

Medical Resettlement

Health Sector Meeting

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UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Introduction to Resettlement

This presentation:

- Provides an introduction to **medical resettlement**.
- Reviews the **referral procedures** for health partners for possible medical resettlement cases

What is Resettlement?

Resettlement is defined as:

“the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status.”



Status offered through resettlement

Status provided to resettled refugees:

- ensures **protection against *refoulement***;
- provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with **access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals**; and
- carries with it the **opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen** of the resettlement country.

Resettlement Overview

Resettlement:

- Is one of **three possible durable solutions**
- Is *not* a right, but is **based on needs**
- Depends upon the **decision of a resettlement country**



1. UNHCR Resettlement Submission Policies



To be submitted for resettlement by UNHCR, individuals or families must:

- A) meet the **preconditions for resettlement consideration**; *and***
- B) fall under one or more of the UNHCR **resettlement submission categories**.**

The priority of the case (emergency, urgent or normal**) impacts the timing of the submission.**

UNHCR Preconditions for Resettlement Consideration

1. the applicant is **determined to be a refugee by UNHCR***; and
2. the prospects for all durable solutions were assessed, and **resettlement is identified as the most appropriate solution.**

* Exceptions can be made for **non-refugee stateless persons** for whom resettlement is considered the most appropriate durable solution, and also for the resettlement of **non-refugee dependent family members** to retain family unity.

Scale of Resettlement

- **28 Resettlement States**
- **80,000** resettlement places a year
- An average of **700,000** persons per year in need of resettlement
- 3 countries- the USA, Australia and Canada offer about **90% of the regular places.**

UNHCR Resettlement Submission Categories



Refugees must meet the requirements for submission under one or more of these categories:

- **Legal and/or physical protection needs**
- **Survivors of violence and/or torture**
- **Medical needs (primary or secondary)**
- **Women and girls at risk**
- **Family reunification**
- **Children and adolescents at risk**
- **Lack of foreseeable alternative durable solutions**

Each year around 2 to 3 % of all resettlement departures are medical needs cases.

Conditions for Consideration Under the Primary Medical Needs Category

Table 1: UNHCR CONDITIONS FOR RESETTLEMENT SUBMISSION UNDER THE MEDICAL NEEDS CATEGORY

DIAGNOSIS

Health condition is life threatening;
OR
There is a risk of irreversible loss of functions;
OR
Health condition is a significant obstacle to leading a normal life + heightened risk
OR
Particular situation in CoA significantly worsens the health condition.

AND

PROGNOSIS

AND
Treatment or residence in the country of resettlement would significantly improve daily functioning, quality of life and life expectancy

AND

TREATMENT

Adequate treatment is not available or is inaccessible in the CoA;
AND
Adequate treatment cannot be ensured through temporary medical evacuation.

AND

AND

INFORMED CONSENT

It is the expressed wish of the individual to be resettled.

Examples

Table 2: LIFE-THREATENING DISEASES

Resettlement might be an option	Most resettlement countries do not accept
Congenital heart disease	Severe irreversible kidney failure
Congenital cataract	Advanced cancers with metastasis
Cancers at an early stage	Retinitis pigmentosa

Summary of Process

Identification of possible case



Referral to UNHCR Health Unit

Referral to UNHCR Resettlement Unit

Assessment of eligibility of case

Referral for Medical Assessment Form

Assess RST suitability on medical grounds by RST Unit

Submission of Case to RST Country

Priority level	Severity of Condition: Any medical condition that:	Timeframe for medical intervention	Timeframe for resettlement (departure)
Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is immediately life threatening (i.e. life-saving surgery) 	< 1 month	Within 1 week
Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires life-saving interventions, but that is not immediately life threatening. Is at risk of major progression or complication without further intervention (i.e. many cancers) 	1 to < 6 months	Within 6 weeks
Normal	Is not life threatening or at risk of major progression/complication but requires intervention in order to ensure reduction of risk of progression/complications and to improve the person's quality of life and overall functioning.	≥ 6 months	Within 52 weeks

Types of cases considered for medical resettlement in Jordan

- Cancers in early stage with good prognosis AND cannot be managed in Jordan due to high cost
- Severe congenital cardiac disease AND cannot be managed in Jordan (high costs or special expertise needed)
- High cost chronic diseases where access to treatment makes a significant difference to outcome e.g.
 - Haemophilia (spontaneous haemorrhages)
 - growth hormone deficiency in children
 - Thalassemia Major

Types of cases considered for medical resettlement in Jordan

- Persons with behavioral, intellectual or physical impairment e.g. autism, cerebral palsy may be considered if there are other confounding factors (e.g. single parent household, other medical problems making the situation worse, multiple disabled children in one household).
- Cases with medical problems which do not meet the above criteria can be considered for resettlement if they fulfil criteria of another category in which case the medical needs will be secondary

Next steps for Medical Resettlement

1. If agencies identify a potential case or have any questions then please discuss with UNHCR Health Unit (burton@unhcr.org)
2. Note: Do not mention the possibility of resettlement to the family as if found to be suitable they will be fully counselled on their options

Questions?