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This Factsheet explains the basic features of resettlement, a durable solution in a third country that is available to a small proportion of refugees worldwide.

What is resettlement?

Resettlement describes the process of transferring refugees from a place where they have sought protection – such as in a refugee camp or urban area in a neighbouring country – to a country that is willing to admit them as permanent residents.

Resettlement may be necessary to provide protection to people who face the most serious risks to their safety, health or other human rights in the country where they have sought refuge. Resettlement may sometimes be the only way to bring together refugee families who have been separated as a result of displacement, although UNHCR recommends that governments provide family reunification outside of refugee resettlement quotas.

right to remain permanently in the host country where the refugee has found protection). Resettlement as a solution is available to a very small proportion of refugees, as [less than one per cent](#)

have a legal right to be resettled and countries do not have a legal obligation to resettle refugees: it is a voluntary process. Resettlement is a way that countries can contribute to the global effort to protect refugees, since the majority of refugees are hosted by countries neighbouring conflicts.

towards refugees. [UNHCR](#) emphasises that a resettlement program should complement – and not substitute – protection provided to refugees who seek asylum in that country.

How many people are resettled around the world?

anticipated to be about [2.4 million people](#). Despite the need, in 2023 only 96,311 refugees were resettled worldwide. Over [85%](#) of these resettlement places were offered by just four countries: the United States (61,644), Canada (13,458), Germany (4,881) and Australia (4,186).

The United States has consistently provided the highest number of places. Its 2023 intake was a marked increase from the [30,000](#) refugees resettled in 2019, the year prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. This increase resulted from the change in policy following the inauguration of President Biden; the administration has raised the [US resettlement ceiling](#) to 125,000 for Fiscal Years 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Around [26 countries](#) now offer resettlement but many have very small programs. Some countries, like Australia, have a regular resettlement program and commit to an annual quota; others accept refugees for resettlement on an *ad hoc* basis. For information on the resettlement of people from particular crisis situations, see our Policy Brief, [Special humanitarian intakes: Enhancing protection through targeted refugee resettlement](#).

How is a person selected for resettlement?

Although UNHCR refers refugees for potential resettlement, it is the government of the resettlement country that decides whether or not to grant a resettlement place.

resettled does not depend on how long they have been waiting. Rather, it depends on factors
ments of global resettlement