

FACTS ABOUT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

How many refugees does New Zealand take each year?

New Zealand has committed to accept 750 refugees per year in its annual quota. This refugee quota has not been raised in nearly 30 years. It was first set at 800 in 1987 but was later reduced. There have also been years when New Zealand has taken less than 750 refugees.

How does this compare to other countries?

When compared with the rest of the world, New Zealand ranks 90th per capita in resettlement. If you take our wealth into account we drop to an embarrassing 116th in the world. That's a record none of us can be proud of. Australia settles five times as many refugees and asylum seekers on a per capita basis.¹

What is family reunification?

Family reunification is when a refugee living in New Zealand applies for a family member to receive a visa. This is a visa category like other immigration categories and can take years to be processed. The New Zealand government offers only 300 places per year in this visa category and does not pay for any of the costs associated with moving to New Zealand. The application currently costs \$580, and each refugee can only sponsor one family member and their dependents. According to the Immigration NZ website,² "For example, if you have a sister and brother, you can only sponsor one of them, together with their partner and children. You cannot sponsor both your brother and sister."

What services do family members receive?

People coming to New Zealand on a Refugee Family Support Category visa do not receive any financial assistance from the government. They do not receive any of the resettlement assistance provided to refugees when they arrive. People who seek to immigrate on a Family Support visa pay a residence application fee, costs of medical examinations, police certificates and other required documents. They pay for their own travel to visa appointments and for their travel to New Zealand.

How does someone come to New Zealand as a refugee?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) decides which refugees are in the greatest need of resettlement and asks countries to take them. The New Zealand government makes the final decision on which refugees to accept each year. Refugees go through a rigorous screening process, using refugee and protection officers, after they have already been screened by UNHCR.

How do refugees get resettled?

There are three solutions open to refugees: voluntary repatriation; local integration; or resettlement to a third country in situations where it is impossible for a person to go back home or remain in the host country. UNHCR helps achieve one of these solutions, but for several million refugees and a greater number of internally displaced people, these solutions are nowhere in sight. Fewer than 1% of refugees will ever be able to access a resettlement place, and according to UNHCR, only 126,800 refugees returned to their home country in 2014. This is the lowest level since 1983.

What does refugee resettlement look like in New Zealand?

Red Cross New Zealand is the lead organisation providing the refugee resettlement programme. Refugees are given permanent residence when they arrive here and spend their first six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. They learn English and local customs. There are resettlement communities in Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hamilton, Auckland, and Christchurch. Each refugee or family is also assigned a social worker and volunteer support worker to help them in their first 12 months in the country. The government provides social support to refugees early in the resettlement period in order to ensure successful integration. This saves money in the long term by helping people gain employment more quickly and lessens the likelihood of health or other problems.

1 <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends/2014-GlobalTrends-annex-tables.zip>

2 <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/live/refugeefamilysupport/default.htm>



What is a refugee?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international organisation responsible for protecting the world's refugees and seeking solutions for them. There are about 19 million officially recognised refugees worldwide - people who cannot return to their home country because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to their religion, race, nationality, or other category recognised by the Refugee Convention.

What is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone seeking protection, whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed. Eligible persons seeking asylum in New Zealand can apply for refugee and protected person status – if that person fears returning to a country where they risk serious harm, torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

How many asylum seekers does NZ take?

In Financial Year 13/14, only 69 asylum seekers were granted refugee status in New Zealand through the Refugee Status Branch, and there were 53 granted through refugee and protection appeals. By comparison, net migration was over 50,000 that same year.

How does this compare to other countries?

Germany has received more asylum applicants than any other European Union nation, with more than 154,000 people seeking asylum from January to June 2015, up from 68,000 in the same period last year. Adjusted for population, Hungary (129,203) and Sweden (228,601) are top recipients of EU countries.¹

What local support services are available to refugees?

There are a number of local NGOs that work with former refugees to help them settle into New Zealand and to work through the application process to reunite them with family through the Family Support visa. For information on local resources and data, we recommend checking with the Red Cross:

<https://www.redcross.org.nz/what-we-do/in-new-zealand/refugee-services/resources/>

New Zealand's commitment to international law

New Zealand is one of 145 countries that are signatories to the 1951 United Nations Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. New Zealand also has protection obligations under the 1984 Convention Against Torture and 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

How big is the refugee crisis?²

- There are 59.5 million people forcibly displaced right now. If this were a country, it would be the 24th largest in the world.
- 38.2 million people have been relocated within their home country, 19.5 million are external refugees, and 1.8 million are asylum seekers.
- 42,500 people are forced to leave their homes each day due to conflict and persecution. This is a 4-fold increase over the past four years.
- Children (below age 18) were a majority of the refugee population. Child refugees are at the highest number in more than a decade.

1 <http://nyti.ms/1JrITPf>

2 <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>

