



a FAIR GO FOR ALL

Making New Zealand's refugee quota work for people from Africa and the Middle East

The world is experiencing an unprecedented refugee crisis; 68.5 million forcibly displaced people, half of whom are children, are trying to survive in increasingly resource-scarce and hostile environments. This figure is the highest recorded since World War II.

New Zealand makes a small yet important contribution to the protection of displaced people.

The government has operated an annual refugee resettlement quota since 1987. The quota was recently raised to 1,000 places a year, with plans to further increase it to 1,500 places by 2020.

Though much has been done, the challenge is to do more. Strikingly, New Zealand has restrictions in place that make it difficult for refugees from Africa and the Middle East to be included in its resettlement quota. Refugees from these two regions require pre-existing family links to New Zealand to be granted protection. Regional allocations also limit New Zealand's intake of African refugees to 17 per cent and Middle Eastern refugees to 15 per cent of the quota.

The world's greatest refugee needs today are in Africa and the Middle East, as illustrated by the situations in countries like South Sudan and Syria. Removing obstacles for people from these two regions is a matter of choice – a political choice to protect the most vulnerable. World Vision New Zealand, alongside hundreds of young Kiwis, calls on the New Zealand Government to include more African and Middle Eastern refugees in the country's resettlement quota and remove the discriminatory family-link policy. We also reiterate our call for the quota to be increased to 1,500 places – in a time of exceptional global need, more refugee children, along with their families, should be allowed to rebuild their lives in New Zealand.



Newly arrived families to a refugee camp in northern Uganda are provided an 'essentials kit' with blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito net, kitchen kits, soap and water containers.

THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

The number of forcibly displaced people, including children, has grown significantly over the last two decades; the latest figures from UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, indicate that there are 68.5 million people worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes. Of these, 25.4 million are refugees who have crossed borders because they fear for their lives at home. More than half of all displaced persons are children.

Displaced children and their families overwhelmingly rely on support from governments and host communities in developing countries. Developing countries hosted 85 per cent of the world's refugees in 2017, about 16.9 million people. Because of their generosity, these countries themselves are vulnerable to losing hard-fought

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development gains. Some countries, such as Uganda and Lebanon, have disproportionately borne the responsibility to care for what is truly a global crisis.

Uganda, for example, is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. As of 1 July 2018, Uganda hosts more than 1.47 million refugees and asylum seekers, about 75 per cent of whom are from South Sudan. Despite the challenges generated by the newcomers, Uganda maintains open and progressive refugee policies. The government has committed to allow refugees full access to education and public health and also offers them an opportunity to cultivate land and work.

It is estimated that 1.2 million refugees worldwide require resettlement in a safe third country. Resettlement is defined as the 'transfer of refugees from a state in which they have initially sought protection to a third state that has agreed to admit them—as refugees—with permanent-residence status.' However, in 2017 only 102,800 refugees were offered places in countries that participate in UNHCR's resettlement programme, including New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the US. The scale of today's resettlement needs vastly outstrips the number of places available.

NEW ZEALAND'S REFUGEE QUOTA PROGRAMME – A LIFELINE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

New Zealand is one of 35 countries in the world with an annual quota intake of refugees. The government has operated this quota since 1987; approximately 25,000 newcomers have been welcomed to New Zealand since. Quota refugees coming to New Zealand are referred for resettlement by UNHCR and have been identified as priority cases needing protection. The exact number of people, and who is selected to start a new life in New Zealand, is decided by the government of the day. The quota is one of three ways for refugees to find protection in New Zealand, alongside being welcomed as part of a family reunification programme or making a successful claim for asylum.

World Vision commends New Zealand's efforts to protect people who are least likely to survive prolonged displacement.



Children and families who have fled South Sudan arrive at a reception centre in northern Uganda where they are given a hot meal and a place to sleep.

The New Zealand Government recently raised its annual quota from 750 to 1,000 places and has publicly committed to further increase it to 1,500 places by 2020, while also developing opportunities for community sponsorship. In addition, over the last three years 600 refugees from Syria have been resettled over and above the quota intake.

World Vision commends New Zealand's efforts to protect people who are least likely to survive prolonged displacement, the majority of which today are in Africa and the Middle East. This is an important contribution to global responsibility-sharing for people fleeing untenable and unsafe circumstances.

However, the global system responding to and seeking to resolve forced displacement isn't working. The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants held in New York in September 2016 recognised the need for much greater responsibility-sharing. New Zealand endorsed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and demonstrated commitment to protect more vulnerable people. This commitment must now be followed up with tangible action.



World Vision has established child-friendly spaces in refugee camps where kids can play and begin to recover from the trauma of war.

MAKING NEW ZEALAND'S REFUGEE QUOTA FAIR FOR PEOPLE FROM SOUTH SUDAN

A key priority for New Zealand must be to help where the need is greatest. Numerous countries in Africa and the Middle East are wracked by violent conflict, with millions of people forced to flee their homes. Refugees from these two regions need an urgent lifeline.

Yet in 2010, the New Zealand Government decided to impose a restriction on refugees applying for protection from the Middle East and Africa; they would only be accepted if they already had family in New Zealand. Remarkably, this condition was not placed on refugees from the Americas. The introduction of a family-link condition came alongside changes to the regional composition of New Zealand's quota. The government sought to refocus on the Asia-Pacific region, mainly for cost, political and perceived security reasons. Fifty per cent of quota refugees were to come from the Asia-Pacific, 15 per cent from the Middle East, 17 per cent from Africa and 18 per cent from the Americas. Previously, the regional intake had been split at around 30 per cent each for Africa, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific.

Taken together, these policy decisions have led to a significant decrease

in refugee numbers from Africa and the Middle East. Ten years ago, before the regional shift and family-link requirement were introduced, approximately one in four refugees coming to New Zealand were originally from Africa; today it is approximately one in 20. Immigration New Zealand has not been able to meet the regional allocation targets for Africa and the Middle East as there are simply not enough people with existing family links in New Zealand. As such, annual intakes from Africa have occasionally gone down to single figures, for example in 2014/15 when just one per cent of New Zealand's actual quota intake came from Africa. While there are currently 2.4 million refugees from South Sudan, only 12 people have been offered protection in New Zealand since 2011 (three in 2013-14, nine in 2017-18). This approach is clearly at odds with the key purpose of a humanitarian quota, which is to support the most vulnerable people and help them start a new life in dignity.

While there are currently 2.4 million refugees from South Sudan, only 12 people have been offered protection in New Zealand since 2011.



Auckland students at the World Vision New Zealand Youth Conference taking action and using their voice.

"We should be treating all people as equals, and not stereotyping them as a bad asset to our country."

Dara-Rose, Year 12 student, Waimate

"New Zealand is a safe, loving country and we should show it. No more discrimination and no more hate!"

Mya, Year 11 student, Christchurch



MOBILISING YOUNG NEW ZEALANDERS FOR CHANGE

World Vision's mandate is to respond to the needs of forcibly displaced children and their families through high quality programming and advocacy. We also empower young people to become agents of change; we believe their views matter and their voices can move mountains.

World Vision's 40 Hour Famine is a key example of how young people across New Zealand speak up on behalf of their less fortunate peers in countries like South Sudan. The message we received from them this year—the message we would like to convey to the New Zealand Government—is clear: South Sudan's children, and their families, need more support from all of us.

Refugees are the global community's collective responsibility. New Zealand cannot stand on the margins as

Uganda continues to host the largest refugee population in Africa. More must be done to help. This includes making New Zealand's annual quota fair for people from South Sudan, and Africa and the Middle East more generally. Resettling from regions with the greatest need will reduce pressures on the host societies and encourage other states to contribute to resettlement plans from these regions.

With New Zealand's refugee quota programme coming up for formal review in 2019, World Vision recommends the following:

1

Remove the requirement for African and Middle Eastern refugees to have pre-existing family links to New Zealand.

2

Bring the quota composition in line with global needs as identified by UNHCR, by increasing percentage rates for Africa and the Middle East.

3

Increase the annual resettlement quota to at least 1,500 places a year, alongside funding for key settlement services.

4

Increase humanitarian assistance to host countries in urgent need of funding such as Uganda, to provide a generation of children with access to education, health and protection.

World Vision