

## Working with UNHCR Washington on Resettlement

### ***What are the procedures for inquiring about a potential resettlement case?***

When individuals in the United States contact UNHCR Washington directly about their family members overseas, we generally refer them to voluntary agencies in their area. We inform them that we limit our responses to individual cases referred to us by voluntary agencies, Congressional offices, or attorneys. Voluntary agencies are usually able to answer routine queries on family reunion and resettlement processing. In some cases, however, agencies have cases which they feel require UNHCR intervention. We will assist with certain individual cases, but ask agencies to be aware of our limited staffing.

To inquire about a specific case, please send an email to the address below, giving a brief description of the case and its particular protection concerns. Please include identifying information about the refugee, such as the full name, UNHCR registration number, date of birth, ration card number, etc.

Any query originating directly from a refugee overseas, we refer to the UNHCR office in the country where the refugee is located, and an answer will not be provided to the inquirer by UNHCR Washington.



Bhutanese refugee school children in Sanischara camp in Nepal

### ***What types of individual queries should we refer to you?***

UNHCR Washington can be used as a resource to answer questions that refugees have regarding accessing a UNHCR office in their country of asylum or procedures of asylum in specific countries. Voluntary Agencies may also serve as an intermediary between inquirers and UNHCR field offices for:

- Refugees that are particularly vulnerable
- Refugees that have immediate protection needs (e.g. unaccompanied minors without a caregiver)
- Refugees with urgent medical needs
- Family reunion for immediate family members where beneficiaries are ineligible for other US family reunion processes.

UNHCR Washington does not have authority over decisions made in other UNHCR field offices. UNHCR offices identify refugees in the country they are in for resettlement based on standard criteria. These can be seen in Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook:

<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/46f7c0ee2.pdf>. Questions about expediting US immigration processes such as an immigration visa (I-130) or Visa 92/93 should be directed to the appropriate US agency: USCIS, or the State Department. UNHCR does not have control over these procedures.

### ***What is the role of UNHCR Washington in resettlement?***

The resettlement unit in UNHCR Washington has a limited capacity to assist in individual casework. Primarily we work with U.S. government officials on federal, state and local levels as well as with non-governmental organizations to provide resettlement opportunities for individuals and groups who have been determined to be in need of resettlement.

We work to build greater awareness and support in the US for refugee populations around the world who need resettlement. Additionally, the unit provides other UNHCR offices with information on US resettlement and immigration policies and procedures. The unit gives on-going support and assistance to UNHCR offices around the world that identify and refer cases to the US program.

In addition to promoting legal rights of resettled refugees under domestic law, UNHCR works with US counterparts to promote appropriate support systems for refugees with special needs, such as refugee women, children, and persons with medical needs.

### ***How do I contact UNHCR?***

VOLAGs may contact us in writing via email at [usawaing@unhcr.org](mailto:usawaing@unhcr.org) or by fax at 202-296-5660.

Address: UNHCR Resettlement Unit, 1775 K St., NW Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006

More information on resettlement can be found at: [www.unhcrwashington.org](http://www.unhcrwashington.org) Click on Resettlement to the right.