



NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

Immigration Factsheets

Refugees and asylum seekers

February 2019

REFUGEES

- Refugees are people who cannot return to their home country because they have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their religion, race, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- New Zealand is a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee and its 1967 Protocol, the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- New Zealand has been accepting refugees for resettlement since the end of World War II.
- Immigration New Zealand is obligated to keep refugee and protection claims confidential under section 151 of the Immigration Act 2009.

New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme

- New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme permanently increased to 1,000 places annually from July 2018. Under the Refugee Quota in 2016/17 and 2017/18, 750 quota refugees plus 250 Syrian refugees were resettled in New Zealand.
- The Government announced in September 2018 that the annual Refugee Quota will increase to 1,500 places annually from July 2020.
- New Zealand's three-year Refugee Quota Programme is agreed to by Ministers following submissions from the UNHCR on the global refugee protection and resettlement needs and discussion with relevant Government departments.
- New Zealand's Refugee Quota is a reflection of the Government's commitment to fulfilling its international humanitarian commitments to provide protection to refugees who are not able to return safely to their home country.
- Refugees are identified for resettlement by the UNHCR according to internationally accepted guidelines that take account of physical and legal protection needs, as well as family reunification. They are submitted for consideration for resettlement in New Zealand in accordance with New Zealand's agreed annual resettlement plan. INZ is only able to consider the case of a refugee for resettlement under the refugee quota following a formal referral by UNHCR.



- It is entirely the decision of the UNHCR whether resettlement is the best option for a refugee and whether their case will be referred to a safe third country. New Zealand is not in a position to request particular cases, nor advocate with the UNHCR on behalf of individual refugees.
- All those selected for resettlement under New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme undergo comprehensive on and off-shore screening and assessment processes focusing on credibility, security, risk and settlement and are required to meet health requirements.
- All quota refugees currently spend their first six weeks in New Zealand at INZ's Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in Auckland, where they participate in a comprehensive reception programme that prepares them to live and work in the community.
- The reception programme addresses the priority areas of: health assessment, initial treatment and health promotion; settlement planning and orientation to New Zealand life; English language; and preparing working-age adults for employment and children for school.
- During the reception programme a Settlement Plan is developed with each quota refugee family that outlines the types of services they will be connected with to support their successful settlement in their community.
- Quota refugees are settled in one of the settlement locations (Auckland region, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington region, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill) based on community links, employment opportunities and access to services to help support their integration.
- An additional five settlement locations were announced in February 2019 following the Government's decision to increase the annual Refugee Quota to 1,500 from July 2020. The extra locations are Timaru, Whanganui, Blenheim, Masterton and Levin. A sixth location will be announced in the coming months.
- Each settlement location will have settlement support services, contracted by INZ, to provide quota refugees with support for up to 12 months in the community and link them to the services they require. Services include coordination of a community orientation programme, enrolment in GP practices, early childhood education, schools, English language classes and employment. Settlement Plans provide guidance to settlement support agencies on the services required and any family-specific needs.

Refugee Family Support Category

- In addition to the Refugee Quota, the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) provides people who were granted residence as refugees or protected persons the opportunity to sponsor a family member and that person's partner and dependent children for New Zealand residence. Each year there are 300 places available.
- The RFSC has a two-tier registration system with priority given to tier one sponsors who meet a high threshold of need. The first step is for eligible people to register as a sponsor of their family members who are offshore. If they meet the eligibility criteria to sponsor their family members, then they will be sent an Invitation to Apply (ITA) and their family members who are offshore will then complete the relevant residence application.



NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship category

- The Government announced in June 2016 that it would pilot a new Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship category for 25 refugees in 2017/2018.
- The key objectives of the category include:
 - Providing an opportunity for community organisations to be actively engaged in refugee resettlement and to build local communities that welcome refugees,
 - Enabling sponsored refugees to quickly become independent and self-sufficient in New Zealand, and
 - Providing an alternative form of admission for refugees to complement our annual refugee quota.
- Principal and secondary applicants must be mandated as refugees, meet relevant immigration policies for the new category, including security, risk and health assessments. Principal applicants will need to have a basic understanding of English, have a minimum of three years' work experience (or a qualification requiring at least two years' tertiary study), have an acceptable standard of health and be aged between 18 and 45.
- Four community-based organisations will help the sponsored refugees to settle into their new communities - Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand (Wellington), Gleniti Baptist Church (Timaru), South West Baptist Church (Christchurch) and the Society of St Vincent de Paul (Nelson).
- Sponsored refugees all arrived in New Zealand by July 2018 and spent two weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) before settling in communities with the support of the approved sponsors.

New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

- The Government launched the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy ('the Strategy') in December 2012. The Strategy guides refugee settlement activities across-Government to deliver better settlement and integration outcomes for refugees in New Zealand.
- The implementation of the Strategy is a cross-government effort and participating agencies lead implementation in their respective areas. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) as the lead agency in refugee settlement, coordinates the overall implementation of the Strategy and the annual reporting against the agreed measures and success indicators.
- The Strategy's goals include:
 - Increasing the number of former refugees in paid employment and reducing the number receiving unemployment-related benefits.
 - Reducing the proportion of former refugees receiving housing assistance
 - Increasing the proportion of former refugee school leavers achieving NCEA Level 2 after five years or more in the New Zealand education system
 - Increasing the number of refugee children who receive age-appropriate immunisations, and
 - Ensuring better use of GP services and greater access to mental health services.



NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION

- As part of the Strategy, the Government reaffirmed the reception programme for quota refugees at MRRC and announced that the ageing buildings at the centre would be replaced. The new MRRC opened in June 2016.
- Two new accommodation blocks as well as dining and education facilities are being built to extend the lifespan of MRRC and accommodate the increase in the Refugee Quota.
- Since implementation of the Strategy began in July 2013, the mix of services provided to refugees has been changed to place a greater emphasis on living and working in New Zealand and linking refugees to services in the community, including employment. In addition, work has been undertaken to better support refugees' access to English language learning and work is underway to address interpreter and translation services barriers for refugees accessing mainstream services. A driver training programme has been established to enable refugees to obtain their restricted licence, which is anticipated to provide support to refugees accessing employment opportunities.
- Detailed progress on the implementation of the Strategy is available on a dedicated page on the INZ website at:
www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy
- Detailed statistics are available on our website:

Refugee Quota arrivals -

www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-quota-arrivals

Refugee Quota settlement -

www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-quota-settlement

Refugee Family Support Category -

www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-family-support-category-pack

ASYLUM SEEKERS

- New Zealand is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- New Zealand is obligated under United Nations conventions to consider claims from asylum seekers who claim refugee or protected person status while in New Zealand.
- Asylum seekers are people who formally request permission to live in another country because they claim to have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin, or otherwise fear returning there.
- A refugee is a person who meets the definition of a refugee provided by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the 1967 protocol.
- A protected person is a person for whom there are substantial grounds for believing he or she would be in danger of torture, arbitrary deprivation of life or cruel treatment if deported from New Zealand.



NEW ZEALAND **IMMIGRATION**

- Immigration New Zealand is obligated to keep refugee and protection claims confidential under section 151 of the Immigration Act 2009.
- Refugee or protection status can be claimed on arrival at a New Zealand airport or port, or at a later time after arrival in New Zealand.
- The majority of people who claim asylum in New Zealand arrive in the country on valid visas or are issued visas on arrival and live in the community. A very small number of people claim asylum on arrival at New Zealand's borders.
- The Refugee Status Branch of INZ decides all claims for refugee or protection status at first instance. The Refugee Status Branch determination examines the credibility of the claim and the risk of the person being persecuted or otherwise suffering cruel treatment if deported to any place.
- If the claim is approved by the Refugee Status Branch, the asylum seeker is recognised as a refugee or protected person.
- Refugees and protected persons are eligible to apply for permanent residence and New Zealand citizenship after five years of residence.
- Refugees and protected persons are also eligible to access employment and income support and public health services, the same as New Zealand residents or citizens.
- If the claim is declined by the Refugee Status Branch, he/she can appeal to the independent Immigration and Protection Tribunal.
- The Refugee Status Branch also decides whether a person's refugee or protected person status should be cancelled because it was obtained through fraud; whether a person no longer needs to be protected because of changes in their or their country's circumstances and whether a refugee should be deported because they have committed serious crimes and pose a risk to the community. These decisions can also be appealed to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal.
- Detailed statistics are available on our website:-

Refugee and Protection Status (asylum seekers) -

www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/statistics/statistics-refugee-and-protection-status-pack