



RESETTLEMENT OF CONGOLESE REFUGEES FROM RWANDA TO THE UNITED STATES © IOM 2018/E.MASABO

## IOM'S RESETTLEMENT: HISTORY AND MANDATE

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951 to ensure the safe and dignified movements of refugees. In the aftermath of World War II, no government alone could help the many displaced survivors to resume their lives and IOM was created to assist with the resettlement of Europeans displaced by the war. To this day, moving people to safety to start a new life remains a core function of the Organization. IOM works closely with governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-government organizations and other partners. The resettlements process begins with UNHCR where they identify, interview and submit refugee cases to countries for resettlement consideration. Subsequently, under cooperative agreements with those same countries, IOM resettlement services — medical screenings, pre-departure briefings, fitness to travel checks, movement assistance — take place. Upon arrival, resettlement countries provide refugees with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals.

## RWANDA AS A HOST OF THOUSANDS REFUGEES

Due to its geographical location, Rwanda hosts thousands of refugees in refugee camps, as well as in urban settings. These refugees mostly come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (52.4%) and Burundi (47.2%). In addition to the primarily Congolese and Burundian caseloads, Rwanda hosts around 580 refugees (0.4%) from other countries. Burundian refugees fled to Rwanda from April 2015 to early 2017, as a result of election-related tensions. Congolese refugees include refugees who fled in the 1990s, as well as more recent arrivals who fled to Rwanda during the 2012-2013 renewed hostilities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With the refugees' prospects for return being uncertain, IOM Rwanda resettles refugees to third countries. Third Country Resettlement movement of refugees and the relevant activities to facilitate orderly migration is a significant role of IOM Rwanda's programmes. At the earliest opportunity prior to departure, it is important that each refugee is well informed and empowered, proper care is given to their health and well-being, and necessary arrangements are in place for their safe travel and meaningful integration. From 2008 to June 2018, IOM Rwanda facilitated resettlement activities and final departures for 11,631 refugees. IOM Rwanda assisted 9,793 refugees to the United States, 671 to Finland, 408 to Canada, 235 refugees to Australia, 145 to Sweden, 132 to the United Kingdom, 76 to the Netherlands, 61 to Norway, 55 to Denmark, 49 to Belgium, 5 to Ireland and 1 to Switzerland.

# IOM RWANDA IN ACTION



CONGOLESE REFUGEES AT KIGALI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT © IOM 2018/E.MASABO



IOM STAFF FACILITATING TRANSPORT FROM TRANSIT CENTER TO AIRPORT © IOM 2018/E.MASABO

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENTS: TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

IOM Rwanda's Operations Unit is responsible to establish support mechanisms for transportation of refugees who got accepted for resettlement to third countries. IOM has global agreements with airlines to minimize travel expenses for resettlement programmes. As soon as the resettlement process is complete and the refugees are ready to travel, advance booking notifications are sent to the receiving missions and tickets are issued. The refugees then come to Kigali for three to five days prior to actual departure for health checks and final preparations at the IOM medical clinic.

The resettlement process ends when IOM has successfully assisted the movement of refugees to their country of resettlement and handed them over to the relevant authorities in that country. IOM staff or externally hired professionals escort refugees to the point of entry or even to the final destination in the

receiving country, if needed. The escort's primary duty is to ensure that refugees travel as comfortable as possible until they arrive at their destination.

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION

IOM Rwanda also facilitates movements of a number of individuals who have been approved to join their families or relatives abroad under family reunification programmes to different countries.

## SELF-PAYING MIGRANTS

IOM additionally provides assistance in facilitating movement of self-sponsored migrants who travel abroad to work or settle under an organized and regular migration scheme. IOM Rwanda does this by improving existing processes to make it easier, more efficient and reliable for both migrants and the governments concerned.



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