

Global Refugee
Sponsorship Initiative

Joint Statement

Ministers from the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative States Network (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain) underline their support for community-based refugee sponsorship at the first Global Refugee Forum.

December 2019

1. On the occasion of the world's first Global Refugee Forum we, Ministers responsible for refugee resettlement and/or integration in our respective countries, come together to share that we have introduced or announced community-based refugee sponsorship programs or pilot programs in our respective countries.

2. We recognize the continued need to demonstrate solidarity with those states hosting large numbers of refugees, and for more resettlement spaces and complementary pathways to increase refugee access to protection and solutions; contribute to comprehensive refugee responses; and improve integration.

3. Taking note of the [Joint Ministerial Statement of July 16, 2018](#), and the [Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative \(GRSI\)](#) as a co-sponsor of the third-country solutions theme of this forum, we support the GRSI's work and recognize that a growing number of countries are piloting, implementing or considering community-based refugee sponsorship, including our own countries.

4. We are convinced of the potential and demonstrated positive outcomes of this model for building welcoming and inclusive communities, and for creating additional protection spaces in countries where it has been implemented with success. We acknowledge that refugee sponsorship allows groups of individuals, communities, and organizations to directly engage as a team in refugee resettlement and integration efforts.

5. We recognize that tremendous compassion and a desire to alleviate human suffering exist within our national communities.

6. In partnership with government, community-based refugee sponsorship leverages this goodwill by allowing sponsors to commit to providing emotional and integration support to help newly arrived refugees adapt to life in a new country. Such programs have already offered protection and durable solutions to some of the world's most at-risk refugees, many of whom are now thriving in their new communities.

7. On December 17, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), which paved the way for the UNHCR-led, multi-stakeholder [Three-Year \(2019-2021\) Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#). The Global Compact on Refugees recognizes the value of community-based sponsorship programs and calls for expansion of such programs in support of the Three-Year Strategy goals of growing

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resettlement; advancing complementary pathways; and promoting welcoming and inclusive societies.

8. With this in mind, we are pleased to announce the formation of a GRSI States Network. This international collaboration, co-chaired by Canada and the United Kingdom, will allow us to collectively promote and support community-based sponsorship programs for refugees. This approach aligns with the Three-Year Strategy call for state-to-state engagement to expand third-country solutions with the support of champion states.

9. As members of this States Network, we commit to encouraging states that are interested in launching new programs; sharing best practices internationally; and facilitating technical and policy exchanges on the use of sponsorship in refugee protection. While thousands of refugees have been given a new home through community-based refugee sponsorship globally, we hope to see this number grow in the years to come.

10. We call upon members of the international community to consider community-based refugee sponsorship as a model for creating additional protection spaces; improving integration outcomes; and strengthening our own communities. We invite others to join a growing cohort of countries, working in partnership with civil society, in offering a warm and supportive welcome to refugees.

11. We, as members of the GRSI States Network, offer our friendship and support in this endeavour, standing ready to answer questions and to provide guidance throughout the entire lifecycle of refugee sponsorship.

12. We also call upon private citizens, community groups, businesses and philanthropists to partner with us to ensure that community-based refugee sponsorship programs succeed and grow. Together we can provide support for refugees and create strong and vibrant communities built around our common humanity.

Endorsed by:

Felipe Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Argentine Republic

Maria Hilda Marsiaj Pinto, National Secretary of Justice, Brazil

The Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Canada

David Stanton T.D., Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Integration and Immigration, Ireland

Hon. Iain Lees-Galloway, New Zealand Minister of Immigration

Consuelo Rumí Ibáñez, State Secretary for Migration, Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, Spain

Quotes

“Brazil maintains its doors open to refugees. The voluntary internal relocation of Venezuelans is a success case that inspires us to resettle refugees from other nationalities. We are currently preparing to launch Brazil’s first-ever community sponsorship initiative.”

- *Maria Hilda Marsiaj Pinto, National Secretary of Justice, Brazil*

“Canada has resettled more than 300,000 refugees through its Community Sponsorship Program. Hundreds of thousands of ordinary Canadians have come together to welcome refugees under this special program, which has transformed lives and enriched communities. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of community refugee sponsorship in Canada, we are thrilled to be partnering with other countries to share our experiences with how to harness the capacity and willingness of citizens to help those in need. We are proud to be working in concert with a growing number of states and their civil society partners to create more protection pathways for refugees.”

- *The Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Canada*

“Welcoming a refugee family is a serious undertaking and has proven to be hugely rewarding and beneficial for both communities and resettled refugee families who have come to Ireland. Community Sponsorship enables sponsor groups to provide not only practical supports to refugee families but also extends the hand of friendship and a “Céad míle fáilte” (a hundred thousand welcomes) - Ireland is proud to be involved in promoting complementary pathways for refugee resettlement.”

- *David Stanton T.D., Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Integration and Immigration, Ireland*

“New Zealand is committed to working with the UNHCR and the international community to find innovative and durable protection solutions for refugees. As part of that commitment we piloted the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, which enabled community organisations to sponsor refugees and to actively support them to settle in their communities in New Zealand. The approach was aimed to bring positive social, economic and cultural benefits for the resettled refugees and the community as a whole. Although the pilot was small in numbers of refugees sponsored, what has been incredibly encouraging to see is the positive impact the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category has had, in a short time, on sponsored refugees’ lives, the community organisation sponsors and the wider community who are supporting refugee settlement in New Zealand.”

- *Hon. Iain Lees-Galloway – New Zealand Minister of Immigration*

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“The Spanish government, together with the regional government of the Basque Country, and with the collaboration of the GRSI, is developing a community sponsorship programme, building on the solidarity with refugees shown by the people of Spain.

This programme presents not only the chance to strengthen resettlement and refugee integration in Spain, but also a unique opportunity to advance coordination among central, regional and local authorities to welcome refugees.

So far, the implementation of the programme is being successful; therefore, the Spanish government is working with other regions, as the Valencian Autonomous Regions, in order to extent this model to those who have expressed an interest in community sponsorship programmes.

We are hopeful that implementing these new programmes will bring positive social, economic and cultural benefits both for the refugees and the host community.”

- Consuelo Rumí Ibáñez, State Secretary for Migration, Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, Spain