

RCUSA Jordan and Egypt Resettlement Recommendations

All of the following recommendations, unless otherwise specified, refer to resettlement for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in Jordan and Egypt.

Recommendations for the United States Government:

- UNHCR sought 30,000 resettlement and humanitarian admission placements for Syrian refugees in 2014, and is seeking 100,000 additional placements by 2016. The United States should continue its tradition of accepting **at least** half of all UNHCR referrals for any given population. Therefore, the United States should resettle **at least** 65,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016. Particular groups of concern include: women-at-risk; religious minorities; unaccompanied refugee minors and other at-risk-children; refugees with serious health concerns; victims of torture and/or trauma; those with affiliations with the U.S. government or U.S.-based NGOs/media/companies; members of minority, persecuted groups; and refugees in immediate physical danger.
- The robust resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States should be in addition to, not instead of, resettling refugees from other parts of the world. The Presidential Determination should increase from 70,000 in FY15 to 100,000 for FY16.
- Security checks are a vital part of the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and have proven to be successful in maintaining the program's integrity. Although these safeguards have been enhanced and updated, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), other U.S. security agencies, and the White House should allocate sufficient resources and staff to eliminate delays and redundancies to reduce the waiting time for refugees at significant risk.
- The U.S. government should identify specific groups of refugees in the region as being of particular humanitarian concern to the United States and as such should be eligible for group processing.
- The U.S. government should expand family reunification opportunities through the USRAP (through the P3 family reunification priority) to allow Syrians in legal status in the United States, even if they did not arrive as refugees, to file affidavits of relationship (AORs).
- The resettlement of other extremely vulnerable refugees in the region, including Iraqis, African refugees in both Jordan and Egypt, and non-Syrian refugees forced to flee from Syria, should also be prioritized.
- Specific NGOs in the region should be able to make direct resettlement referrals to the United States. The U.S. government should provide increased capacity building and training for these NGO partners so they can identify and refer the most vulnerable refugees for resettlement.
- Funding for DHS should be increased so that it can visit the region more frequently to interview refugees slated for potential resettlement. When security concerns make in-person interviews impossible, DHS should use video conferencing for interviews.

- DHS should consider utilizing iris scans and additional biometric data that UNHCR has collected for 65-67% of registered Syrian refugees. The use of this data could help reduce redundancies in the USRAP screening process.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) should support programming that assists communities and organizations that resettle Syrian refugees to foster a welcoming climate for them, offer services that are tailored for Syrian refugees, and include a long-term focus on their successful integration.

Recommendations for UNHCR:

- UNHCR should increase capacity to conduct refugee status determinations (RSD) and provide resettlement referrals for Syrian refugees in the region to as many countries as possible, including the United States.
- UNHCR should reconsider how it prioritizes refugees for resettlement, and should refer the most vulnerable cases, including women-at-risk and unaccompanied minors.
- UNHCR should increase resettlement opportunities for Syrian refugees living in refugee camps in Jordan. Resettlement from the camps should complement, not diminish, resettlement opportunities for urban refugees.
- Resettlement operations should be conducted in a transparent manner, with UNHCR and NGOs working in cooperation with each other to provide basic information about resettlement to refugees.
- UNHCR, with the assistance of the international community, should establish an Emergency Transit Center (ETC) in the region to move the most vulnerable cases to a safe environment while resettlement processing is completed.
- The importance of resettlement must be better recognized within the broader UNHCR structure. Resettlement training should be provided to the regional bureaus in Geneva and in regional and national offices so that frontline staff can better incorporate resettlement into protection activities and advocacy.
- Best Interest Determinations (BIDs) should be facilitated for the unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs) that have already been identified in Jordan and Egypt and for all future identified URMs. BIDs must be utilized to pursue both immediate protection needs for children, as well as durable solutions, including resettlement, when appropriate.
- UNHCR should continue to monitor and raise, directly with States as well as publicly, concerns about the denial of access to refugees at borders.