and regional UNHCR bureaux, a follow up on the initiative for Palestinian refugees from Iraq was presented. UNHCR also highlighted refugees in urban settings and in protracted situations, illustrated further by a presentation of a multi-disciplinary mission to eastern Sudan in October 2008. Focus was also placed upon the role of host countries, with a representative from Iran invited as a guest speaker.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, closed the conference. "Today I am converted," he concluded after describing the slow start of the resettlement activities within the UNHCR a few years ago. Whilst applauding new resettlement initiatives, Guterres emphasized the need for active engagement, especially in the global economic crisis, to increase rather than decrease the number of resettlement places. He stressed the need for further work in order to ensure that resettlement becomes a durable solution for a larger part of the refugee population.

For further information about the ATCR including UNHCR's full report from the sessions please log on to the ATCR Secure website [username and password as provided in the ATCR invitation]

► [weblink : www.unhcr.org/ATCR](http://www.unhcr.org/ATCR)

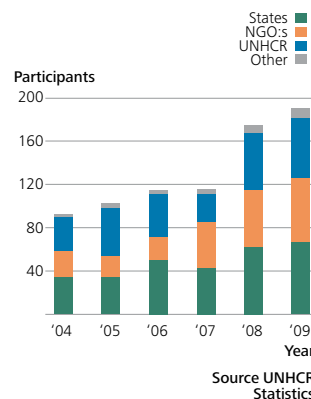


To the left: High Commissioner, António Guterres speaking at the ATCR, flanked by Matthew Coats of the UK Border Agency. Below: Podium of the last day of consultations. Photographs by UK Border Agency



Bigger and bigger...

The ATCR has doubled in size during the last five years:



"Today I am converted"

UNHCR's High Commissioner, António Guterres



Ruben Ahlvin was presented with a Distinguished Service Award Photograph by S. Hopper (UNHCR)

A word from the outgoing chair

By Sarah Swash
UK Border Agency

Having now handed over the ATCR Chair to Sweden, we would like to extend our warm thanks to UNHCR and States for their cooperation and support over the last year as we took forward the international resettlement agenda together.

We were particularly pleased to see at least four new States starting to engage in resettlement during 2008-09.

We would like to see more EU States who don't yet resettle refugees to develop programmes of their own. The common EU Resettlement Programme gives us a strong opportunity to do that through pooling our resources and expertise at EU level, in close cooperation with UNHCR.

We look forward to continuing to work with international colleagues over the coming months and years to further strengthen the international base of resettlement.

Celebrating a colleague

By UNHCR Resettlement Service

The 15th Annual ATCR ended with a standing ovation following the presentation by António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, of a Distinguished Service award to Ruben Ahlvin, Swedish Migration Board, in recognition of distinguished service and contributions to refugee resettlement. Mr Ahlvin has worked in the resettlement field for more than thirty years and has attended the ATCR since its commencement. UNHCR colleagues expressed deep appreciation of Ruben's professionalism and commitment to the humanitarian and life-saving cause of refugee resettlement.



Picture by Magnus Bejerlein

WGR Working Group on Resettlement

October 14, 2009

at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland



Chaired by Sweden

Working Group on Resettlement meet in Geneva

The Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) brings together resettlement states to discuss global developments, as part of the Annual Tripartite Consultations (ATCR) process. Next meeting is held on the 14th of October in Geneva.

By **Denise Thomsson and Lena Åkerstedt**, The Swedish Chair

Representatives from 37 states are invited to attend the meeting in Geneva in mid-October. A separate invitation letter has been sent out to those concerned. The meeting, held semi-annually, brings together states with various levels of experience on resettlement to discuss global developments together with UNHCR.

The autumn meeting has traditionally only gathered states, while it develops into a tripartite format in the spring and summer; however, under the Swedish Chair the NGO Focal Point Caritas Sweden has been invited to attend the meeting as an observer. This in order to keep the NGO community up-to-date and prepared for developments coming out of the meeting, and to ensure a well functioning tripartite process.

The WGR will focus on developing ways to put the chair theme of *Increased global commitment and capability for resettlement* into practice. By looking at tools such as the Broadening the Base Toolkit, introduced by Denmark in 2005, as well as the potential further use of core groups, the meeting will aim to support growth within and outside current resettlement states.

Documents relevant to the meeting will be published on the secure WGR website. However to ensure that more actors can take part of the results, materials will be transferred to the secure ATCR website (available to a larger public) after the meeting. 11 observer states have also been invited to attend the meeting, in order to broaden the basis for resettlement on a global level.

Please note that the registration deadline is 1st of October 2009!

Working Group 14th of October 2009

Draft Agenda [Subject to change]

8.30-9.00	Coffee/tea and registration
9.00-9.15	Welcome, introduction by Chair
9.15-10.30	Brief update on important developments since ATCR '09 Update on follow up items from ATCR '09 Priority updates to and feedback on UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs Document 2010 Updates by states Strategic use of resettlement
10.30-11.00	Coffee and tea [provided]
11.00-12.30	Enhanced global commitment and capability for resettlement (Chair's theme) Introduction by chair Enhanced commitment through the use of Core Groups
12.30-13.45	Lunch [not provided]
13.45-15.15	Enhanced global commitment and capability for resettlement cont'd Enhanced commitment through the previously developed "Broadening the Base Toolkit" An EU resettlement scheme for the benefit of increased global commitment Conclusions and recommendations
15.15-15.40	Coffee and tea [provided]
15.40-16.30	Report back and information session The Expert Group on Resettlement Anti-fraud Updating the Resettlement Handbook
16.30-17.00	Conclusions and closing remarks Main conclusions and findings of the Working Group

Important Notice to Participants

Included in your invitation you will find information on how to access the WGR Secure Website. On the website you will currently find Invitation, Registration Form, map of the Palais des Nations, Tour deTable, and

a draft Agenda. Our intention is that the discussion papers will be posted on the secure website roughly a week before the meeting. The Final Agenda will be posted the week of the meeting. We would like to inform you

that we will not be providing copies of the documents at the meeting.

Please note also that there will be no simultaneous interpretation service at this WGR.

1st of October deadline:

- Registration (States): Send to the Swedish Chair [sweden.atcr@migrationsverket.se]
- Registration (UNHCR): Send to Suporn Vongchompoo [vongchom@unhcr.org]
- Update Tour de Table: Send to the Swedish Chair [sweden.atcr@migrationsverket.se]
- Documents to be posted on the WGR website: Send to the Swedish Chair [sweden.atcr@migrationsverket.se]

An end in sight?

UNHCR and resettlement states bring hope to the encamped Palestinian refugees on the Iraqi/Syria border

A generous response met UNHCR's appeal for the nearly 3 000 Palestinian refugees from Iraq, situated in camps along the Syrian/Iraqi border. In one year almost 2 000 refugees have been resettled to 12 states. By continuous efforts, UNHCR hopes to empty the camps by end of 2009.

By UNHCR Resettlement Service and Denise Thomsson

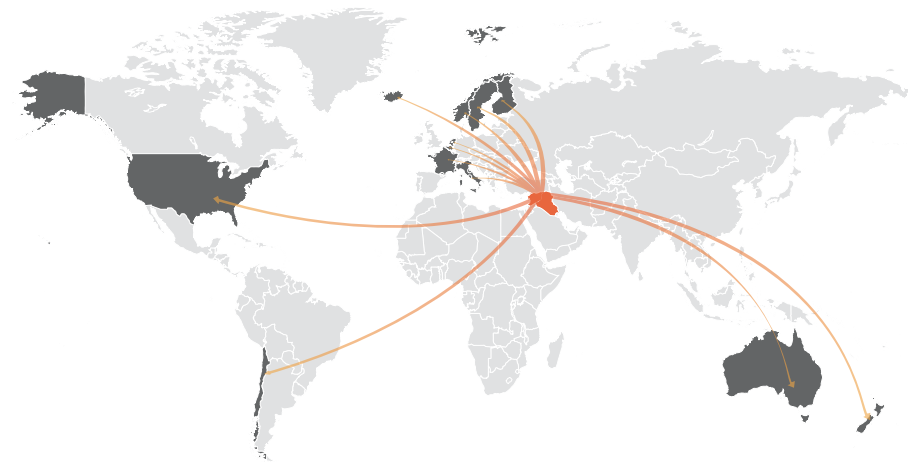
In September 2008, UNHCR launched an appeal to resettlement countries to consider accepting Palestinian refugees from Iraq who were located in three camps, Al Waleed, Al Tanf and Al Hol, which are on or close to the Syrian/Iraqi border. The living conditions in the camps were extremely difficult and UNHCR's estimations were that out of the total population of 2,973 Palestinian refugees residing in the three camps, 1,279 persons had special needs and therefore had been prioritized for resettlement.

As of the beginning of 2009, the future was still unknown for the refugees in the camps. Mid January no country had yet given any concrete pledge to take on any of the refugees for resettlement. In an article on refworld.org, published by the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) on 18th of January, residents in Al Tanf pointed out that European states would only have to take ten families each in order for the camp to be emptied.

Even though their hopes had not yet been realized, the situation of the Palestinians in Syria was put in the spotlight in November 2008 when European states were encouraged to take on 10 000 refugees for resettlement. After visiting Al Tanf in March 2009, the Swedish Director General Dan Eliasson was appalled by the harsh conditions, and emphasized further the need to empty the camp.

During 2009, the response from resettlement countries has been increasingly positive. As of 31 August 2009 (less than one year after the initial appeal was launched) 1,981 refugees had been accepted by 12 resettlement countries. 672 individuals had departed to the countries that accepted them for resettlement. 1,096 refugees were still waiting decisions from the resettlement countries to which their cases had been submitted. The UNHCR Resettlement Hub in Beirut will continue to submit cases to resettlement countries on either a dossier basis or for selection missions in the coming months.

The resettlement of Palestinian refugees from Iraq has proved to be an efficient burden sharing tool. The generous response by resettlement countries is crucial to ending the suffering of this population and to finding a solution to their deteriorating humanitarian situation. With continuous support and efforts by resettlement states, UNHCR hopes to be able to close the camps in Al Waleed, Al Tanf and Al Hol by the end of 2009.



The countries involved in this resettlement operation are Australia, Belgium, Chile, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and USA.



Al-Tanf Refugee Camp: Clockwise from left: Tents crowd the small strip of land that constitute the Al-Tanf camp, the main street of the camp lined with water tanks, Swedish Director-General Dan Eliasson talking with children during his March 2009 visit, refugee children at Al-Tanf. Photographs by D.Thomsson, R. Sener and J.Wreford (UNHCR)

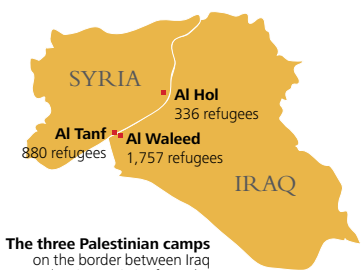


NGOs call for continuous action

By Elizabeth Campbell, Refugee Council USA

NGOs are pleased with the resettlement progress of Palestinian refugees from Iraq and commend governments for their actions and UNHCR for facilitating this work. Refugees have thus far departed to over 12 countries, signifying a good example of international cooperation and responsibility sharing in the face of a dire humanitarian and protection situation. We support UNHCR's goal to close the three border camps by the end of 2009 and urge governments to continue to act swiftly to help make this happen.

We are also pleased with the very creative ways that governments have worked to resettle these refugees, many of whom were in difficult and even unreachable places. We applaud the use of the transit centers and believe that this experience has helped to set a high standard and precedent for future use of these centers for populations that are otherwise hard for governments to access. We remain concerned however about those Palestinian refugees from Iraq inside of Syria. They have not been afforded the same protection and treatment as Iraqis or other Palestinian refugees. We urge that they are all registered with UNHCR and also considered for resettlement in the near future.



The three Palestinian camps on the border between Iraq and Syria. Statistics from the UNHCR, September 2009

UNHCR Appeals for Somali Refugees in Eritrea

3,262 Somali refugees in Eritrea have been found eligible for resettlement, of whom 1,142 were submitted to resettlement countries in 2008. Another 1,362 have dossiers prepared and are awaiting submission. These refugees come from violence ridden regions in South Central Somalia and many are from vulnerable clans or sub-clans. Most have spent nearly a decade in camps. Return home is not an option, nor is local integration, as the Eritrean Government has ruled this out in legal terms. These refugees have been overlooked and resettlement countries are urged to consider submissions for some of them in their annual intake.

By UNHCR Resettlement Service

As of June 2009, UNHCR Eritrea has registered around 5,055 refugees of whom 4,864 are Somali nationals and the rest Sudanese and Ethiopians.

As part of its protection strategy, UNHCR Eritrea has decided to embark on large scale resettlement processing for the Somali refugees originating from South-Central Somalia who are in a protracted situation without any prospects for repatriation or local integration.

To determine eligibility, those who are from South-Central Somalia and arrived prior to 2004 (i.e having spent more than 5 years in exile in Eritrea) are being considered under this large scale processing. A total of 3,520 refugees were assessed to fall under these criteria.

Since mid-2000, these refugees are residing in the Emkulu camp, 7-8 kilometres inland from the port city of Massawa. The population of Emkulu camp initially lived in a camp located near the port of Assab (Harsile), which was closed due to fears relating to security during the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war. The refugees originate from the central and

southern parts of Somalia, mainly the Gedo region, and belong to sub-clans of the Darod, primarily Marihan (Hawarsame and Faki Yakub) and Absame. There are also small numbers of minority clans such as Bantus, Gaboye, Shekal, Galgala and others.

Refugees residing in the Emkulu camp have been issued with identity cards by the Eritrean Office of Refugee Affairs (ORA), which are necessary to facilitate travel within the country. Despite the availability of these identity cards, there remain substantial limitations on freedom of movement in Eritrea and, in the absence of specific authorization from ORA, refugees are only able to move within the vicinity in which the camp is located. Travel to other administrative zones of the country requires authorization as applies to all foreigners in Eritrea.

Until about a year ago, Somali residents of Emkulu camp were able to find work in Massawa, usually on private construction projects as well as in the fishing industry. Refugees report that families were able to raise an income of about 1,200 to 1,500 Nakfa (70 to 100 US\$) on a monthly basis. Work in construction projects

is however no longer available (private construction is currently suspended in Eritrea) and this has consequently led refugees to be entirely dependant upon the limited assistance provided by UNHCR through ORA. As a result of this, refugees are no longer able to raise money to purchase clothing and other essential items and have resorted to selling a portion of their monthly food rations to satisfy these needs.

Refugees have access to education and medical care provided by the government and funded by UNHCR. Students who have completed grade eight, the highest level of schooling available in the camp, have access to public schools in Massawa and benefit from UNHCR assistance for transport and school supplies.

Refugees report that security in the camp is, overall, of high standard. While there is no formal police presence in the camp, refugees in collaboration with ORA have developed autonomous methods of conflict resolution and refer complex matters to ORA and the Eritrean police.

As Somali refugees in Emkulu are, with very few exceptions, entirely reliant on humanitarian assistance and are restricted to life



Pictures from Emkulu Camp, Massawa, Eritrea
Photos: G. Muchiri

Resettlement statistics

As of 16th of August 2009, the files of 1,362 refugees (314 cases) are finalized and pending submission at the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi. The case breakdown is as follows:

Resettlement criteria	Cases	Persons
SVT	18	78
Medical	33	161
WAR /FHH /Elderly	57	228
Small families (under 6)	103	291
Large families (6 +)	103	604
TOTAL	314	1362

UNHCR renewed Appeal:

Who? The majority of the refugee population in Eritrea comes from violence-ridden regions in South Central Somalia and many are from particularly vulnerable clan or sub-clans.

Why? Given the ongoing critical situation in their country of origin, repatriation is not realistic. Local integration in Eritrea is also not a feasible option, and several restrictions, including that of freedom of movement, continue to affect the population. Resettlement remains the only viable durable solution.

When? As soon as possible. Many of these refugees have been spending nearly a decade confined to the refugee camp environment. A solution to the plight of this population requires a clear commitment from resettlement countries to accept these refugees.

in the refugee camp, their prospects for economic independence as one pre-condition for local integration are slim. Moreover, whereas the Eritrean Nationality law has provisions for foreigners to apply for and be granted Eritrean nationality, UNHCR has been informed that this does not apply to Somali refugees. Unlike other foreigners, Somali refugees are also not entitled to residency permits and the Eritrean government has ruled out local integration in legal terms.

As part of the large scale resettlement processing, UNHCR has screened the Somali population of Emkulu camp on the basis of their place of origin and date of arrival. Thus, Somalis originating from South-Central Somalia

who arrived prior to December 2004 are being interviewed and Resettlement Registration Forms (RRFs) are completed for those who were found to be eligible.

Resettlement Activities of this Particular Group to Date

By end of May 2009, 3,873 refugees had been interviewed and 3,262 were found eligible for resettlement and were referred to the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi for submission to potential resettlement countries.

A total of 821 Somali refugees in Eritrea were submitted to Canada in 2008 and 300 to Australia. Departure arrangements for these refugees, the vast majority of whom were accepted,

are currently underway. A further 21 refugees were submitted to Norway (6 persons), Finland (6 persons), the UK (4 persons) and France (5 persons) in 2008. In all, 1,142 Somali refugees in Eritrea were submitted for resettlement in 2008.

In 2009, 8 refugees were submitted to Norway and 5 to Switzerland. Although UNHCR had also submitted a further 460 persons to the US, these cases had to be withdrawn since given the current US inability to access Eritrea.

For further information please contact:
Jennifer Ashton, Senior Resettlement Coordinator, Resettlement Service,
Department of International Protection Services, UNHCR
Ashton@unhcr.org



UNHCR

Medical experts meeting postponed

Some of you will be aware of previous indications that UNHCR would like to convene this October a special meeting on medical resettlement, pursuant to discussions at the 2008 ATCR and WGR meetings. To allow for preparation by all participants, and to benefit from related workshops and data consolidation by UNHCR during the next few months, it is proposed that this meeting be postponed until February 2009, to be held prior to and in conjunction with the February WGR. The meeting on medical resettlement will invite the participation of medical experts from resettlement countries in addition to IOM and UNHCR. In the meantime, UNHCR in consultation with the Swedish Chair of ATCR, will initiate a process of consultation with resettlement States concerning the agenda of the meeting which will focus on important policy and operational considerations to advance medical resettlement globally.

For further information, please contact Sean Henderson [henderson@unhcr.org] at UNHCR Headquarters.

UNHCR updates public website



In order to enhance global commitment and capability for resettlement, UNHCR has updated the resettlement pages of its public website. The public website has shown to be used more than the site Refworld where most updated materials have been published.

By UNHCR Resettlement Service

An informal survey on the utility of UNHCR websites with resettlement content was conducted among 90 participants at the 2009 ATCR. The survey looked at three website portals:

- ATCR secure website
- UNHCR public website
- Refworld website

The survey results show a high percentage of respondents (92%) aware of the ATCR secure website, and 88% found the website useful in preparing for the ATCR. However, only 79% visited the ATCR secure website prior to the ATCR, and only 52% of respondents had looked at the Projected Global Resettlement Needs document posted on the secure website. The reasons for the low access to this key ATCR document prior to the ATCR include the timing of the document being posted on the website and the late registration of some ATCR participants. Steps will be taken to improve in these areas under Sweden's chairship.

The survey also revealed that 95% of respondents had previously visited UNHCR's public website; however, the resettlement page on UNHCR's Refworld website had only attracted about 55% of respondents, despite the fact that Refworld contains some of the most up-to-date information on refugee resettlement relevant to ATCR discussions.

In view of the survey results and in accordance with Sweden's chairship priorities to enhance global commitment and capability for resettlement, UNHCR has taken steps to improve the utility of its web-based resources on resettlement in terms of content, design and inter-linkages. In consultation with the Swedish chair, new information will be posted on the UNHCR public website, including frequently asked questions and answers on refugee resettlement, aimed at raising public awareness of resettlement which will be especially useful for new and emerging resettlement States.

▶ UNHCR websites with resettlement content:

- ATCR secure website: www.unhcr.org/ATCR
- WGR secure website: www.unhcr.org/WGR
- UNHCR public website: www.unhcr.org
- Refworld website: www.refworld.org

Europe (Gov)

GDISC initiates action group on resettlement

GDISC, The General Directors Integration Services Conference, invited colleagues to Stockholm to discuss joint efforts within resettlement. After presentations from the ATCR chair, as well as UNHCR and IOM, participants divided into break out groups to elaborate on possible cooperative activities to increase the impacts and use of resettlement. The meeting proposed that an action group be initiated to elaborate on the possibilities to engage further in resettlement in the area of Africa's Horn. The action group, to be chaired by the UK, will function as an organ for cooperation within resettlement, development and integration. Even though initiated by European colleagues, the group will be developed with regards to other global foras, such as the ATCR. Dan Eliasson, co chairing the meeting with Matthew Coats, was pleased to see such a progressive outcome from the day's discussions, and looked forward to the next steps together with international colleagues.

- I am happy that our initiative will lead to more European states working together to support refugees in some of the worlds worst refugee sites, said Eliasson.

▶ **weblink :** <http://www.gdisc.org/>

Europe (NGO)

Churches launch conference on a European resettlement scheme

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) convened a European conference on resettlement during the first working weeks of the Swedish EU Presidency. Under the title "Towards the common EU resettlement scheme", the conference gathered some 60 participants to discuss current developments on resettlement within the European Union.

The conference, held just outside Stockholm in Sigtuna from the 25th to 28th of August, brought together some 60 experts from relevant government departments, UNHCR offices, NGOs and churches in EU Member States. The Swedish Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, Tobias Billström, the UN's Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees, Erika

Feller and the Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, Jacques Barrot, all addressed the opening panel of the conference and underlined, each from their own perspective, the importance of resettlement.

During the four days of the conference participants debated the current developments regarding resettlement in Europe, discussed the details around an emerging European Resettlement Scheme and witnessed resettlement in practice through a visit at a local municipality. The discussions pointed to the need for enhanced co-operation and the desire for more coordination at an EU level, while at the same time concluded that a certain degree of flexibility should be maintained in order to ensure the effectiveness of resettlement as a durable solution.

Thorsten Moritz, CCME

▶ **web resource:**
More on the CCME- conference



European Union

The European Commission has proposed that EU states contribute voluntarily to a Joint EU Resettlement Programme



The United Kingdom (NGO)

The UK Gateway Protection Programme for Refugees was expanded in 2008/9 up to 750 arrivals and the UK resettled the highest number of refugees to date – almost 700 refugees. The quota will remain at 750 for 2009/10. During 2009/10 the United Kingdom Border Agency will carry out three selection missions to Jordan to interview Iraqi refugees, one to East Africa to consider Congolese (DRC), one to Bangladesh to consider Burmese and two to the Evacuation Transit Centre in Romania to consider refugees who cannot be accessed in their current country of refuge. The UK is currently working with 15 local authorities across the country.

The United Kingdom (NGO)

National Skillshare Day

The British Refugee Council is planning its next national skillshare day, for staff and managers from all the existing resettlement programmes across the UK. The event will take place in February 2010 and is a key element of NGOs' commitment to sharing good practice and ensuring that resettled refugees are given high quality help and support as they rebuild their lives in the United Kingdom.

Online Forum for Refugees

The British Refugee Council and Refugee Action are working together to develop an Online Forum for refugees to access prior to being resettled in the UK. The aim is to enable refugees to chat online with other resettled refugees, and get a better understanding of the services available in the areas to which they will be resettled. It is hoped the forum will enable pre-arrival refugees to get up to date and accurate information to ensure that their expectations for life in the UK are realistic. The aim is to initially trial the forum with the new Iraqi arrivals groups in October/November 09 who will be living in Hull,

Sheffield and Manchester. The project is facilitated by Refugee Council and Refugee Action staff, and is a refugee-led project, involving resettled refugees from Hull, Sheffield and Manchester. The British Refugee Council is also exploring the idea of creating a DVD for potential resettled refugees. This will be available to refugees in the country where they are currently living, to help prepare them more thoroughly for what they can expect in the UK, and to help ensure that their expectations of life in the UK are realistic.

Consultations with resettled refugees

British Refugee Council staff running Gateway programmes in Sheffield, Hull and Norwich now carry out formal consultation exercises with resettled refugees 6 months and 12 months after their arrival in the UK. The aim of the consultations is to enable resettled refugees to have an active voice in shaping the services which affect them. They also assist the British Refugee Council to ensure that refugees are receiving the support they need.

Australia (NGO)

Refugee and Humanitarian Program expands

From July 2009, Australia's annual Refugee and Humanitarian Program intake increased by 250 places to 13,750. The program comprises 6,000 Refugee Program places (the resettlement partnership with UNHCR) and 7,750 places to be shared between the Special Humanitarian Program and Australia's Protection Visa process.

Consultations on future of on-arrival support services

Australian NGOs and refugee community organisations have recently participated in a public consultation and submission process regarding future directions of support services for newly-arrived refugees. During July and August, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship conducted public consultations and focus groups in cities around Australia and invited written submissions regarding priorities for the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). The IHSS provides initial, intensive settlement support to newly-arrived humanitarian entrants, including on arrival reception and assistance, case coordination, information, referrals, accommodation services and short term torture and trauma counselling. Tenders will soon be invited for the provision of IHSS services for the five years from July 2010.

Active national program for Refugee Week

Refugee Week 2009 celebrations were held in Australia between Sunday 14 June and Saturday 20 June, focusing on the theme "Freedom from Fear". Major launches were held in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane and more than 160 local events took place, including community celebrations, arts events, seminars, information expos, sporting events, film screenings and competitions. NGOs and community organisations throughout Australia played an active role in coordinating these events.

New report highlights protection challenges

In conjunction with the Sydney launch of Refugee Week, the Refugee Council of Australia released a report documenting the experiences of refugees in South-East Asia and the Middle East. Entitled "The Search for Protection", the report is based on interviews with refugees originally from Burma and Iraq who have recently resettled in Australia. The study found that many refugees awaiting resettlement lived in constant fear of arrest and deportation and regularly experienced harassment and exploitation.

► **web resource:**
[The report on protection challenges at Refugee Council of Australia web site](#)



New Zealand (NGO)

Newly-arrived refugees complete six-week orientation program

On August 14, 151 refugees from countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Burma/Myanmar, Eritrea, Colombia and Bhutan completed their six-week orientation program, leaving the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre to resettle in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Hutt Valley, Porirua, Wellington, Nelson or Christchurch. The orientation program, coordinated by Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand, begins with the newly arrived refugees receiving their own Welcome Pack which includes a hygiene kit, warm clothing, thermal underwear and toys for children.

Tim Houghton, Refugee Services' coordinator at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre, explains: "Once the group has recovered from their flights, introductions are made through an interpreter and explanations of the support we and other services will be providing. Interviewing each family allows us to find out as much as we can about their resettlement needs which we discuss with our staff in the regions where they will be resettled. Our social worker helps resolve any emerging concerns and we rely on the cultural insights provided by our cross cultural workers to help us understand the groups we are assisting. As soon as possible we

discuss with the families the cities they are being relocated to and talk about any concerns they may have.

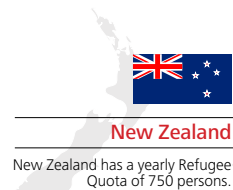
"Throughout each intake we work closely with other agencies at the centre including those working in medical, educational and mental health areas. We assist Housing New Zealand as they do assessments, look for appropriate housing and finalise tenancy agreements with each family. Finally, we prepare all the paperwork they will need to start their lives in New Zealand, including setting up bank accounts and IRD (tax) numbers."

NGO builds homes for refugee families

Habitat for Humanity Nelson has offered an exciting opportunity for two families from a refugee background to be the proud owners of their own homes. To date, nine homes have been built by Habitat for Humanity in the Nelson region. Nelson is also the home for a growing Bhutanese community with the first four families arriving earlier in the year and another family of five arriving in time for World Refugee Day on June 20.

The next issue:

The next issue of the ATCR/WGR Newsletter will be distributed mid November. The issue will have a focus on protracted refugee situations as well as present discussions and outcomes of the WGR. 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] before 2nd of November.





ATCR WGR

ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS
and WORKING GROUP ON RESETTLEMENT