



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Forgotten pledges

Refugee resettlement in a multi-crisis world



Prepared by

Ali Mohamed

Editing

Dr. Sherif Abdel Hamid

Introduction:

Resettlement represents an essential and indispensable opportunity for refugees fleeing the dangers of armed conflict and violence and who have not found safe haven in host countries, and this process leads to a permanent refugee solution in a third country for refugees who are unable to integrate locally or return to their home country. Resettlement allows refugees to enter a third country legally and safely. Resettlement involves selecting and transferring refugees from the country in which they have sought protection to another country that will accept them as refugees with permanent resident status. However, there are only a few places available for resettlement. Each country independently determines the number of resettlement places and the countries from which it receives refugees. Every year, the number of people wishing to resettle far exceeds the available places. Although resettlement is not a right and is not available to every person granted refugee status. In recent years, high-income countries have undertaken plans to resettle their refugees and grant them protection in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to implement the Global Compact on Refugees. However, these countries did not fulfill their promises, and a gap remained between the resettlement needs estimated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the obligations of the countries undertaking resettlement. In 2022, only 24 member states accepted refugee resettlement requests from refugees from 84 countries, and while there were 1.5 million refugees in need of resettlement, only 7% of them were resettled¹. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated global resettlement needs in 2024 at about 2.4 million refugees, and with more than 90 days passing, resettlement operations are proceeding at a very slow pace². According to available data, there is a record increase in global resettlement needs year after year. In 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated global resettlement needs at more than 2 million, which is an increase from the same global resettlement needs that were estimated at about 1.4 million in 2022. The 2023 statistics represent an increase of 36% compared to resettlement needs in 2022.

Resettlement is a beneficial process for refugees, as it gives them another opportunity to obtain a decent standard of living, including adequate housing, and to integrate into societies that recognize their rights. For countries, resettlement is an opportunity to show international solidarity with other countries and people in need of international

¹ REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FACTS, UNCHR, . <https://www.unhcr.org/us/sites/en-us/files/legacy-pdf/639929dd4.pdf>

² GLOBAL APPEAL, UNHCR, <https://tinyurl.com/bdd9vf6b>

protection, and for receiving societies Resettlement allows for the effective reception and integration of recognized refugees. Refugees often thrive and contribute widely to their communities, build families, and obtain citizenship. There are three traditional solutions that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has worked on for refugees: voluntary return to the countries of origin, integration into the country of asylum, or resettlement in a third country. In the spirit of sharing responsibility towards refugees, high-income countries have pledged to accept numbers of refugees through resettlement programs. However, there remains a gap between the global needs estimated by UNHCR and the reality on the ground. For example; European Union member states have pledged to resettle more than 20,000 refugees in 2022³. However, only more than 16,000 people were eventually resettled, and even these pledges, even if fully implemented, do not cover global resettlement needs. For example; Refugees resettled in European Union countries in 2022 represent only 1.1% of global resettlement needs. In the United States, resettlement operations have not returned to what they were before 2017 and have not reached the annual average of resettlement operations. In the last three years, the United States has remained far from returning 70,000 refugees annually, which is the average resettlement in the United States.

Providing resettlement remains a critical mechanism to ensure the protection of people who are most at risk or have specific needs that cannot be met in the country in which they have sought protection. There are six criteria for refugees who are eligible to apply for resettlement programs: women at risk; Children at risk; Survivors of violence and torture; Individuals exposed to security risks; individuals at risk of persecution; And individuals with critical medical conditions.

There are innovative initiatives and additional solutions to strengthen the resettlement system, such as complementary pathways, which is a mechanism through which refugees can obtain protection, but it differs from the official refugee resettlement process authorized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It usually involves specific admission criteria, regardless of refugee status, that refugees must meet to access it. There are three categories of complementary pathways: humanitarian pathways, skills-based pathways, and community-based pathways. Complementary humanitarian pathways may include humanitarian admission programs, humanitarian visas, and family reunification. Complementary skills-based pathways include employment- or education-based migration opportunities, such as jobs or scholarships offered to well-qualified refugees. Community-based complementary pathways are

³ Seven Priorities to Expand Resettlement and Safe Pathways to Europe, <https://tinyurl.com/4cudxm8x>

initiatives through which citizens, community groups, or non-profit organizations can sponsor refugees individually, but even these complementary pathways, which are not a substitute for government resettlement programs, do not attract large numbers of refugees. All of the above prompted Maat for Peace to attempt to analyze the pledges of high-income countries and major economies that made promises in favor of resettlement, to come up with results and recommendations to strengthen resettlement programs. Maat took advantage of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing's reference to the issue of "resettlement" to raise this crucial issue. **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights launches this report on the sidelines of the 55th session of the Human Rights Council.** The report focuses on the pledges made by countries to resettle refugees and the extent to which these countries have implemented their pledges. The first section of the report focuses on the country and geographic distribution of resettlement needs, and the second section on the pledges of the ten economic countries. The major issue in resettlement and the third section focuses on the gender dimension of resettlement processes, while the fourth and final section focuses on the challenges facing resettlement.

First: Country and geographical distribution of resettlement needs

Resettlement needs vary nationally and geographically. Countries rife with tensions and armed conflicts are at the forefront of countries from which refugees fleeing are called for resettlement, and there is a direct relationship between armed conflicts and high resettlement needs. Nationally, Syrian refugees in 2023, for the seventh year in a row, represented more than 777,000 people, the population with the highest resettlement needs in the world. This is a 27% increase in the resettlement needs of Syrians within one year⁴. According to credible data, refugees from Afghanistan represent the second highest level of resettlement needs⁵, followed by refugees from South Sudan⁶, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and finally from Myanmar⁷. It is noted that all of these needs come from countries that are either experiencing armed conflicts or tensions or

⁴ GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT UNHCR PROJECTED NEEDS, UNCHR, <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/62b18e714.pdf>

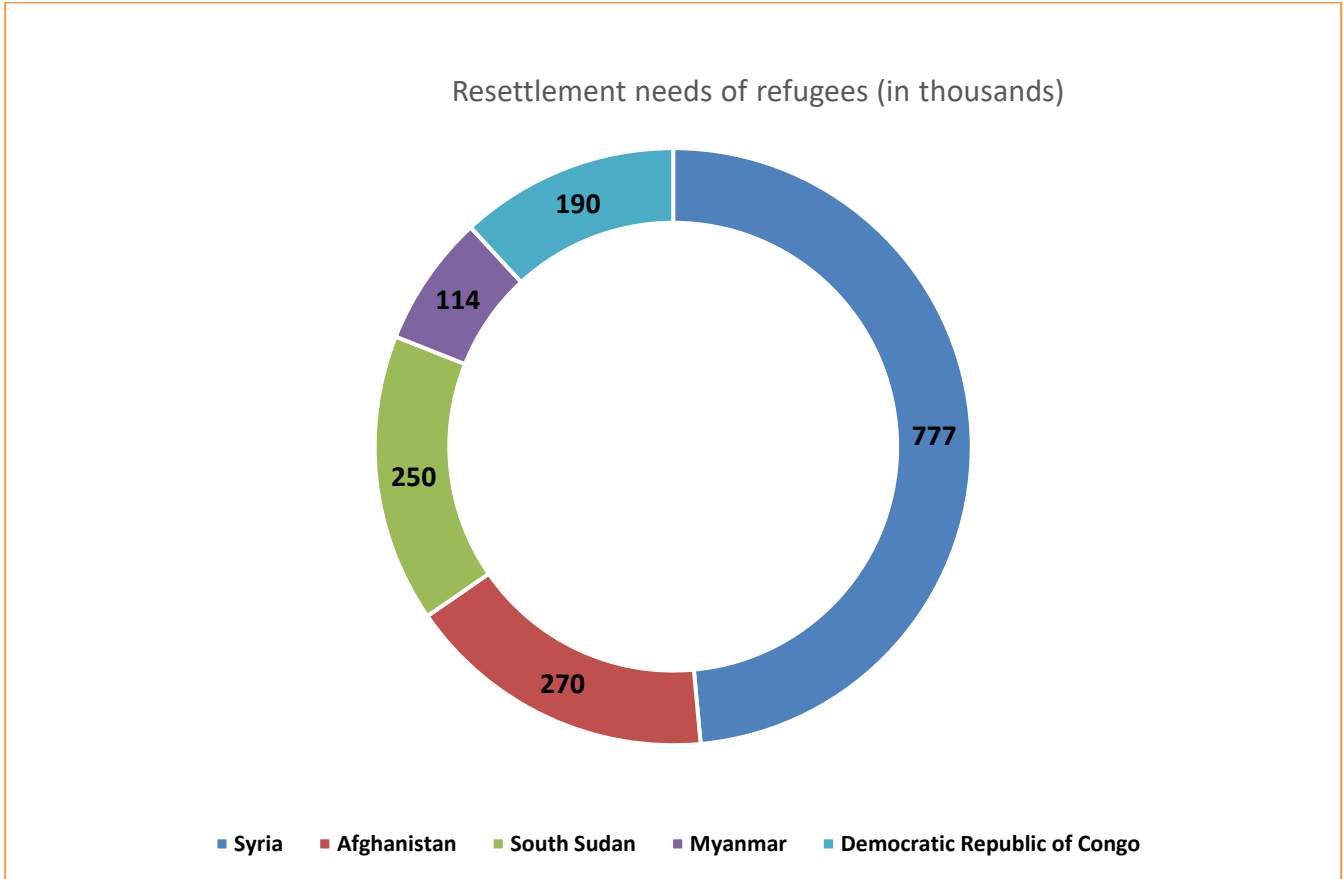
⁵ IRC: New research reveals the EU's "staggering neglect" of Afghan refugees, <https://www.rescue.org/uk/press-release/irc-new-research-reveals-eu-staggering-neglect-afghan-refugees>

⁶ Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, . <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2024/article/regional-refugee-response-plans-0>

⁷ Global refugee resettlement needs will rise sharply next year, UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/62b18da44>

are in post-conflict stages⁸. The figure below shows the resettlement needs in the five countries with the highest rates.

Figure 1: Resettlement needs by country



The African continent comes at the forefront of the geographic areas from which refugees require resettlement, with approximately 662,000, driven by the needs of refugees in Congo, Central Africa, Somalia, and Sudan, and instability in countries such as Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, and South Sudan and risky migration flows in the Sahel. Followed by the Middle East region with about 463 thousand and the European continent with 417 thousand⁹, driven by armed conflicts and ethnic tensions in Yemen, Sudan and Syria. Europe comes next as a result of the flight of thousands of displaced Ukrainians who need to be resettled in third countries. Then Asia and the Pacific, and finally the Americas region. In the first table below, the needs of refugees according to each geographical region are estimated in the thousands.

⁸ UNHCR: Global refugee resettlement needs grow in 2024, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcr-global-refugee-resettlement-needs-grow-2024>

⁹ Ibid

Geographic area	People (in thousands)
Africa	662
The Middle East	463
Europe	417
Asia and the Pacific	383
Americas	77.8

Given the previous table; The clear intersection between international and non-international armed conflicts and the displaced and the subsequent increase in the number of refugees and the subsequent increase in resettlement needs is evident. It is also noted that the European continent is in an advanced position and this is mainly due to the continuation of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and before the war and the subsequent need of the population in Ukraine needs resettlement to other countries. Before the war, Europe was at the bottom of resettlement needs. Resettlement remains the international community's main tool for providing protection and critical solutions to the most vulnerable refugees, in line with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. Resettlement remains a magical solution to the problem of vulnerable refugees who suffer from vulnerable situations in host countries. However, the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and insufficient pledges mean that the total resettlement in the last three years at least has been far less than the promises made¹⁰. Even with the increase in government quotas and pledges for resettlement, they remained insufficient and did not meet global needs, and in many cases the acceptance of refugees into resettlement programs was much lower than pledges.

Second: The contributions of the ten largest economies to resettlement operations

Under the pledges made by high-income countries with strong economies, they have obligations to resettle refugees who have not achieved local integration in host countries. This subsection of the report analyzes the contributions of the ten largest economies according to the International Monetary Fund's data for the year 2024 and

¹⁰ Global resettlement in 2023, unhcr, page 20 <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/62b18e714.pdf>

high-income countries to resettlement¹¹. In the past ten years, high-income countries have never hosted more than 19% of refugees. In 2022, high-income countries hosted only 26% of refugees. This is a significant increase over previous years, due to the absorption of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees who largely reside in European countries. Low- and middle-income countries host 76% of refugees worldwide, and they often face local difficulties that create obstacles to providing protection¹². Among the ten largest economies according to the International Monetary Fund, three countries are from the European Union. However, the European Union countries resettled 16,695 refugees - that is, only 1.1% of the global needs for resettlement only in the year 2022. In the table below are the largest ten economies according to IMF data, as measured by output. GDP.

* 1	Country	GDP (trillion)
1	United States	27.9
2	China	18.5
3	Germany	4.7
4	Japan	4.3
5	India	4.1
6	United Kingdom	3.6
7	France	3.2
8	Italy	2.3
9	Brazil	2.3
10	Canada	2.2

1. United States of America

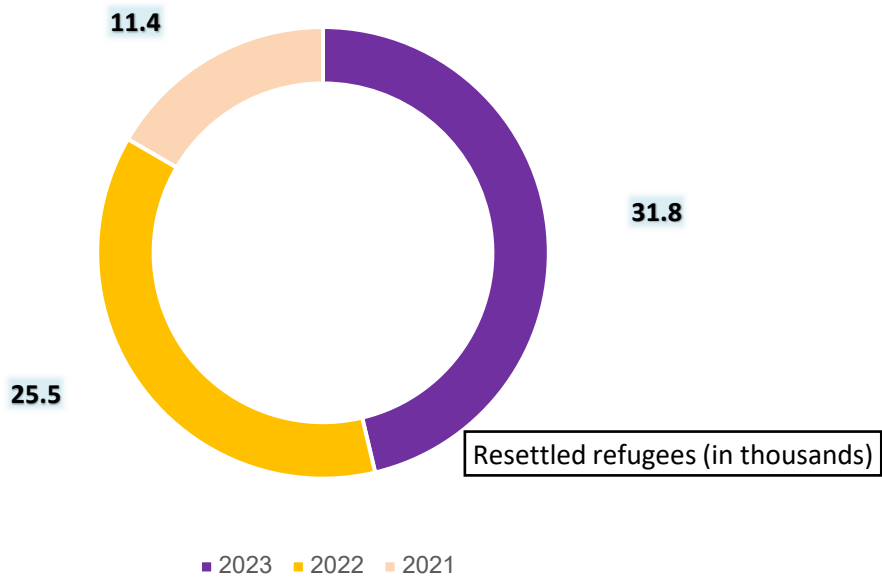
The pace of resettlement in the United States has declined in recent years according to the priorities of US presidents, while the average resettlement has been 73,000 since the adoption of the resettlement program in the United States in the seventies of the last

¹¹ The top 10 largest economies in the world in 2024, Forbes, <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/explainers/top-10-largest-economies-in-the-world/86159/1>

¹² What is refugee resettlement? <https://www.rescue.org/eu/article/what-refugee-resettlement>

century. However, the pace of resettlement has declined in the last four years and in the form Below are the refugees who were resettled from 2021 to 2023.

Figure 2: Refugees resettled in the United States of America within three years



It is noted from the previous table that the period of former US President Donald Trump was the fewest years in which resettlement was approved, which portends risks for a decline in these numbers, if the latter wins the presidential elections scheduled for November 2024. In all cases, and based on the above data, the United States did not reach the estimated average of 72 thousand refugees per year in the last three years, which is intended for the period from 2021 to 2023. Upon President Biden assuming the presidency, he pledged to restore the refugee resettlement program in the United States to what it was before his predecessor, Trump, and although resettlement levels rose after that, the administration accepted far fewer refugees than before 2017.

There is another note worth noting that is related to the numbers of resettlement and intersects with accepted asylum applications. For example, in 2021, more than 11,000 people received resettlement in the United States, which are very small numbers compared to other years, given that in the same year only 17,700,000 people received asylum, which is the lowest number since 13,800 asylum requests were approved in the fiscal year in 1994. Maat hopes that the United States will restore the resettlement program by gradually increasing the number of people accepted into resettlement

programs until reaching the previous average, which is estimated at about 72 thousand annually.

2. China

There are no clear statistics available on the people China resettles on its territory. China signed two major international documents on refugee issues in September 1982: the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Although China has signed these agreements, it does not yet have formal legislation or administrative provisions on providing asylum. In general, UNHCR has access to asylum seekers in Beijing and conducts refugee status checks. People identified as refugees under the UNHCR Charter are allowed to remain in China temporarily while UNHCR seeks permanent solutions for them in a third country through resettlement.

It is noted that China resettles people fleeing conflicts geographically close to it. During the years 1978 and 1979, approximately 260,000 Vietnamese refugees, most of them of Chinese origin, were displaced from their country to China. The Chinese authorities granted them refugee status and resettled them in six provinces and autonomous regions in southern China. In 1981 and 1982, respectively, China provided resettlement opportunities to 2,500 refugees from Laos and a small number of Cambodian refugees from refugee camps in Thailand, and below that, there are no government resettlement programs in China.

3. Germany

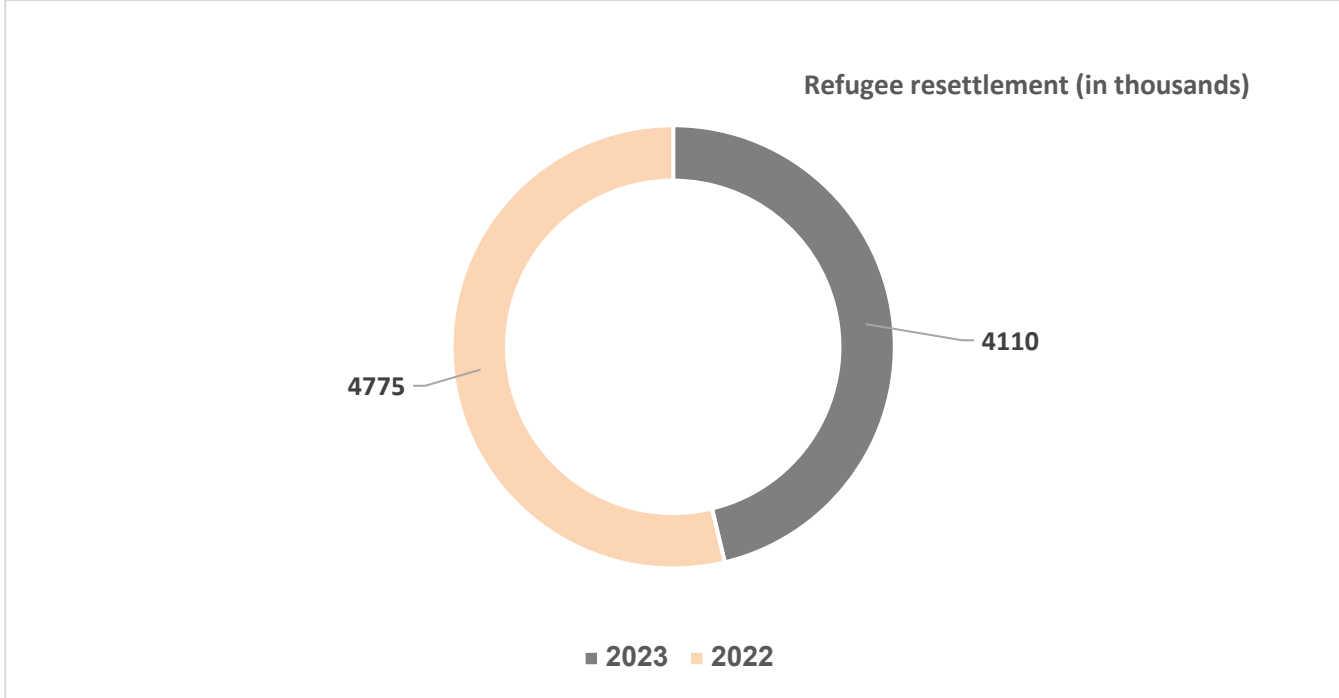
Germany planned to resettle 6,500 people through the resettlement and humanitarian admission program and did not succeed in achieving the goal. Germany accepted 2,196 refugees through the resettlement and humanitarian admission programs in the first half of 2023¹³, and the number of refugees resettled in Germany at the end of 2023 reached about 4,110 people seeking protection through resettlement, the humanitarian admission system with Turkey and refugee programs run by the German states¹⁴. In any case, it is a decrease from the number of people resettled in 2022, whose number reached about 4,775 people¹⁵. It plans to continue achieving the target of 6,500 places

¹³ GERMANY FACT SHEET, <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2024/02/Bi-annual-fact-sheet-2023-09-GERMANY.pdf>

¹⁴ Refugees and Asylees in the United States, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states>

¹⁵ Data on resettlement activities in 2022, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-07/AR2023_factsheet18_data_resettlement_EN.pdf

by the end of 2023. UNHCR is providing advice and support to the authorities in these initiatives. In any case, Germany has not yet reached the goal of resettling more than 6,000 people annually through government resettlement programs, and in the third figure below, the refugees who were resettled in 2022 and 2023.



4. Japan

In 2010, Japan began a third-country resettlement programme, the first of its kind in Asia, with a quota of 60 refugees from Asian countries. However, the programme is very limited and although Japan is supposed to accept 60 refugees annually under the resettlement programme, only 229 refugees resettled since 2010 to 2022. Nevertheless, there are many programmes offered by the Government of Japan and some private actors targeting some Syrian refugees, including Jordan and Lebanon, to settle in Japan through scholarship opportunities ¹⁶.

5. India

India does not have a formal Government programme for refugee resettlement compared to some other countries. However, India primarily provides asylum to refugees, especially those fleeing neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Myanmar,

¹⁶ <https://help.unhcr.org/japan/resettlement/>

Tibet and other countries. However, during the OHCHR hotline in India, more than 1,000 people inquired in 2021 to apply for refugee registration and resettlement ¹⁷.

6. United Kingdom

In 2019, the UK pledged to resettle 5000 a year, yet it has not fulfilled its pledges so far. However, under the pretext of the consequences of the coronavirus, the resettlement scheme has been postponed. Since its launch until the end of 2023, only 2543 refugees have been resettled, almost half of the initial one-year target. This falls short of fulfilling the UK's pledge¹⁸. This failure in resettlement pledges is added to previous pledges, for example, in September 2015, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom pledged to resettle 20,000 refugees by 2020. However, it has not even entered into force .

In August 2021, the UK government announced a new resettlement scheme through which it planned to resettle 5,000 people in the first year. Until September 2022, The United Kingdom has not fulfilled its pledges to resettle refugees from Afghanistan. In February 2024, members of the Afghan Special Forces who fought alongside the British Special Forces were barred from moving to live in Britain, following the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan, and documents showed that the UK Special Forces rejected the applications even though some contained compelling evidence of service alongside the British Army. Afghan commando forces accompanied British special forces in Afghanistan's most dangerous combat missions. In testimony to Parliament, British Armed Forces Minister Heapey said that requests for resettlement from members of the Afghan Special Forces had been partially rejected¹⁹. According to the testimony of lawyers who worked to support former members of the Afghan forces in their applications, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who have been refused resettlement in Britain. Members of the elite forces were eligible to apply for resettlement in Britain under the Afghan resettlement and assistance policy, but more than 2,000 people were denied applications²⁰.

The United Kingdom Government has also failed to provide protection to Afghans. Despite its pledge in 2021 to resettle 20,000 people through the Afghan Citizens

¹⁷ UNHCR India Factsheet - May 2022, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, <https://reliefweb.int/report/india/unhcr-india-factsheet-may-2022>

¹⁸ What are safe routes in the UK? Four common myths explained, International Rescue Committee – UK, <https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/what-are-safe-routes-uk-four-common-myths-explained>

¹⁹ Special forces blocked UK resettlement applications from elite Afghan troops, bbc, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68332923>

²⁰ UK blocked resettlement applications from elite Afghan troops, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/495150/UK-blocked-resettlement-applications-from-elite-Afghan-troops>

Resettlement Programme, only a very small number of people have been brought into resettlement in the UK since the initial evacuations. Statistics available until September 2023 show that only 234 people have been granted access to resettlement²¹. Although the United Kingdom is ready to resettle refugees as a high-income country and a strong GDP economy, the country signed an agreement with other inadequate countries for refugees such as Rwanda to reduce the number of refugees it has and resettle in the African country. In November 2023, the United Kingdom's Supreme Court confirmed that the bilateral agreement between the Kingdom and Rwanda to deport asylum seekers arriving in the United Kingdom to Rwanda was unlawful²², adding that Rwanda is an unsafe country for refugees and asylum seekers, but the Government had continued to strive to sign a new agreement between the two States. On 5 December 2023, the United Kingdom's and Rwanda's interior ministers signed a new agreement²³. More than 29,000 asylum seekers and migrants arrived in Britain in 2023, compared to nearly 40,000 in 2022, confirming the persistence of anti-migrants' policies in the UK. The UK interior minister has described the influx of refugees into the UK as an invasion that increases hate speech and xenophobia against migrants²⁴. Under the previous agreement, refugees and asylum-seekers are awaiting deportation to Rwanda or facing unlawful expulsion, in contrary to article 13 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

7. France

There is no resettlement programme in France, however, it made commitments to receive and resettle refugees²⁵, and was committed to resettle about 100 families a year under a framework agreement signed by France with UNHCR in 2008²⁶. Despite France's commitment to resettle 5,000 people in 2022, it had resettled only 3,200 by the end of 2022²⁷, leading to a gap between France's resettlement pledges and accepted applications²⁸.

²¹ MYTH: The UK Government safe routes are functional and work in practice, <https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/what-are-safe-routes-uk-four-common-myths-explained>

²² New agreement signed between UK and Rwanda to deport asylum seekers, Migrant News, <https://tinyurl.com/zstb47pd>

²³ New agreement signed between UK and Rwanda to deport asylum seekers, Migrant News, <https://tinyurl.com/zstb47pd>

²⁴ U.K. minister under fire for calling migrants an 'invasion', <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/u-k-minister-under-fire-for-calling-migrants-an-invasion-1.6133688>

²⁵ Resettlement, France, <https://help.unhcr.org/france/en/la-reinstallation/>

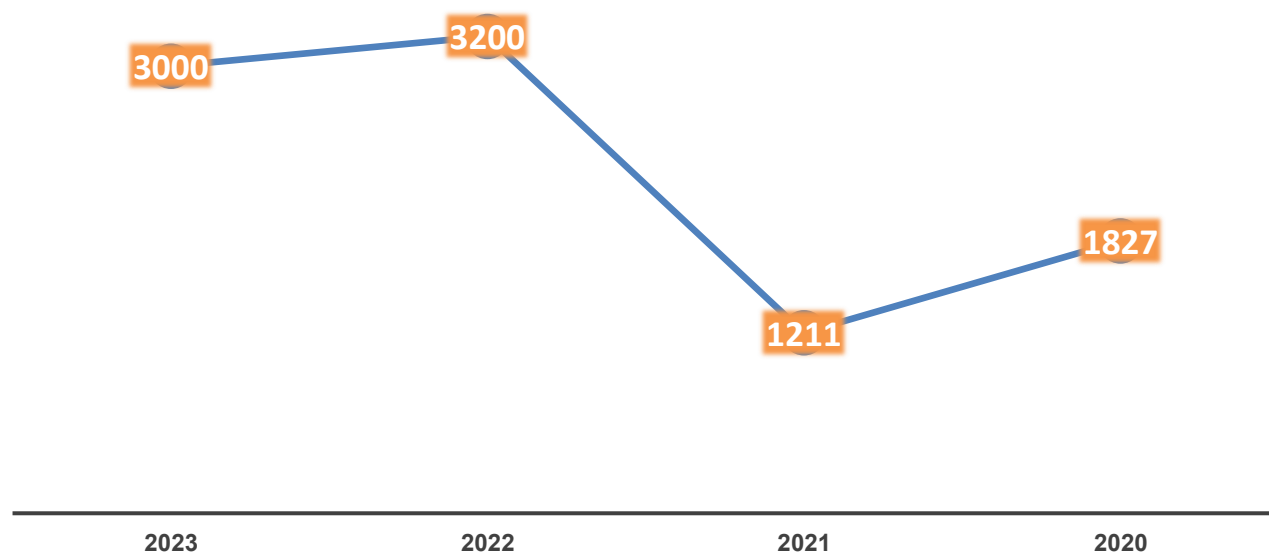
²⁶ Resettlement Data Finder (RDF), <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#1HGo>

²⁷ ACCESS TO THE TERRITORY AND PUSH BACKS, <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/france/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/access-territory-and-push-backs/>

²⁸ Country Report: France, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) |, page 32, https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AIDA-FR_2022-Update.pdf

The figure below shows the resettled refugees from 2020 to 2023:

Figure 4: Resettlement of refugees in France distributed over four years



It is clear from the previous figure that in recent years, France has not reached the commitments on resettlement, which we have already reported to be 5000 persons each year. In 2023, France amended its resettlement quota from 5000 to 3,000, due to the arrival of more than 10,000 displaced persons from Ukraine in 2022 and its commitments under the new voluntary solidarity mechanism to receive displaced Ukrainians²⁹.

8. Brazil

Since 2002 (when the resettlement programme was first implemented in Brazil) until July 2017, Brazil has resettled 715 refugees. Meanwhile, Brazil developed several resettlement programmes between 2014 and 2019 that benefited 113 people of different nationalities in Latin America and from outside the continent. Demands for increased commitments regarding the resettlement of refugees are still being forwarded to Brazil.

9. Italy

The decision to resettle refugees in Italy rests with the Italian government. UNHCR in no way participates in the final selection of refugees on Italy's resettlement programme. Refugees cannot apply directly for resettlement, as refugees deemed eligible for resettlement are directly contacted by UNHCR's office in the State in which they reside.

²⁹ Annual pledging exercise, <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/41511-annual-pledging-exercise>

Italy sets burdensome conditions for resettlement; if you are a refugee or asylum seeker already in Italy or the EU, you are not eligible to consider resettlement in Italy. According to data, Italy was among the countries that resettled a significant number of refugees. However, this number declined in 2022 to only 60 refugees compared to about 1,180 in 2018³⁰, yet Italy continued to resettle some refugees, especially Afghans and Libyans, through other programs such as humanitarian admission. Since 2017, UNHCR has evacuated or resettled 1,368 refugees and asylum seekers from Libya to Italy³¹. As part of Italy's national resettlement programme, from 2015 to July 2023, 2,727 refugees resettled in Italy from unstable first asylum countries. Refugee resettlement through joint governmental programmes with UNHCR is significantly lower than resettlement through programmes such as humanitarian admission.

10. Canada

Canada announced plans to resettle more than 144,000 refugees between 2023-2025, in cooperation with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration. Earlier in October, the Canadian government announced that it had fulfilled its commitment to resettle more than 40,000 Afghan refugees with the assistance of the IOM³². However, by the end of 2023, only 30,000 Afghans had arrived for resettlement in Canada³³.

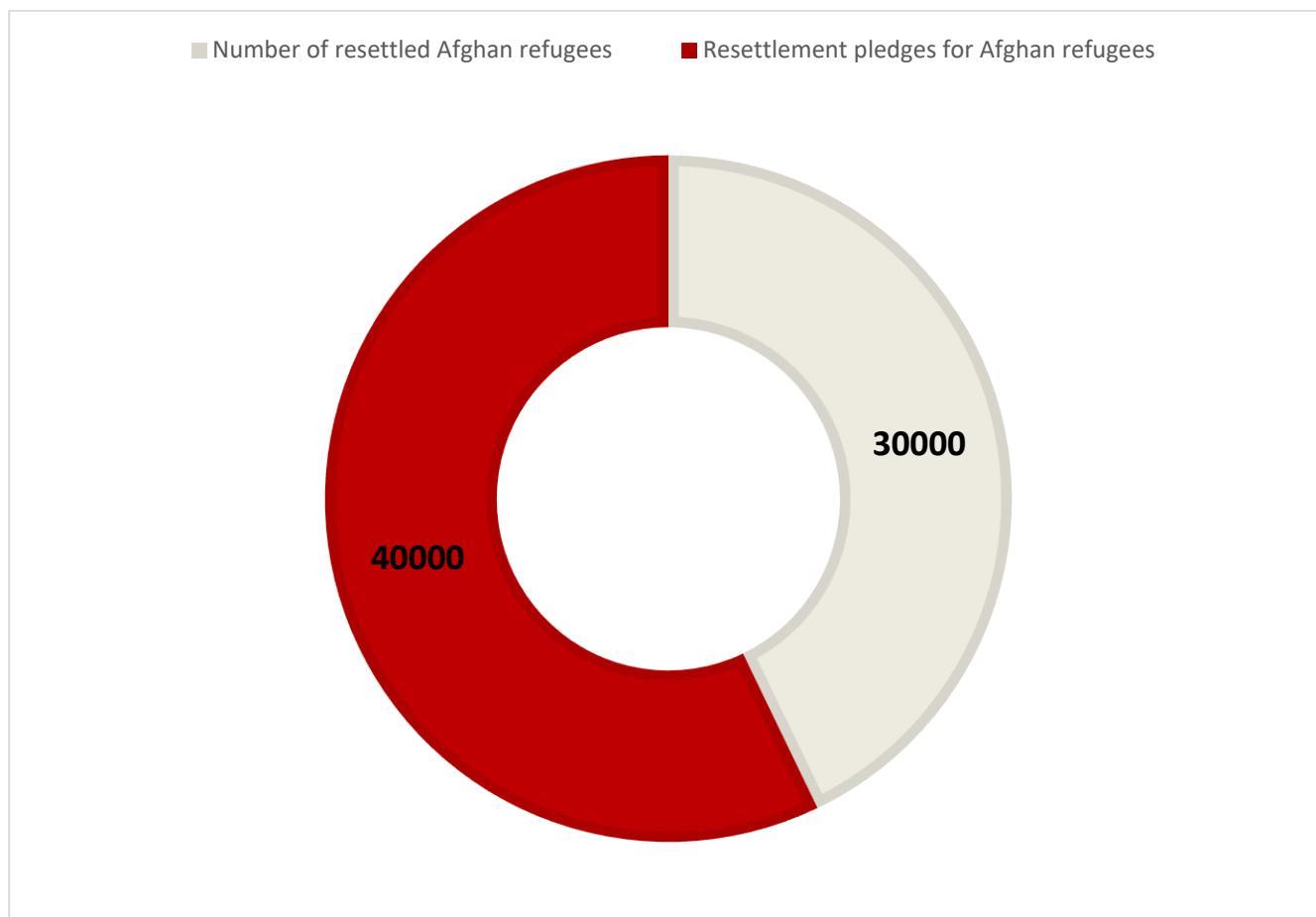
³⁰ Data on resettlement activities in 2022, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-07/AR2023_factsheet18_data_resettlement_EN.pdf

³¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/it/notizie-storie/comunicati-stampa/libia-1500-rifugiati-arriveranno-in-italia-con-i-corridoi-umanitari-e-le-evacuazioni-grazie-al-nuovo-protocollo-dintesa-firmato-oggi-a-roma/#>

³² More than 40,000 Afghans Resettled to Canada with IOM's Support, <https://reliefweb.int/report/canada/more-40000-afghans-resettled-canada-ioms-support>

³³ Minister of International Development appearance before the Standing Committee On Citizenship and Immigration (CIMI) on the government's response to the final report of the special committee on Afghanistan, <https://tinyurl.com/mr33yyhv>

Figure 5: Eulogy between Canada’s pledges and resettled refugees



As the first half of 2024 approaches, Canada still has not resettled its pledged numbers. In 2023, it resettled only 30,000 with the assistance of the Canadian government³⁴. In a related context, Canada continued to refuse to resettle certain nationalities such as Yemeni refugees.

Thirdly: Gender-based discrimination in resettlement processes

Maat noticed discriminatory practices during these resettlement processes, as they apparently have a gender dimension and are gender-based. During the period from 2017 to 2022, there was a consistent trend of the resettlement of more males in EU countries. In 2022, there was a gender balance, with approximately 11,000 men resettled compared to more than 10,000 women. However, men's resettlement compared to women remained a priority in general. In the United States, surveys indicate a pattern of gender bias in the acceptance of resettlement applications from Syrian refugee women

³⁴ Canada’s Immigration Plan 2023-2025: Targets for New Permanent Residents, <https://www.aussizzgroup.com/canada/blog/canada-immigration-targets-2023-2025/>

between 2010 and 2020, which are the latest available years of resettlement statistics disaggregated by sex and age. Other statistics indicate that 31% of refugees admitted to the US were children under 14 years of age, 33% were women and girls at 14 years of age, and 36 % were males and Boys aged 14 and over³⁵. Refusal of women's applications in resettlement programmes may lead them to return to their home State. According to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants, forced return to States of origin is extremely serious and these women are often forced to resettle internally and may remain unknown. This necessitates ensuring that refugee women and girls have access to information on resettlement procedures.

Fourthly: Challenges to resettlement in a third country

While trying to request resettlement in a third country, refugees face a range of challenges as follows:

Voluntary pledges: Voluntary pledges by states represent a resettlement challenge, and low government quotas are a major reason for resettling a relatively limited number of refugees each year. The voluntary nature of these pledges and the lack of obligation in the implementation of the resettlement schemes lead to the non-adherence to them.

Multi-agency participation: Resettlement countries also face significant challenges in addressing resettlement efficiently. On one hand, bureaucratic processes often require the participation of various and multiple governmental agencies. Resettlement applications may take months or years to complete the examination of the files, which is one of the obstacles facing this issue, as some refugee applicants are inadequately aware of the follow-up procedures, in addition that over the long period of time, the refugee's data may be altered which impedes access by UNHCR or IOM. In the US, for example, resettlement applications are extensively considered through multiple security checks and background checks in an average process of 18 to 24 months, which is a very long time. Also in the UK, the examination of resettlement applications also takes years to reach a decision.

Sophisticated resettlement procedures: resettlement procedures are complex³⁶, and until refugees are properly informed, this requires time-intensive and resource-intensive

³⁵ Refugees and Asylees in the United States, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states>

³⁶ Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service, Division of International Protection, UNCHR, Page 4, <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5fe06e8b4.pdf>

interpretations. Refugees may face significant cultural and linguistic barriers along with varying levels of education, access to technology, and disabilities, all of which can pose a challenge in the transmission of information³⁷ to refugees seeking resettlement.

Unsustainable resettlement initiatives: The ending and unsustainability of UNHCR resettlement initiatives are obstacles to sustaining resettlement in 2019. For example, the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP), which was a global multi-stakeholder mechanism to support States and relevant stakeholders in developing resettlement programmes and promoting complementary pathways. It also provided targeted capacity building such as training, technical assistance and the deployment of experts³⁸. The initiative was developed jointly by UNHCR and the IOM and launched in January 2020. This initiative has been widely recognized in support of the expansion of third-country solutions under the Strategy and its next phase “The Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030”. However, the initiative ended in December 2022 and was not extended.

Discrimination in accepting the resettlement applications: Discrimination in accepting the resettlement applications is one of the obstacles to the effective strengthening of this mechanism. For example, refugees from some States face discrimination when examining their applications, resulting in their rejection because of the prohibition imposed on these States. For instance, a number of Yemenis, including (Z.A) and (H.A), complained in a testimony to Maat that European countries impose a ban and select limited numbers of Yemenis to accept their resettlement. Libya is also one of the countries facing discrimination in the examination of their resettlement applications³⁹. For example, only 118 Libyan refugees and 106 Yemini refugees resettled from 2010 to 2022.

Fifthly: Conclusions and recommendations

The resettlement of refugees in a third country is complicated rather than facilitated, as reflected in States' failure to fulfil their pledges in terms of such operations and insufficient commitments and quotas established by States. Therefore, filling the resettlement gap and promoting the humanitarian objectives of the global resettlement system requires obligations to protect refugees and sharing responsibilities of States

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Resettlement enables refugees to relocate to another country which has agreed to admit them with a legal status ensuring international protection and ultimately permanent residence., <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/resettlement>

³⁹ The US Is Resettling the Fewest Number of Refugees in 40 Years, Global Citizen, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/us-accepted-refugees-2018/>

with strong and high-income economies and between UNHCR, IOM and other stakeholders. There is a clear intersection between increasing tensions and armed conflicts and increasing resettlement needs globally, as with each new conflict in the world, additional resettlement needs are added. **Based on the following, Maat for Peace recommends:**

- The need to adopt systems to monitor and evaluate resettlement programmes and to address challenges affecting the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of such programmes;
- Completing initiatives related to refugee resettlement programmes, that are complementary to the Government's resettlement programmes;
- Encourage the Special Rapporteur on migrants and the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing to publish a joint paper on global resettlement challenges;
- Announce more ambitious pledges that address and fill the gap in global and unprecedented resettlement needs;
- Involve UNHCR and civil society organizations supporting resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes in the preparation of pledges, targets, priorities and resettlement schemes;
- Major economies must invest in expanding and initiating resettlement programmes and demonstrate generous support for refugee protection in cooperation with UNHCR and other stakeholders;
- Ending any discrimination based on gender, origin, sex or race when examining resettlement applications;
- UNHCR should play a greater and more decisive role in resettlement procedures and refugee departure arrangements and strengthen its capacity to process resettlement requests.