

# Resettlement to the United States

Photo : ICMC / G. Dingemans



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## Context

Political instability, human rights violations and conflicts cause mass displacement in and around the Middle East. Persons in need of protection include more than 3 million Syrians fleeing civil war and large numbers of refugees from Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran and elsewhere. The overwhelming majority of these refugees remain within the region in countries of first asylum. For some, however, resettlement to a third country may be the only safe and viable durable solution.

Each year less than 1 per cent of the world's estimated 10.4 million refugees are submitted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to resettlement countries for consideration. Among the countries that take part in UNHCR's resettlement programs, the United States accepts the largest number of refugees through its U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), including almost 70,000 refugees in the fiscal year 2014. UNHCR refers refugees for resettlement through this program by submitting its cases to the Resettlement Support Centers (RSC) funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). RSCs are operated by authorized organizations under PRM's guidance, and prepare eligible cases for presentation to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for consideration.

## Operations

ICMC has been a resettlement partner of the United States in the Middle East since the 1950s. By operating the Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and Middle East (RSC TuME), ICMC contributes to a major component of the United States' resettlement program, and in the last few years alone has facilitated the resettlement of more than 37,000 refugees from countries of first asylum in the Middle East. The Resettlement Support Center is familiar with migration flows in the region and has extensive experience with refugees from a diverse range of national, cultural, religious and social backgrounds.

ICMC's operations in Turkey and the Middle East reflect the reality of uncertainty and instability in the region. The RSC TuME enjoys long-standing and productive relationships with UNHCR, Turkish and Lebanese authorities and other key stakeholders, and works closely with these partners to identify and overcome possible challenges to resettlement activities.



## PROTECTION

Our activities focus on case processing and resettlement:

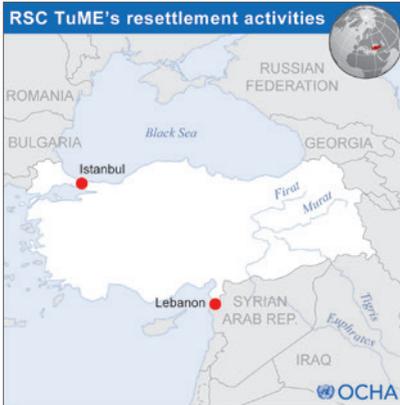
- Gathering biographic and other data about refugees.
- Pre-screening interviews.
- Logistical and processing support to officers of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) who conduct assessment interviews.

Preparing refugees for departure:

- Arranging for medical clearances.
- Preparing the necessary documents for departure and travel.
- Requesting assurances of sponsorship from U.S.-based resettlement agencies that provide assistance to newly arrived refugees.
- Cultural orientation training.

“ I reassure the refugees that they can share information with me without fear. Although what I can do for them is very limited, I feel like I can make a change in their life. ”

Ezgi Tanriver, ICMC's caseworker at the Resettlement Support Center in Istanbul.



Map: Based on OCHA/ReliefWeb

## Activities of the Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and Middle East

The main office is located in Istanbul, Turkey with a sub-office in Beirut, Lebanon.

Through the Resettlement Support Center, more than 7,000 refugees are resettled annually to the USA.

On average, 62 people are processed every day at the Resettlement Support Center in Istanbul and Beirut.

A pool of around 80 interpreters provides translation services to and from English, Arabic, Farsi, and Somali.

## Activities

### Preparing cases for resettlement

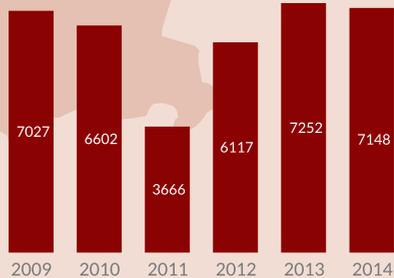
The Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and Middle East prepares the cases of refugees referred by UNHCR for presentation to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). This process involves:

- pre-screening interviews, including screening for vulnerable cases in need of special attention; and
- gathering of biographic data and key documents and preparation of asylum seekers' accounts of persecution and other protection concerns.

The RSC TuME also provides logistical and processing support to USCIS officers conducting adjudication interviews, and arranging essential resources such as interpreters, interview rooms, communication facilities, transportation, and security escorts for refugees where necessary.

In addition to helping asylum seekers and refugees prepare their case files, the RSC TuME is also a crucial source of information and a contact point for persons applying for resettlement. Through email, telephone, a web portal and face-to-face counselling, ICMC's staff provides support for refugees accessing the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and provide information about the status of cases and the resettlement process.

### REFUGEES RESETTLED BY RSC TuME



Figures based on US fiscal year

Since 2009, RSC TuME has resettled more than 37,000 refugees to the United States

## Medical examinations and cultural orientation

The Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and Middle East also provides a range of services for refugees who have been approved for resettlement, including cultural orientation training and medical examinations. Over three days of training based on interactive and experiential learning, highly-qualified ICMC's experts inform refugees and help them develop the skills they need to adapt to life in the United States. Adult and youth classes address refugees' expectations, cultural differences and practical life skills on matters such as transportation, education, employment, and budgeting. Children younger than 8 years of age accompanying their families to cultural orientation training are provided with childcare on site.



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“ I want to personally thank all of you for your excellent work [...]. You exceeded our goals for the year in Turkey despite numerous challenges, including two travel moratoriums, building renovations, having to hire and train new staff, and changing Turkish government requirements on exit permits. I am well aware of how complicated your operation is logistically, and I am always amazed at how well and smoothly your operation runs. It does not happen by magic. It happens because of your hard work and dedication. ”

Robert Ward, Regional Refugee Coordinator, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, US Department of State