

# **ILPA** information sheet

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## **The Gateway Protection Programme** *March 2014*

It is 10 years since the UK first accepted refugees under the UN's resettlement programme. Titled the "Gateway Protection Programme" in the UK, the resettlement programme is a global system, administered by UNHCR, whereby refugees are moved from a country where they have sought protection, often in overcrowded camps, to a third country which has agreed in advance to admit them as refugees. Each of the participating countries sets an annual quota and in partnership with UNHCR selects individuals or groups of refugees to be admitted. The system operates separately from the refugee status determination process which applicants for asylum must go through in those same third countries.

### **Resettlement in figures**

Of the 10.5 million persons of concern to UNHCR globally, only 1% will be resettled. Not every country who has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention also participates in the resettlement programme; the UK has chosen to do so for the past decade, accepting an annual quota of 750 persons. Many other EU States also contribute, with Sweden offering the most places, currently 1,900 each year. The contribution from Europe totals 5,500, and is modest compared with other major Western States: the USA offers 70,000 places annually, Australia 20,000 and Canada 7,100.

### **Why is resettlement needed?**

Four-fifths of the world's refugees are currently taking refuge in a country which borders the country from which they fled persecution. Often these refugees live in difficult camp environments, for many years or even decades. They have no means of onward travel and, because the risk of persecution is extant, no ability to return home. These refugees are effectively left in limbo, and may be confined to a camp environment by the country of refuge, which often will not have the resources to cope with large numbers. The resettlement programme is an attempt to assist both the refugees and the first countries of refuge.

## **The UK's involvement**

The UK has a long history of accepting refugees in need of resettlement on an ad hoc basis. In the 1940s over 200,000 Polish second World War exiles were taken in. In more recent times the process has been formalised under the Gateway Protection Programme. This began in 2004 with Liberians resettled from camps in Sierra Leone who were soon followed by Congolese resettled from camps in Uganda. The UK's quota was initially set at 500 persons; it was increased to 750 persons in 2007. This quota is however rarely filled; it was successfully met for the first time in the 2011/2012 year's intake. There are no current plans to increase the quota, something which is being [urged](#) by charities such as the Refugee Council.

## **How are the refugees chosen?**

Because only a small fraction of the refugees who need help can be resettled, certain groups are prioritised. The categories used by UNHCR include:

- Women and girls at risk
- Survivors of violence and/or torture
- Elderly persons and Persons with medical needs or disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex persons
- Persons who face current threats to their physical security

Each resettlement country sets its own priorities and determines which groups they will assist. For example, the UK currently aims to fill its quota with 10% Women-at-Risk cases, and 3% medical cases each year. The UK has a policy not to accept resettlement from other EU countries, but in the past has taken 10 people from Malta.

The process for selection begins with UNHCR identifying suitable candidates for resettlement in the field. Details of those candidates are then provided to UK Visas & Immigration, who then visit the country, to interview the candidates and make a final determination as to whether to accept them. On occasion, refugees are selected on the basis of paperwork alone ('dossier selection'). All gateway refugees are granted a five-year residence permit with a view to this being extended thereafter by the grant of indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Gateway refugees also receive a 12-month support package to help them integrate locally, administered by the local authority in the area chosen for their resettlement; local authorities who have signed up for the scheme have included Sheffield, Manchester, Brighton, Hull and Norwich.

Further information about resettlement can be found on UNHCR's website, here:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>

The European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) conducted a study on resettlement in Europe in 2013. The UK chapter is available here: [http://www.know-reset.eu/files/texts/00170\\_20130919160801\\_knowresetcountryprofileunitedkingdom.pdf](http://www.know-reset.eu/files/texts/00170_20130919160801_knowresetcountryprofileunitedkingdom.pdf)