



Brighton: An Oromo family that was resettled to the UK in 2006 / UNHCR / H. Davies / 2007

### Welcome to the Linking-In EU Resettlement Project

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter for the new ERF funded IOM, UNHCR and ICMC project 'Linking-In EU Resettlement'. We are pleased to renew our collaboration with those of you who were involved in the 'Practical Cooperation' project and happy to welcome new participants to this project. To date, we have confirmed participation from governments and civil society partners from 17 EU countries. The project also remains open to new participants.

The emphasis of this new project is on the reception and integration of refugees at the local level and the importance of linking the pre-departure and post-arrival phases in order to make resettlement more successful. It aims to strengthen the expertise of European practitioners in all stages of the resettlement and integration process by building an online network of resettlement practitioners and actors - including national, regional and local governmental authorities, NGO and civil society representatives - both in participating Member States and more broadly across the EU. As a first step, we invite you to follow the 5 easy steps outlined on the back page to join the new **EU resettlement practitioners network** on [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com). In the course of the project we will develop a dedicated resettlement web portal, which will include an online forum for practitioners where information can be exchanged and stored.

Our project began in September 2011 and runs until November 2012. During this time, we will organise a wide range of activities, including national multi-stakeholder meetings in most of the individual member states and a number of local practitioners' trainings. The project also aims to pilot innovative activities in resettlement including - but not limited to - initiatives involving private university sponsorship and private business. We are particularly interested in involving the media wherever possible and beneficial, given the important role they play in raising community awareness about resettled refugees. To help us to select which pilot activities to pursue, we need **YOUR** suggestions for activities that could work in your area – more information on how you can get involved in this process can be found on the back page of this issue.

All 'Linking-In' project activities will feed into the first EU Resettlement Skills Share Day, to be held in Brussels in April 2012. The Skills Share Day will provide an opportunity to share good practices from across the globe and consider new initiatives that could be implemented in the EU. For more information on our plans for this event, please have a look at the 'EU Skills Share Day' article on page 4 of this newsletter. We very much welcome your input in the organisation of the project's activities, and look forward to extending an online welcome to the project via our LinkedIn group.

### What is resettlement and why is it so important?

Resettlement is a transfer of refugees from their country of first asylum to a third country that has agreed to admit them with a long term or permanent resident status. Resettlement provides protection for refugees whose safety is immediately at risk and is a tool of international protection in a context of responsibility sharing among states.

It is one of three durable solutions that UNHCR pursues for refugees, along with voluntary repatriation and local integration depending on the case. Over 80% of the world's 10.5 million refugees live in developing countries whose populations often face their own serious challenges. Resettlement can be the only way for UNHCR to offer a **long-term solution** to those refugees who have no prospects of either returning home or of integrating in these countries. In cases where refugees face the risk of being returned to a country in which they risk facing persecution, or when they are at risk in the country of asylum itself, resettlement can be- and often is- a **life-saving tool**.

Sometimes resettlement can even benefit the refugees or asylum-seekers who remain in the country of asylum. Indeed, where the international community shows that it is ready to carry a small part of another country's responsibility by offering protection to part of its refugee population, the government of that host country can be encouraged to more readily offer protection to those remaining in the country (for instance by allowing other asylum-seekers to enter the country). In these cases, we refer to the **"strategic use of resettlement"**. *Continued on page 2*

## FOCUS ON A REFUGEE SITUATION: NORTH-AFRICA

In each newsletter, in cooperation with UNHCR's resettlement service, we will highlight one of the current refugee situations around the world where resettlement is needed either as a durable solution or a protection tool.

One of the current refugee crises where resettlement is the only solution and where it truly can mean the difference between life and death is North Africa. A few thousand refugees and asylum-seekers are stranded in rudimentary refugee camps along Libya's borders with Tunisia and Egypt. Most of them originally came to Libya from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan, fleeing persecution in their countries of origin. Many were detained in Libyan prisons, some for years. When the fighting broke out in Libya, they were all again forced to flee. Now, they are living in one of two camps on the Libyan border: Choucha camp in Tunisia and Saloum camp in Egypt. Living conditions in these camps are extremely difficult as they were set up only as temporary measures to accommodate refugees during their registration, refugee status determination and resettlement processes. They are not designed or equipped to offer long-term shelter or protection. Life in Choucha is tough. The camp is completely dependent on humanitarian aid, and subject to crushing summer heat and sandstorms. A fire in May nearly destroyed the entire camp, and recently, heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding have caused severe damage. Conditions in Saloum are even worse.

Taking into account the very limited protection that can be provided to refugees in these camps, as well as the lack of prospects for returning to their home countries, UNHCR is calling upon the international community to resettle the entire population from both camps as soon as possible. This is by no means an impossible task; the US is willing to accept most of the refugees and UNHCR is thus calling upon EU Member States to show solidarity with Mediterranean countries by offering just 2,000 resettlement places. In total, 5,000 refugees are in need of resettlement. So far, European countries have pledged less than 900 places. This includes over 450 places offered by Norway as well as places by Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal and Denmark.

Resettlement of refugees out of the two border zones will not only solve the urgent humanitarian and protection needs of the concerned refugee population, but also pave the way for building future asylum systems in the region. UNHCR is working on programs that are co-funded by the EU to develop the Tunisian and Egyptian institutional and administrative capacities for asylum management. This is a process that will take a few years. In the meantime, a few thousand refugees who are living under very difficult circumstances are losing hope and UNHCR calls upon European countries to act quickly and offer up to 2,000 resettlement places. This will solve a desperate refugee situation taking place on Europe's very doorstep.



Photograph: Paulo Siqueira/Save the Children

### What is Resettlement? *continued from page 1*

There are 24 resettlement countries in the world that offer some 70,000 resettlement places each year. This, however, is not enough to meet the needs of those refugees in need of this solution: UNHCR estimates that 172,000 refugees will need resettlement in 2012 alone. While some industrialized countries such as the US, Canada and Australia have very large resettlement programs, together offering over 60,000 places, the EU could do significantly more. Though there are some significant and well-established resettlement programs in the EU, on the whole, Member States only offer some 5,000 resettlement places each year. The project partners hope that this number will increase significantly in the years to come. This will require the concerted efforts of all partners involved in the resettlement process, from national governments and NGOs to local municipalities, schools and sports clubs. The Linking-In EU Resettlement project aims to support the crucial cooperation between resettlement actors and to enhance the quality of resettlement programs.

For detailed information on resettlement please see the UNHCR resettlement website: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b1676.html>

## CHALLENGES FOR EMERGING RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES

### Finding housing for resettled refugees in Belgium with the support of local NGOs

On July 18 2011, Belgium received 25 Eritrean and Congolese refugees from Tunisia as part of Europe's effort to show solidarity with North Africa. The refugees - families with children and women at risk - were first transferred to the centralised reception centre in Pondrôme. While the identification of housing has proven challenging, most refugees in the group have now taken up residence in their new homes in the Brussels and Antwerp region, thanks to integration support from the NGOs Caritas and Convivium.



Caritas established good contacts with house owners, which enabled them to rent private housing very quickly for smaller families. One family is still at the reception centre, waiting for suitable housing to be found for them in a municipality. According to Caritas: "Housing for larger families can sometimes be a challenge, which could potentially be overcome if Belgian cities were engaged in resettlement in a more structured and continuous way."

The NGOs have provided some basic furniture in the houses, and most of the refugees are now busy decorating their homes. "It is still a bit early to say", reflected a Caritas-worker, "but the refugees do seem to be doing quite well. We have now registered most of the refugees for benefits and medical care, and all of the kids have been enrolled in school. Some of the women have been through very serious hardships in Libya, and we hope that they will be able to cope well with the changes and their traumatic experiences. We will be able to tell you more in a few months time, once they are completely settled in their new communities and can take stock of all the changes they have gone through since July. It was heart-warming to see how the Eritrean community immediately stepped in to welcome them, offering guidance and support."

More on how to prepare for the reception of resettled refugees in the *Paving the Way Handbook*: <http://www.icmc.net/pubs/paving-way-a-handbook-reception-and-integration-resettled-refugees>

## GOOD PRACTICES IN RESETTLEMENT

### Do- Be- Do: Doing-better-dossier submissions to save refugee lives

Procedures governing the selection of refugees for resettlement may appear to be a technical or even dull subject. However, it is these procedures that decide if individual refugees and their family members will be saved from potentially life-threatening situations. This summer, the government of Belgium for the first time accepted refugees on the basis of dossier submissions, thereby making a vital contribution to life-saving protection work at Choucha refugee camp.

The resettlement referral process is based on individual refugee identification by UNHCR. UNHCR uses the Refugee Registration Form (RRF) to refer refugees for resettlement, and countries then select refugees based either on the dossiers ('electronic' or 'paper' submissions) received from UNHCR and/or by organising their own selection mission to the refugee camp. Dossier-based resettlement is generally more efficient than country selection missions, and country acceptance of dossier selection is of great value when dealing with urgent and emergency protection cases requiring immediate action to bring refugees to safety. Most EU resettlement countries - including Denmark, Finland, France, Portugal, Sweden and the Netherlands - accept dossier submissions; some select their entire resettlement caseload like this, others combine it with selection missions. Most dossier cases in Europe go to Sweden, which has developed a good practice, offering speedy resettlement for all dossier submissions, even within one working day for emergency cases.

**"We suffered terribly in Libya. Now, what we want more than anything else is freedom" – Mussie, a 31-year-old Eritrean refugee**

The previous IOM, UNHCR and ICMC 'Practical Cooperation in Resettlement' project was strongly committed to extending European emergency resettlement places and dossier submission routes, with the intention of making these processes an intrinsic feature of European resettlement. In cooperation with the Swedish government, the project organised a study visit to the UNHCR regional resettlement hub in Beirut in May 2011, to promote dossier submission practices and the model of cooperation between Sweden and UNHCR. The Portuguese and Belgian governments participated in this visit, which was called "Do-Be-Do: Doing-Better-Dossier submissions". Belgium wanted to explore whether it could make use of dossier submissions in its resettlement programme, whilst Portugal was interested to learn how to overcome practical issues it had encountered by making use of Sweden's expertise. Due to security concerns in the camp, the Belgian government decided to put into practice what they had learned and selected 25 refugees from Choucha camp on a dossier basis. The refugees, the first dossier arrivals to Belgium, were happy to leave their dire situation in the camp and restart their lives in safety. This shows how important 'boring' procedures can be!

### European Parliamentarians make urgent call: Resettle stranded refugees to Europe

In July 2011, six MEPs from different political groups, led by Maltese EPP member Simon Busuttil, visited two refugee camps on the Libyan Tunisian border. They were very moved by the conditions the refugees had to endure.

"The key request we got from all the actors in the field was to open up new places for resettlement. Three to four thousand people is not that many," Dutch Green Judith Sargentini said. "The most important role for us now is to share this experience and urge member states to be more generous. We will have to take these refugees anyway, either in Lampedusa or directly via resettlement. And I'd rather have them alive."

Busuttil is convinced about resettlement being the solution: "The time has come when we need to go beyond financial solidarity. If 3,000 or 4,000 people are blocked in the camp in Choucha, facing temperatures of 43°C and sandstorms every afternoon, the only way is to go towards solidarity such as resettlement. Over half a million people have moved from Libya to Tunisia. Of these, only a few thousand remain who have no place to go. (...) It's up to us now as Europeans to carry the responsibility for these people. It's a goodwill gesture to resettle these people amongst the 27 states in the EU, to show the Tunisian people that we appreciate all what they've done".

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/headlines/content/20110708FCS23672/html/EP-delegation-visits-Tunisia-to-assess-migration-situation>

### LINKING-IN WITH LINKEDIN:

#### Join the new practitioners network in 5 simple steps

A fundamental aspect of the 'Linking-In' project is connecting those who work in refugee resettlement in Europe. A future online community of practice will enable us to pool ideas and practice, learn from each other's experiences and source new solutions to facilitate successful integration. As a basis for the online network we have set up a new group on [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com). If you are not yet a LinkedIn member, please take 3 minutes to follow these 5 easy steps to join:

- ✓ Go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and click on 'Join Today'. Fill in a few personal details and click on the 'Join LinkedIn' button.
- ✓ Fill in a few more details about where you live and work, then click on 'Create My Profile'.
- ✓ You will be invited to search for contacts via your email address book. If you do not want to do this, just click 'skip this step'. The next page asks you to confirm the account via your email inbox.
- ✓ Once this is done, return to LinkedIn. Join our group by typing '**The EU Resettlement Practitioners Network**' into the search box in the top right-hand corner and clicking on 'Join Group'. Those of you who are focal points of the project partner organisations can join the 'Linking-In EU Resettlement' sub-group.

You can now initiate a discussion and invite others to join it, or take part in an existing discussion. We can have an unlimited number of discussions open at any one time. So if you have a question you'd like to discuss, a successful practice you'd like to share or if you're looking for information or advice, post a discussion and involve your colleagues across Europe. Get LinkedIn!

At the end of April, we will be holding the first ever EU Resettlement Skills Share Day in Brussels. We are very excited about this interactive and participatory event, which will bring together around 100 resettlement practitioners and experts from across the EU and beyond to share information and identify pre-departure and post-arrival phase practices and approaches that contribute to the successful integration of resettled refugees. We also hope that the event will serve to consolidate Member States' commitment to refugee resettlement.

The Skills Share Day will provide an overview of the project's activities in the coming months, and invite stakeholders and partners to assist us in shaping the project's pilot activities. It will showcase innovative practices and initiatives in the field of resettlement, facilitate networking and help to create successful partnerships.

The Skills Share Day will address a diverse range of resettlement topics, including the benefits of pre-departure orientation, involving host communities and previously resettled refugees in the resettlement process, the role of local and national media in promoting resettlement, solutions to the provision of housing and engaging private enterprise in reception and integration.

We will employ a mixture of presentations, group discussions and exercises, film screenings and video conferences, and guest speakers from resettlement countries around the world including academics, practitioners and resettled refugees. To enable practitioners to present their services, activities and experiences in resettlement, and allow participants to gain a broad insight into the full range of resettlement solutions, the event will host a 'resettlement marketplace'.

To ensure each of you can 'tailor-make' an event programme according to your needs and interests, we will share the details of the planned programme with you in advance of the event. The event will be most meaningful if we are aware of your needs, your identified concerns and your practices and experiences, so please do contact us if there is something you want to share or present, or if you feel the event should address particular resettlement issues. With your input and ideas, the Skills Share Day can be an innovative and inspiring event that facilitates concrete partnerships and action in favour of refugee resettlement.

In this issue, we highlighted the refugee situation in North Africa, and featured Belgium's experience as it was one of the countries that responded to that crisis by offering resettlement places. Dossier basis selection was highlighted as an example of a good practice for such situations. Please contact us if you have stories and experiences to share from your region or if you would be interested in seeing a particular practice or situation featured in our future Newsletters. All contact details are at the bottom of the page.

### PILOT ACTIVITIES: CALL FOR IDEAS

The Linking-In EU Resettlement project will also facilitate the development of pilot activities by project partners that aim to initiate innovative activities. The project has modest funding available to support activities in, which could include: Private sponsorship projects involving universities; Mobilisation of host communities in the resettlement process, including via volunteering and campaigning; Housing; Engagement of private business in resettlement, be it through sponsorship, training and mentoring. **Please contact us if you have any ideas for a pilot project which the project might be able to support.**

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A joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC Project- LINKING IN EU RESETTLEMENT - Linking the resettlement phases and local resettlement practitioners

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