



# Resettlement of refugees in the Netherlands

*Justitie*



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst

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**All around the world, millions of people are on the run, fleeing from violence and persecution. As a result of this, about 30 million people are staying in refugee camps of the UNHCR, the refugee agency of the United Nations. The UNHCR makes every effort to find permanent solutions for them, but some of the refugees cannot return to the country of origin and are also not safe in the region.**

**Every year, eighteen Western countries, including the Netherlands, invite refugees to build up a new future in a new country: this is called resettlement.**

## What will you find in this brochure?

This brochure will give you answers to the following questions regarding the policy pursued on resettlement by the Netherlands.

- Which refugees and how many refugees does the Netherlands invite?
- What is the role of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) in this process?
- How are these refugees prepared for their arrival in our country?
- Which countries are also involved in this process?
- How is the civic integration process of the resettled refugees carried out?

## Resettlement in the Netherlands

The Dutch government pursues an active policy on the reception of refugees. Our country has joined the global resettlement programme of the UNHCR. Every year, our country invites 500 refugees to come to the Netherlands. The Netherlands is also involved in the 'Regional Protection Programmes' of the EU. With these programmes, the Netherlands supports the countries that are forced to receive large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Resettlement of refugees is one of the ways to provide support. In concrete terms this means that, four times a year, a Dutch mission goes to one of the refugee camps to determine who qualify for resettlement in our country.



### ***Where do the invited refugees come from?***

- *Bhutan*
- *Burma (Myanmar)*
- *Burundi*
- *Democratic Republic of the Congo*
- *Iraq*

## What procedure does a mission follow?

A mission to a refugee camp usually lasts two weeks. During the mission, the IND interviews the refugees presented by the UNHCR. Because the IND is the admissions organisation of the Netherlands, the IND determines which refugees qualify for resettlement in our country. IND doctors conduct medical examinations, and employees of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) establish to what extent the candidates already have the basic skills for civic integration.

*IND mission leader: "It is less than a drop in the ocean, but giving someone in a dead-end situation a new future makes every member of the mission delegation feel good."*

During the mission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the up-to-date country or theme-specific information that is required for a thorough selection procedure. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also responsible for the registration of personal details and family relations. Each step during the mission is described in the 'Handbook for Resettled Refugees'. This handbook also states which organisation is responsible for which part of the mission.



## Which countries do the missions visit?

The last few years, the missions went, for example, to Kenya (Ethiopians and Eritreans), Tanzania (Burundians and Congolese), Thailand (Burmese), Syria/Jordan (Iraqi), and Nepal (Bhutanese).



*Mission member: "Interviewing asylum seekers is one of my daily activities, but the international setting of a mission makes it very special."*

## Who will receive an invitation?

Countries that invite refugees for resettlement include Australia, the United States, Canada, Scandinavia, UK, Germany, and the Netherlands. Each country has its own selection mandate, a framework for making decisions. The refugees that satisfy the conditions may be invited.

The Netherlands also focuses its attention on refugees who are extra vulnerable, such as unaccompanied women (women at risk), unaccompanied minors, and people in acute medical need who can undergo treatment in the Netherlands. But also families qualify for resettlement.

### **Criteria**

*The Netherlands basically uses the following as review frameworks:*

- *The International Convention on Refugees.*
- *The European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR).*
- *Humanitarian grounds.*
- *The derivative residence permit for family members.*

*Mission member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “The Netherlands is a trendsetter in resettlement, certainly at the European level. We not only invite refugees, but also share our experiences with other countries. We now see that other countries are copying the Dutch example.”*

## In the Netherlands

The candidates who are invited already get their first introduction to the Dutch language and our country in the refugee camp. This is arranged by the COA.

The COA is also responsible for the initial reception facilities in the Netherlands.

Upon arrival in the Netherlands, the invited refugees initially stay in an reception centre for about six months. There they follow a civic integration programme and get language lessons. Once the accepted refugee arrived in the Netherlands, he or she is granted a positive decision and a residence permit.

Then the refugees are offered accommodation in a Dutch municipality, where the civic integration continues. Stichting Nidos, a guardianship organisation for refugees and asylum seekers, ensures that guardians are appointed for unaccompanied minors.

## Which organisations also involved?

The following organisations cooperate closely to ensure that the invitation, the travel to the Netherlands, and the civic integration process of the refugees run as smoothly as possible:

- UNHCR, the Refugee Agency of the United Nations, nominates the refugees as possible candidates for the process.
- Four times a year, the IND organises missions to one of the refugee camps. The IND determines who will be resettled.
- The Medical Advice Bureau: doctors of the IND conduct a medical examination.
- The COA is also responsible for civic integration and initial reception facilities in the Netherlands.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains contact with the international organisations; The Ministry is furthermore responsible for the registration of personal details.
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) arranges tickets and travel documents for the invited refugees.
- Stichting Nidos appoints the guardians for unaccompanied minor refugees in the Netherlands;
- The Aliens Police processes the administrative details in the Netherlands.

## More information

### ***The Resettlement Section of the IND also deals with:***

- *asylum applications submitted abroad, for example, at an embassy*
- *boat refugees*
- *specific individual cases*
- *individual requests from the UNHCR*

If you still have questions after reading this brochure, please do not hesitate to contact the IND.

The Resettlement Section can be reached at telephone number +31(0)70 779 47 35.

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Please visit the following websites for the contact details of the other organisations that are involved in the Dutch resettlement policy:

UNHCR: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

Europese Commissie: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

COA: [www.coa.nl](http://www.coa.nl)

Stichting NIDOS: [www.nidos.nl](http://www.nidos.nl)

IOM: [www.www.iom-nederland.nl/english](http://www.www.iom-nederland.nl/english)

Please visit [www.ind.nl/EN/](http://www.ind.nl/EN/) for more information about the IND and the implementation of the Dutch Aliens policy.

