FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

If I was interviewed during the Protection Intake, Profiling or met a UNHCR staff, does that mean that I will automatically be considered for Resettlement?

No. Protection Intake interviews, Profiling interviews, open consultations in UNHCR offices, or other counseling with UNHCR staff aim to provide a general assessment of an individual refugee’s situation and not for Resettlement. If you are considered for Resettlement, you will be specifically contacted by UNHCR Resettlement Unit. If you are not contacted, that means you are not being considered for Resettlement at this time.

How do I know if I am being considered for Resettlement?

You should not assume that you have a Resettlement case or else have been considered for Resettlement, unless you are invited to a Resettlement Interview and all aspects of Resettlement processing will then be explained to you. If following the Resettlement Interview, your case is positively assessed and meets the Resettlement criteria, it will be submitted to the Resettlement Country and you will be notified.

Should I or my dependents stop working or studying when our case is considered for Resettlement?

No. Final decisions regarding Resettlement to a Resettlement Country are done by the Governments of the Resettlement Countries. As such, there is no guarantee your case will be accepted for Resettlement until this is pronounced by the Resettlement Country. Additionally, Resettlement is a long process and if your case is accepted for Resettlement, job skills and education, including language skills, will be of fundamental importance in the Resettlement Country. Your skills will help you to better integrate once you are resettled!

If I have been interviewed for Resettlement, when should I follow up on my case?

UNHCR will inform you if and when your case is submitted to a Resettlement Country. If 3 months pass from the date of your Resettlement Interview and you are not informed, you may inquire on the status of your case. However note that the Resettlement process after the case has been submitted to the Resettlement Country varies between months and sometimes even years.

WHAT IS RESETTLEMENT?

Resettlement is a limited solution available to refugees who meet very specific requirements. Refugees must therefore be realistic about the chances of being submitted for Resettlement by UNHCR. Resettlement places among the millions of refugees throughout the year, Resettlement Countries decide how they will allocate integration solutions available to refugees who meet very specific requirements. Considering Resettlement criteria and the limited Resettlement places, not everyone who wants to be resettled will be resettled. The other two durable solutions - voluntary repatriation and local integration - are equally considered in each refugee’s situation. Each year, Resettlement Countries decide how they will allocate Resettlement places among the millions of refugees throughout the world, and UNHCR can only process cases for Resettlement submission within existing limits. Refugees must therefore be realistic about the chances of being submitted for Resettlement by UNHCR.

WHO CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR RESETTLEMENT?

Resettlement identification is done regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, education, level, social status, nationality or religion. Yet, in order to be identified for Resettlement, you need to meet the Resettlement criteria. No refugee is automatically entitled to be considered for Resettlement after living a certain number of years in their country of asylum.

HOW DOES UNHCR DECIDE WHO IS SUBMITTED FOR RESETTLEMENT?

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RESETTLEMENT INFORMATION BROCHURE FOR UNHCR PERSONS OF CONCERN IN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA

What happens if my case is not recommended for Resettlement Submission the Resettlement Country?

If your case is found not to meet the Resettlement criteria and hence cannot be submitted for Resettlement at this time, you will be informed by UNHCR.

Can I appeal UNHCR’s decision not to recommend my case for Resettlement Submission?

There is no appeal system if your case is found not to be in need of Resettlement by UNHCR.

What happens if I have been interviewed for Resettlement and there is a change in my family, such as marriage, birth or death?

You should inform UNHCR as soon as possible. If you are a refugee in Namibia and Botswana, you should also inform the Camp Management / Office of the Commissioner.

What happens if there are changes in my contact details?

You should inform UNHCR as soon as possible if there is a change in your contact details, including your physical address, your phone number and / or your email address.
HOW TO APPLY FOR RESETTLEMENT?

There is no application process for resettlement.

UNHCR identifies refugees for Resettlement Consideration on an ongoing basis. When identifying refugees who can be submitted for Resettlement, UNHCR’s main focus is on those refugees in South Africa, Namibia/Botswana who have specific protection needs and particular vulnerabilities, and who meet the Resettlement criteria. You should, however, understand that the identification of a refugee as being particularly vulnerable does not necessarily mean that the refugee is either eligible for or in need of Resettlement. Resettlement is only one option that UNHCR considers to address a refugee’s particular needs.

UNHCR makes a decision to submit a case for Resettlement only after conducting an in-depth assessment of the individual and his/her family’s particular situation.

In accordance with its current procedures, UNHCR does not accept self-referrals/“resettlement applications” from refugees.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS?

UNHCR only identifies cases for Resettlement Consideration to Resettlement Countries. The authorities of the Resettlement Countries make the decision as to whether a refugee will be accepted for Resettlement. Each Resettlement Country has its own regulations and procedures for Resettlement of refugees. These include medical screenings, security clearances and, in some cases, a further interview with the Immigration Authorities of the country of resettlement.

REFUGEES IN THE USA / CANADA RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

During the interviews UNHCR and representatives from the Resettlement Country will ask the refugee detailed questions about his/her history and background related to their country of origin and country of asylum. It is very important that the information provided is truthful, clear, accurate and complete. The Resettlement Country will rely on this information when considering your case, assessing your credibility and determining whether you qualify for Resettlement in that country. For this reason, you must tell the truth during all of your interviews and not withhold any information which could be relevant to your Resettlement case.

The entire Resettlement process is complex and involves many steps; it takes a long time, and especially in light of current further travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Refugees should therefore be patient while their case is being processed. Be patient and prepared to wait for a final decision and departure formalities, if accepted.

Refugees submitted to the US Resettlement Admissions Programme can get updates on their cases by sending an email to: case@cwlsafrica.org

CONFIDENTIALITY

All Resettlement files that are processed by UNHCR are kept strictly confidential. UNHCR will request refugees whose cases are submitted for Resettlement Consideration to sign a declaration authorizing UNHCR to share all information and any documents pertaining to them and their family members with government officials from the Resettlement Country.

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