

Note On Resettlement And Other Referrals

26 August 2021

In response to public announcements from some States of additional resettlement opportunities for Afghan refugees, UNHCR and partners are receiving increased resettlement requests from Afghan nationals. Despite the ongoing pandemic, approximately 300-400 Afghan refugees, asylum-seekers and new arrivals have gathered daily outside UNHCR premises in recent days. We understand that individuals are also approaching diplomatic missions. As such, UNHCR would like to share common guidance for diplomatic missions in Iran to assist in responding to such requests.

UNHCR remains focused on addressing the most urgent protection issues facing Afghan nationals seeking international protection, including ensuring access to territory, protection inside the country of asylum, and assistance to help new arrivals meet basic needs. While resettlement is an important tool which UNHCR hopes to utilize in the future for some individuals who meet eligibility criteria, securing protection space for new arrivals inside Iran remains the immediate priority of UNHCR.

Currently, the resettlement quota allocated to Iran remains zero. Although a number of countries have announced increased resettlement programmes, there have been no specific commitments to resettle Afghan refugees from Iran. UNHCR continues to advocate for States to include Afghan refugees in Iran in any resettlement programming, including as a tool to reduce the number of vulnerable refugees attempting secondary movements.

If Iran does receive a resettlement quota, the UNHCR resettlement programme will be accessible only for those individuals who meet eligibility criteria and through the already established UNHCR procedures for identification and referral. Resettlement submission will be contingent on many factors, including the severity of resettlement needs, the protection environment, the position of the host country, and the number of spaces made available for submission from Iran.

Separate and distinct from a resettlement program, a number of States have established programs to help Afghans who worked with or for those countries to travel to those countries. **UNHCR is not involved in the identification, referral, or processing of individuals accessing these specific programs.**

Information-sharing remains the main response that UNHCR can provide to resettlement requests for now. For this purpose, a [help page](#) has been set up for Afghans who recently arrived in Iran. This includes [key information](#) on how UNHCR can or cannot help, as well as numbers of [UNHCR hotlines](#) across the country for further information (available further below). **Given the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, UNHCR recommends referring individuals to its [website](#) and [hotlines](#), rather than to UNHCR premises.**

If directly providing information to individuals, UNHCR recommends referring to the wording on its webpage. UNHCR further recommends that all levels of staff are sensitised to such wording, in order to ensure streamlined information, avoid mass gatherings, and manage expectations, as current conditions are not conducive to adequate needs assessments. Please find here a few suggested key messages:

- *If you have recently arrived in Iran, you may wish to approach your local BAFIA office for further information. The Iranian Government, through the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA), is responsible for registering asylum-seekers and deciding if they are refugees.*
- *Some countries have recently announced opportunities for Afghan nationals who have worked or been affiliated with those countries to apply for permission to travel to those countries. These programs are established by those countries and UNHCR does not refer people to the programs or process applications.*
- *You may have seen information about resettlement opportunities for Afghan refugees. UNHCR is currently focused on ensuring the immediate safety and protection of people who have just arrived in Iran. Resettlement may be considered in the future for some individuals.*

UNHCR hotlines

Tehran

Contact us if you live in Alborz, Ardebil, East Azerbaijan, Esfahan, Gilan, Hamedan, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Markazi, Mazandaran, Qazvin, Qom, Semnan, Tehran, West Azerbaijan, Zanjan provinces.

Telephone: 021- 88212520 (Sunday to Thursday from 8:30 to 15:30)

Esfahan

Contact us if you live in Esfahan province

Telephone: 031-3444 2841 (Sunday to Wednesday from 08:30 to 15:30)

Mashhad

Contact us if you live in Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, North Khorasan and Golestan provinces.

Telephone: 051-37685641 (Sunday to Wednesday from 09:00 to 12:00 and 14:00 to 16:00)

Kerman

Contact us if you live in Kerman, Yazd, Sistan & Baluchestan and Hormozgan provinces.

Telephone: 034-32476851 and 034-32476850 (Sunday to Wednesday from 8:30 to 15:30)

Shiraz

Contact us if you live in Fars, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Ilam and Lorestan provinces.

Telephone: 071-37229692 and 071-37236014 (Sunday to Wednesday from 8:30 to 15:30)