

**EU-FRANK**

Facilitating Resettlement  
and Refugee Admission  
through New Knowledge



# EU-FRANK Study Tour to Kenya: Canada and the United States of America Operational Resettlement Work

Kenya, 11-15<sup>th</sup> March 2019

The EU-FRANK project is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)



## Background

The EU-FRANK project is the European Union Specific Action Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge. It is led by the Swedish Migration Agency in partnership with Belgium, Italy, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, European Asylum Support Office (EASO), International Catholic Migration Commission, International Organization for Migration, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and is funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The project started in January 2016, with its activities being officially launched at the kick-off meeting in Stockholm in October 2016, and will end in June 2020. The activities within EU-FRANK – targeted research, development of working materials, and development of resettlement training for practitioners within organizations and governmental institutions within EU Member States – will result, i.a. in new approaches in the field of resettlement and a training module within the training curriculum of the EASO.

Canada has been an active participant in the EU-FRANK project and has hosted two previous EU-FRANK conferences, one in May 2018 on monitoring and evaluation and another in September 2018 for heads of EU member state resettlement missions. The United States has also been an active participant in several of the previous project activities.

## Mission Report

The group participating in the study tour consisted of Kenyan-based representatives from International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Canadian and U.S. governments, as well as external representatives from EU Member States (MS), international organizations, and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Participants were given a unique opportunity to observe the resettlement work of Canada and the U.S. in Nairobi, Kenya, and at Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya near the border with South Sudan. Over four days, participants toured resettlement facilities and learned about both governments' operational resettlement work in the region, including their cooperation with UNHCR and IOM. During the tour, participants gained insight into two models of refugee resettlement to inform the development of MS resettlement programs and the work of EASO in supporting MS initiatives. The following report briefly describes the program of the study tour and concludes with a series of recommendations prompted by participants' reflections and insights.

### Day 1: UNHCR Admissions Processes and US Operations

*Presenters: Muasa, Nkirote, Ginsberg – UNHCR  
Bartlett, Muttersbaugh, Rehberg, Won, Ortega – RSC Africa (U.S.)*

The study tour began with a presentation at the Nairobi UNHCR Office by representatives of UNHCR's Regional Service Centre Resettlement Hub (UNHCR-Hub) and UNHCR Kenya Branch Office Resettlement and Registration focal points. The presentation outlined UNHCR's functions and activities as they relate to submissions to third countries for refugee resettlement, which include: coordination, monitoring of statistics and quota matching, pre-deployment training, and verification of refugees. UNHCR plans resettlement submissions a year in advance using resettlement commitments and projections by destination countries. Participants learned that one of the most significant issues that UNHCR faces is the unpredictability of many destination countries' resettlement commitments, which can change from year to year. The

Resettlement Hub currently has 465,000 open cases – 10% of which have special considerations such as medical or psychosocial needs. There are approximately 5 million refugees in the East, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes regions. Resettlement is a solution for less than 1% of the refugee population.

Next, at the U.S.-funded Resettlement Support Centre (RSC) for Africa, participants heard from officials from the U.S. Department of State, Church World Service, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, and Center for Disease Control representatives, as they discussed the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and the various stages of processing refugee applicants undergo prior to arriving in the U.S. Through the USRAP, the U.S. has admitted more than 3.3 million refugees since 1975 – more than any other country in the world. In its long tradition of resettlement, the U.S. historically resettled 50,000 to 70,000 refugees per year, with the ceiling of refugee admissions being determined by the President. This fiscal year (October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019) the refugee admissions ceiling is 30,000. The handling of refugee cases via the USRAP is a complex, multi-year process carried out by intragovernmental and interagency network with overall program coordination led by the Department of State. The U.S. funds and manages seven RSCs worldwide, including the Nairobi-based RSC, which conducts resettlement activities in Africa to prepare eligible refugee applications for U.S. resettlement consideration. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Church World Service holds the cooperative agreement with the Department of State for RSC Africa.

## **Day 2: Field Visit to Kakuma Refugee Camp**

*Presenters: Dara, Mutambo, Kiyong'a – Government of Kenya  
Cansizoglu, Kuzucu, Ahouansou – UNHCR  
Alathur – IOM*

Participants, together with Nairobi-based staff from UNHCR, IOM, and Church World Service, flew to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northwest Kenya to observe refugee processing activities taking place in a camp setting and to understand the conditions for refugees in a Kenyan refugee camp. The delegation visited the UNHCR compound, IOM offices, and the Kalobeyei Settlement. Kenyan government officials and the camp manager briefed participants about the process of resettlement of refugees in other African countries and issues concerning integration in these cases.

Participants then visited the nearby UNHCR compound where they learned about recent updates to processes and innovations that UNHCR uses to improve the resettlement process and maintain program integrity. Presenters described the development of web-based application Kiosk to Access Services and Information (KASI), which allows refugees to view the biographical data and personal details UNHCR and implementing partners have on file for them. AIM (Application for Integrated Management in Protection Solutions) is a tool UNHCR resettlement staff use to algorithmically identify the most vulnerable refugees in need of resettlement and manage the refugee data that becomes part of UNHCR's referral submission to a third country resettlement program. AIM automates the identification of refugees for resettlement rather than relying on UNHCR resettlement officers to identify the most vulnerable refugees, as is the standard procedure across Africa.

Participants also visited an IOM office, where IOM staff briefed them on its facilities, which include twenty-five interview rooms, classrooms, and advanced medical facilities. At the Kalobeyei Settlement, participants spoke with refugees, observing their living conditions and how the refugee and host communities live side by side.

### **Day 3: Canadian Operations and IOM**

*Presenters: O’Keefe – High Commission of Canada, Nairobi  
Asante, Kimani, Seymour, Marwan – IOM*

This day focused on informing participants about the Canadian government’s refugee-related operations in the region, in coordination with IOM. In the morning, participants arrived at the High Commission of Canada in Nairobi, where an official briefed them on Canada’s resettlement programme, including the eligibility and admissibility criteria that factor into the final decision, and casework in Kenya. The presenter described two ways in which applicants can access resettlement: through private sponsorships or through referral organizations like the UNHCR. The presentation concluded with an outline of complementary pathways for refugees that are meant to supplement basic resettlement programmes: family reunification, education, and the Economic Mobility Pathways Project.

IOM staff gave participants an overview of its Medical Health Assessment Centre before departing for the IOM offices. There, participants learned about IOM’s operations in the region, including refugee resettlement. IOM staff described the steps necessary to support resettlement out of Kenya and identified several best practices, such as conducting interviews close to refugees’ residences, biometric verification of identity, and expedited departures for vulnerable or protection cases.

### **Day 4: Pre-Departure and Cultural Orientation Activities**

*Presenters: Bartlett, Rehberg, Tsibulsky – RSC Africa (U.S.)  
Njuki – IOM (Canadian resettlement assistance)  
O’Keefe, Hiles – High Commission of Canada, Nairobi*

On the final day of the study tour, participants learned about how the U.S. and Canadian governments prepare and assist refugees for departure towards their new homes. The morning session took place at the U.S.-funded and -managed RSC for Africa, where staff briefed participants on the United States’ pre-departure and cultural orientation classes. In addition to receiving a briefing, participants observed a cultural orientation class in session with refugees in the USRAP pipeline, and interacted with cultural orientation trainers in a mock classroom with training materials. The presenters outlined the topics introduced in the classes, describing them as fundamental in informing refugees of the processes and systems that will impact their resettlement, as well as in managing expectations of their lives in the U.S.

Next, participants went to the High Commission of Canada, where IOM briefed participants about the Canadian program for pre-departure resettlement assistance, Cultural Orientation Abroad. The objective of both models is the successful resettlement of refugees in their new home communities, including language learning and employment. Other pre-departure training issues common to both the U.S. and Canada are psychosocial considerations, dispelling myths about migration, managing expectations about resettlement, considerations for pre-literate students, and addressing lower levels of familiarity with computers and mobile phones.

## Concluding Session: Reflections from Participants

To conclude the study tour, participants shared their learning experiences and key takeaways. Participants focused on resettlement processing and best practices, with several emphasizing the need for better coordination and collaboration. One participant referenced UNHCR's three-year resettlement and complementary pathway strategy as an important initiative to improve resettlement coordination. Participants also agreed on the need to collaborate on resources. All study tour participants expressed appreciation for the work by the Canadian and U.S. governments, as well as IOM and UNHCR representatives for their expert involvement in the program, and for facilitating an open exchange on the challenges and opportunities in the field of refugee resettlement.

## Next Steps:

Participants expressed appreciation for the study tour as a space for the exchanges of knowledge and best practices. The following are recommendations by the study tour's conveners, EU-FRANK and the governments of the U.S. and Canada, for concrete next steps:

- 1. Create products to better communicate the knowledge and insights gained during the study tour.** These products include a comprehensive report for internal use, a short summary for public distribution, and a presentation for public consumption. Participants agreed to make use of these products to inform the governments of their respective countries of the information received during the study tour. The comprehensive report should also be shared with EU resettlement countries with missions in Nairobi to improve coordination and resource-sharing on resettlement-related activities.
- 2. Explore mechanisms for better coordination of resettlement commitments among states.** Despite the recognized benefits of responsive and stable resettlement targets set in a timely manner, the reality of states' shifting commitments highlights the need for better coordination between states and international organizations in leveraging resettlement resources, including – among other resources – trained interpreters, administrative and logistics support, and interview space in reasonable proximity to both urban refugees and those in camps.
- 3. Continue to seek opportunities for and expand the scope of both formal and informal exchanges in the fields of refugee resettlement and integration.** Feedback from participants of the study tour emphasized the importance of having more opportunities to facilitate exchanges and collaboration. Expanding both the frequency and scope – by including more states and other partners in resettlement study tours and exchanges would be an important next step.