



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Michael Wood	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Resettling Afghan evacuees – settlement support, COVID-19 and considering options to extend our response	Date to be published	5 August 2022

List of documents that have been proactively released		
Date	Title	Author
October 2021	Resettling Afghan evacuees – settlement support, COVID-19 and considering options to extend our response	Office of the Minister of Immigration
8 November 2021	Resettling Afghan evacuees – settlement support, COVID-19 and considering options to extend our response CAB-21-MIN-0454.01 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of international relations and confidential advice to government.

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Immigration

Chair, Cabinet Economic Development Committee

Three-year Refugee Quota Programme (2022/23 to 2024/25)

Proposal

1. This paper seeks decisions on the international regional allocations and subcategories for the next three-year Refugee Quota Programme (2022/23 to 2024/25, years ending June). I propose that the international regional allocation and subcategories are adjusted in consideration of the refugee resettlement priorities identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the international humanitarian commitments of the New Zealand Government.

Executive Summary

2. I am proposing changes to the regional allocations and the subcategories of the Refugee Quota Programme for the 2022/23 to 2024/25 cycle.
3. New Zealand's Refugee Quota Programme contributes to New Zealand's fulfilment of our international humanitarian commitments and supports UNHCR and the international community in providing protection to refugees who are not able to return safely to their home country. Refugee resettlement provides an opportunity for government to work with local communities to build social cohesion and improve the wellbeing of our communities, further enhancing an international reputation in this area we can be proud of.
4. In 2019, Cabinet agreed to increase the Refugee Quota Programme from 1000 to 1500 places per year, from July 2020 [SWC-18-MIN-0131]. However, as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 on the Refugee Quota Programme's operations and New Zealand's border restrictions, we have been unable to realise this increase [CAB-21-MIN-0189]. The Government aims to resettle 1,500 refugees per year from 2022/23 onwards and Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is working with communities, settlement support services and government agencies to prepare for resettlement.
5. In 2010, the Cabinet Committee on Domestic and Security Coordination (DES) agreed to the introduction of a rolling three-year Refugee Quota Programme [DES Min (10) 2/3]. The current cycle will expire in June 2022. Cabinet decisions are therefore required on the international regional allocations and the subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme for the next three-year cycle which will commence on 1 July 2022.
6. Regional allocations are set within the Refugee Quota Programme which align with UNHCR's priorities and New Zealand's international commitments. The international regional allocations of the Refugee Quota Programme are currently focused on the Asia-Pacific region, with 50 per cent allocated to that region, 20 per cent allocated to the Americas region, and 15 per cent allocated to each of the Middle East and Africa regions. Global refugee resettlement need remains high, with the majority of the refugees located in the Middle East and Africa regions.

7. To respond to changing refugee resettlement demands, specifically a decrease in demand for resettlement of Colombian refugees from the Americas region, I propose that Cabinet decreases the international regional allocation for the Americas region to 10 per cent, which allows for an increase to the regional allocations for the Middle East and Africa regions to 20 per cent each.
8. Within the Refugee Quota there are also a number of subcategories. I am proposing the following changes from the last three-year cycle due to operational developments in the last three years:
 - 8.1. removing the HIV/AIDS allocation within the medical conditions and disabilities subcategory, as within our broader immigration policy settings HIV/AIDS is no longer considered a high-cost medical condition. This means that refugees with HIV/AIDS can be eligible for a place within the quota based on their protection needs as identified by UNHCR. I propose leaving the limit on places allocated to the medical conditions and disabilities subcategory as up to 75 places per year.
 - 8.2. increasing the limit on places set aside for urgent/emergency resettlement from up to 35 places per year to up to 100 places per year, which will increase New Zealand's ability to respond to UNHCR priority urgent or emergency referrals to resettle refugees whose protection needs arise from imminent life-threatening situations.
9. Following the Taliban taking power in Afghanistan, in November 2021 Cabinet agreed to allocate places for Afghan refugees under the Refugee Quota Programme, beginning in 2023/24 [CBC-21-MIN-0122]. UNHCR have advised that they have capacity to refer Afghan refugees from 2022/23. I therefore propose bringing forward places set aside for Afghan refugees under the quota to 2022/23, and using a phased approach so 200 places are allocated in 2022/23, 250 places in 2023/24 and 300 places in 2024/25 to match UNHCR referral capacity and to support well managed settlement across communities in New Zealand.
10. In February 2022 Cabinet agreed that New Zealand will continue to set aside 150 places per year for a three-year period to resettle refugees who have been subject to Australia's offshore processing legislation (both in Nauru and onshore in Australia) subject to UNHCR referral International relations [CAB-22-MIN-0031]. International relations New Zealand and Australian officials are working to finalise the New Zealand/Australia Refugee Resettlement Arrangement starting from 1 July 2022 and ending on 30 June 2025.
11. Places allocated to the subcategories for large-scale refugee crisis situations and women at risk were both doubled when the number of places under the Refugee Quota Programme were set to increase from 1000 to 1500 places per year from 2020/21. I propose that the number of places allocated to each of these subcategories remains unchanged for the next cycle (200 +/- 10% places per year for large-scale refugee crisis situations and at least 150 places per year for women at risk).
12. We have not received a UNHCR request for further action on Ukraine to date, however the use of the large-scale refugee crisis situation places could include Ukraine should there be a coordinated call from UNHCR. I will receive advice on the relative priorities for the use of these places 2022/23 shortly.

13. The remainder of places available under the Refugee Quota will continue to be allocated to the general protection subcategory (including family reunification).

Background

14. New Zealand works with UNHCR and the international community to find durable protection solutions for refugees who are not able to return safely to their home country. New Zealand’s Refugee Quota Programme is a demonstration of this commitment and provides the ability to resettle 1500 refugees per year in New Zealand.
15. The Refugee Quota Programme is comprised of refugees referred by UNHCR according to internationally accepted guidelines that take account of their priority physical and legal protection needs, as well as family reunification.
16. All UNHCR-referred cases considered for resettlement in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme are subject to a further full assessment and screening undertaken as part of the INZ decision-making process.
17. The Refugee Quota Programme is one stream within a broader refugee and humanitarian programme. Annex One contains more information on New Zealand’s refugee and humanitarian programmes, including the assessment and screening processes and reception programme for the Refugee Quota Programme.

Cabinet decisions on the next three-year Refugee Quota Programme are now required

18. Cabinet decisions for the next three years (2022/23 to 2024/25) are required on the international regional allocations, and the subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme.

I propose changes to the international regional allocations of the Refugee Quota Programme in response to changing resettlement needs

19. The Government sets the international regional allocations based on UNHCR priorities and New Zealand’s international commitments. I propose the following allocations for the next three-year Refugee Quota:

Table One: Proposed international regional allocations (percentages) within the Refugee Quota Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

<i>Region (of asylum)</i>	<i>2021/22 (current)</i>	<i>2022/23 to 2024/25 (proposed)</i>
Asia-Pacific	50	50
Americas	20	10
Middle East	15	20
Africa	15	20

20. To respond to changing refugee resettlement needs, I recommend the following adjustments to allocations:
 - 20.1. decreasing the international regional allocation for the Americas region to 10 per cent, reflecting a decrease in resettlement needs of Colombian refugees from the Americas region

- 20.2. increasing the allocations to for the Middle East and Africa regions to 20 per cent each given the high resettlement needs in these areas
- 20.3. continuing to allocate 50 per cent of places to the Asia-Pacific region, which enables New Zealand to support refugee hosting countries and responsibility sharing within our region.
21. Global refugee resettlement needs remain high, with the majority of refugees in the Middle East and Africa regions. The international regional allocations of the Refugee Quota Programme have not changed significantly since 2010, when it was refocussed to resettling refugees from the Asia-Pacific region. New Zealand has prioritised refugee resettlement from the international regions where access to protection solutions and supports for refugees has been challenging and has not included resettlement from Europe. The number of places that are set aside for large-scale refugee crisis situations has increased from 50 to 200 over the past 13 years (relative to increases in the total quota), and the offer to Australia of up to 150 places annually took effect in 2014.
22. The regional allocations are based on a refugee's region of asylum, rather than their region of nationality. For example, resettlement of a Syrian refugee from an Indonesian refugee camp would be considered part of the Asia-Pacific regional allocation. The regional allocations do not include the 200 places set aside for response to large-scale refugee crisis situations, places for urgent/emergency resettlement or the 150 places offered to Australia.
23. Officials sought UNHCR's views on the resettlement and priority needs over the next three years and the suggested changes to the regional allocations are in keeping with UNHCR's feedback. UNHCR are seeking New Zealand's ongoing engagement across priority areas. This includes emerging priorities as those occur across the three-year Refugee Quota cycle, within the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific regions working with other states to maximise the strategic impacts of refugee resettlement. UNHCR welcome New Zealand's continued support for resettlement in the Asia-Pacific region.

I propose changes to the subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme to reflect operational changes and decisions already taken by Cabinet in relation to Afghanistan and Australia

24. The proposed changes to the subcategories within the Refugee Quota Programme are shown below:

Table Two: Proposed subcategories of the Refugee Quota Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

Subcategories	Number of places per year			
	2021/22 (current)	2022/23 (proposed)	2023/24 (proposed)	2024/25 (proposed)
Medical conditions and disabilities	Up to 75 (including up to 20 for HIV/AIDS)	Up to 75	Up to 75	Up to 75
Emergency/urgent resettlement*	Up to 35	Up to 100	Up to 100	Up to 100
Afghan refugees	0	200	250	300

Places offered to Australia*	150	150	150	150
Places for large-scale refugee crisis situations*	200 (+/- 10%)	200	200	200
Women at risk	At least 150	At least 150	At least 150	At least 150
General protection, including places for family reunification	Remainder	Remainder	Remainder	Remainder
Total	1500	1500	1500	1500

*Not included in the regional allocation

I propose removing the limitation of the HIV/AIDs in the medical conditions and disabilities subcategory and increasing the allocation of emergency/urgent resettlement places within the Refugee Quota

25. I propose maintaining the number of places within the medical conditions and disabilities subcategory and remove the limitation on the annual places for refugees with HIV or AIDS. The subcategory for medical conditions and disabilities aligns with New Zealand’s humanitarian priorities. HIV and AIDS are no longer considered to impose significant costs or demands on the New Zealand health system, therefore, the rationale for restricting the number of refugees with HIV or AIDS in a particular financial year no longer exists.
26. I propose increasing the number of places available for emergency or urgent resettlement from up to 35 to up to 100 per year. The urgent/emergency priority referral resettlement places provide for referrals from any international region, based on a refugee’s acute vulnerabilities and/or specific protection needs. These places allow New Zealand to respond to UNHCR priority urgent or emergency referrals to resettle refugees whose protection needs arise from imminent life-threatening situations (such as refoulement, detention, requiring life-saving medical treatment).
27. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, New Zealand has demonstrated capacity to resettle refugees referred by UNHCR as urgent and emergency cases. UNHCR has recommended that New Zealand increases the allocation of places under the urgent resettlement subcategory, to enable UNHCR and New Zealand to respond quickly to unforeseen and exceptionally compelling situations for refugees with imminent protection needs.

I propose allocating places to Afghan refugees within the Refugee Quota from 2022/23

28. Following the Taliban taking power in Afghanistan, in November 2021 Cabinet agreed to allocate places for Afghan nationals under the Refugee Quota Programme, beginning in 2023/24 [CBC-21-MIN-0122]. I propose bringing forward places set aside for Afghan refugees under the quota to 2022/23 as UNHCR have indicated capacity to refer, and using a phased approach so that 200 places are allocated in 2022/23, 250 places in 2023/24 and 300 places in 2024/25 to match UNHCR referral capacity and to support well managed settlement across settlement locations in New Zealand.

29. UNHCR have recently advised officials that they are seeking to work with a number of resettlement countries (including New Zealand) to support the resettlement of Afghan refugees located in Iran (considered Asia-Pacific region) given the protracted nature of the refugee situation in that country and the priority protection needs of refugees requiring resettlement in a safe third country.
30. UNHCR will seek to refer Afghan refugees located in Iran to New Zealand in 2022/23 and have advised that these individuals are not likely to be recent arrivals to Iran unless they have priority protection needs.
31. New Zealand will be able to accommodate this request under the proposed regional allocations. However, given UNHCR's preparedness to refer refugees from 2022/23 bringing forward the allocation of places under the quota specifically for Afghan refugees will demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to working with the international community in response to the Afghanistan crisis.
32. It is envisaged that places for Afghan refugees will be set aside for three years, after which Afghan refugees could continue to be resettled under general category provisions.

Places for refugees subject to Australia's offshore processing legislation will continue to be set aside as per Cabinet decisions in February 2022

33. From 2014, Cabinet has set aside up to 150 places per year under the quota to resettle refugees who have been subject to Australia's offshore processing legislation. Australia is now seeking resettlement of these individuals and decisions were taken at Cabinet on 21 February 2022 regarding the parameters of the offer [CAB-22-MIN-0031].
34. Cabinet has agreed to resettle these individuals subject to UNHCR referral [REDACTED] International relations [REDACTED] The up to 150 places per year under the offer will be allocated for three years and then absorbed into the overall quota programme.
35. Cabinet agreed that those resettled under this offer will have the same access to family reunification as other refugees, meaning that any immediate family not being resettled at the same time as the primary refugee (due to being located in their home country or another third country) will be able to be resettled in New Zealand under the general protection places. These family members will not be subject to the time limits on the 150 places. [REDACTED] Constitutional conventions [REDACTED]
36. Any of the places left unused by those eligible under the offer and their immediate family will be reallocated to the quota based on the regional allocation percentages.

I propose maintaining the same number of places for large-scale refugee crisis situations and women at risk, and continuing to allocate the remainder of places to general protection and family reunification

37. I propose that the number of places allocated to the large-scale refugee crisis situations subcategory remains at 200 (+/-10%) per year for the next three-year cycle. The allocation for large-scale refugee crisis situations allows flexibility for the New Zealand Government to respond to situations as they arise. Places available under this subcategory were doubled from 100 (+/- 10%) to 200 (+/- 10%) when the overall quota was increased from 1000 to 1500 places.

38. To date, New Zealand has not received any formal request from UNHCR to resettle Ukraine refugees under the Refugee Quota Programme and we have not set aside any places for Ukraine refugees given our settlement capacity is limited to 1500 places per year. Places for large-scale refugee crisis situations could be allocated to Ukraine if UNHCR advise that doing so would be a priority.
39. Officials from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Foreign and Affairs and Trade (MFAT) will provide advice after the Refugee Quota has been set on the use of the large-scale refugee crisis situation places in 2022/23, following further discussions with UNHCR on current global priorities. Decisions will be jointly taken by the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the allocation of these places.
40. I propose maintaining the number of places allocated to the women at risk subcategory of at least 150 places. The women at risk subcategory exists to protect refugees who are particularly vulnerable, including women who are unaccompanied, pregnant, heads of household, disabled, or elderly. These women are generally in need of additional protection from, for example, abduction, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The number of places allocated to women at risk was doubled from at least 75 places to at least 150 places when the overall quota was increased from 1000 to 1500 places.
41. The remainder of places available under the Refugee Quota will continue to be allocated to general protection, which includes places for family reunification.

Consultation

42. MBIE consulted MFAT on the proposed recommended changes to the regional allocations and subcategories of the Refugee Quota Programme.
43. MFAT have advised that they are comfortable with the proposed regional allocations and subcategories. MFAT have noted that, in relation to the Americas region, while the resettlement needs of Colombian refugees have decreased, the situation in parts of the region remains volatile, particularly for those facing democratic challenges in Venezuela and Central America. This can be addressed through the 10 per cent allocation to the Americas when the Refugee Quota is operationalised.

Financial Implications

44. The proposals in this paper do not have any financial implications for the Refugee Quota Programme.
45. A Budget Bid has been submitted to meet higher costs for delivering the Refugee Quota Programme associated with COVID-19, which has impacted on travel costs and operations, and locating housing. If unsuccessful, INZ will provide further advice on the impact on the delivery of the Refugee Quota Programme.

Legislative Implications

46. The proposals in this paper do not have any legislative or regulatory implications.

Human Rights

47. The proposal is consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Publicity

48. Officials will work with my office to develop a communications strategy.

Proactive Release

49. MBIE will proactively release this Cabinet paper on its website within 30 business days of a decision being made by Cabinet. Proactive release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982 and MBIE's proactive release criteria.

Recommendations

50. The Minister of Immigration recommends that the Committee:

1. **Note** that Cabinet decisions on the next three-year Refugee Quota Programme (2022/23 to 2024/25) are required;
2. **Agree** to set the regional allocation of places within the Refugee Quota for 2022/23 to 2024/25, as follows:

<i>Region (of asylum)</i>	<i>2021/22 (current)</i>	<i>2022/23 to 2024/25</i>
Asia-Pacific	50	50
Americas	20	10
Middle East	15	20
Africa	15	20

3. **Agree** to the following subcategories and allocations within the Refugee Quota:

<i>Number of places per year</i>				
<i>Subcategories</i>	<i>2021/22 (current)</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>2024/25</i>
Medical conditions and disabilities	Up to 75 (including up to 20 for HIV/AIDS)	Up to 75	Up to 75	Up to 75
Emergency/urgent resettlement*	Up to 35	Up to 100	Up to 100	Up to 100
Afghan refugees	0	200	250	300
Places offered to Australia*	150	150	150	150
Places for large-scale refugee crisis situations*	200 (+/- 10%)	200 (+/- 10%)	200 (+/- 10%)	200 (+/- 10%)
Women at risk	At least 150	At least 150	At least 150	At least 150

General protection, including places for family reunification	Remainder	Remainder	Remainder	Remainder
<i>Total</i>	<i>1500</i>	<i>1500</i>	<i>1500</i>	<i>1500</i>

*Not included in the regional allocation

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Immigration

Annex One: New Zealand's Refugee and Humanitarian programmes

The Refugee Quota Programme is one part of New Zealand's broader refugee and humanitarian programmes, which also include 300 places each year (increasing to 600 from 2022/23) for refugee family reunification under the Refugee Family Support Category and 50 places per year for the next three years under the extended pilot of the Community Organisation Refugee Support Category. New Zealand also has a number of successful claims each year for refugee or protected status in New Zealand from onshore.

Refugee Quota selection processes

Refugees considered for resettlement through the Refugee Quota Programme are submitted to New Zealand by UNHCR according to prescribed resettlement guidelines. All UNHCR-referred refugee cases considered for resettlement in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota are subject to a further full assessment and screening undertaken as part of the INZ decision-making process, which includes:

- An offshore interview with an INZ official that focuses on credibility, risk and settlement
- An immigration risk assessment by INZ to assess for any reputational risk to New Zealand
- A security check by the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service
- A biometric check through sharing fingerprints with our Migration 5 partners (collaboration on immigration matters between New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom), and
- An immigration health assessment.

Cases that do not meet the Government's agreed Refugee Quota Programme, New Zealand's relevant immigration policies, security, Migration 5 checks and risk assessment are declined.

Reception and settlement processes for successful outcomes

Prior to arriving in New Zealand, INZ provides all refugees resettled under the Refugee Quota Programme with information on New Zealand law, employment, housing, health services, education, daily living, immigration, citizenship, English language education. In addition, regional factsheets are provided on the city or town in which each refugee family is likely to be settled.

Upon arrival, quota refugees participate in the reception programme at Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa (the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre). The programme supports the outcomes in the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy and has been developed with a variety of agencies, including the Ministries of Health, Social Development and Education, and the Police. The programme builds on the information provided to refugees prior to their arrival in New Zealand, and includes sessions on Taha Māori (Māori perspectives), living in a multicultural society, New Zealand Police and the law, moving into the community, education, health (including parenting and healthy families), and English language learning. Children participate in schooling to prepare them to enter New Zealand's education system on their move into the community.

The Government contracts the provision of settlement support for quota refugees during their first year in the community, including coordinating a community orientation programme and linking quota refugees to their community and the services they need to support their settlement.