



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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Operational Guidelines on Facilitating Family Reunification for Persons in Need of International Protection

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	<u>Purpose</u>	3
2.	<u>Scope</u>	3
3.	<u>Rationale</u>	3
4.	<u>Legal foundation</u>	3
5.	<u>UNHCR's role and engagement</u>	4
6.	<u>Operational framework for UNHCR engagement</u>	5
6.1	<u>Types of activities for UNHCR's engagement</u>	5
	PILLAR I: Gathering evidence	5
	PILLAR II: Advocacy for systems change	6
	PILLAR III: Policy and knowledge building	7
	PILLAR IV: Working with and coordinating partners	8
	PILLAR V: Exceptional direct case work/support	10
6.2	<u>Relevant UNHCR functions</u>	12
6.3	<u>Planning and reporting for family reunification activities</u>	13
7.	<u>References</u>	14
8.	<u>Monitoring</u>	14
9.	<u>Contact</u>	14
10.	<u>Dates</u>	14
11.	<u>History</u>	14
12.	<u>Placement</u>	14

ANNEXES

1)	Terms and Definitions
2)	Guide to UNHCR's position on dependency and family relationships in the context of solutions
3)	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
4)	Bibliography

1. PURPOSE

These Operational Guidelines reaffirm the priority afforded to family reunification by UNHCR and provide an operational framework to inform UNHCR's engagement at country, regional and headquarters (HQ) level.

They update and replace the [UNHCR Note \(and associated Guidance\) on Family Reunification, July 1983](#), and should be read in conjunction with UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection (upcoming), and UNHCR Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways (upcoming). They build on existing UNHCR guidance documents in relation to [child protection](#), family reunification, and relevant UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusions.¹

2. SCOPE

The recommendations provided by the Guidelines are non-mandatory, but the positions represented herein are highly recommended. These Guidelines are limited in scope to family reunification for persons in need of international protection (referred to in this document as "refugees") through State-managed family reunification procedures² and the cross-border reunification of families separated during flight. They do not provide guidance on voluntary repatriation or other pathways facilitating family unity.³ The reunification of families where dependency between departing and receiving family members is not established falls outside the scope of these Guidelines.⁴

These Guidelines are primarily aimed at personnel in protection and solutions, registration, information management and external engagement functions, as well as personnel managing, overseeing and supporting protection delivery. They can be shared with partners and officials from national and local authorities in support of a collaborative approach.

3. RATIONALE

These Guidelines seek to harmonize UNHCR's approach to family reunification, particularly across countries of departure and receiving countries, and support greater coordination between operations. They equip UNHCR personnel to support States in ensuring unrestricted access to refugee family reunification and mitigating unsafe onward movements.

4. LEGAL FOUNDATION

Family unity is a human right.⁵ Respect for the right to family unity and family life requires States to refrain from conduct which would result in family separation, but also to take measures maintaining family unity and, where needed, ensuring the reunification of separated families.⁶

¹ [Executive Committee Conclusion No 9, 1977, No 24, 1981, No 88, 1999.](#)

² Family reunification procedures are: The legal, rights-based and State-provided avenues that allow refugees to access their right to family unity regulated by national, regional and international law. Family reunification procedures include individuals with nuclear and extended family relations in line with the principle of dependency which ensures that family members—who may not be close family members but are nevertheless dependants—are able to enjoy the right to family life and family unity.

³ See [UNHCR/OG/2022/02 - Operational Guidelines on Voluntary Repatriation](#), 3 November 2022, Section 7.1. For additional guidance on cases involving children, consult the UNHCR Best Interests Procedure Guidelines 2021. See also the [Resettlement Handbook](#) and upcoming GRSI guidance on private sponsorship pathways.

⁴ See Annex 2.

⁵ Article 16 UDHR, Article 23 ICCPR & Article 10 ICESCR, Part 1 para. 16 European Social Charter, Article 17(1) American Convention on Human Rights, Article 18(1) African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 18(1) African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

⁶ See Annex 4 for list of legal articles and consult the upcoming UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection.

The obligation to facilitate family reunification sits with all countries—the country of origin, intended departure and receiving country.⁷

Family members of refugees (officially recognized in the receiving country), who are also outside their country of origin, often have international protection needs of their own or would be considered derivative of their immediate family members with formal recognition. Therefore, requirements imposed on them should ensure their international protection needs are fully met throughout the procedure.

5. UNHCR'S ROLE AND ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring access to family reunification for refugees is first and foremost the responsibility of States.

States often have separate or adapted legislative frameworks to facilitate family reunification of refugees with additional flexibilities built in.

However, family reunification procedures for refugees often suffer from shortcomings. When seeking to reunite, refugee families are subjected to immigration system requirements that may not take into consideration their international protection needs and vulnerabilities. These may relate to requests for passports, documentary evidence of relationships and in-person interviews in another country.

National family reunification procedures should fully recognize the refugee character of the family members seeking reunification and guarantee protection throughout the procedure. As the agency mandated with refugee protection, UNHCR should advocate for protection-sensitive procedures and support States in making them accessible to refugees.

Where State practice does not ensure access to family reunification in a timely and efficient manner, UNHCR engages with civil society, including refugee-led organizations (RLOs), law firms, private sector, international organizations (such as the IOM) and others to identify, build the capacity and coordinate the support provided to refugee families.

UNHCR does not routinely provide direct case support for the purposes of family reunification. Where national support structures are not established or there are political or other limitations, and those seeking refugee family reunification encounter significant barriers, UNHCR can exceptionally step in to provide case support directly (see section 6.1.V below).



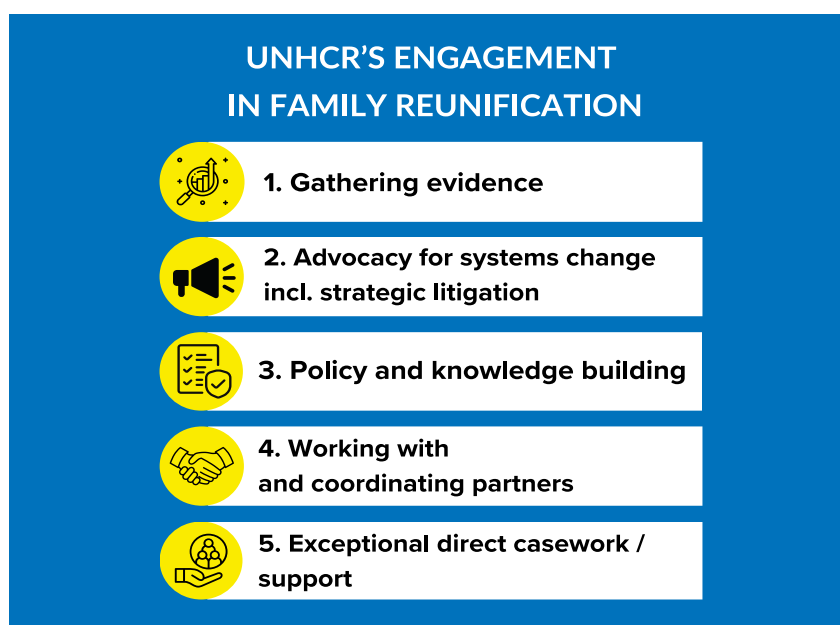
⁷ See Annex 1 for definitions of departure and receiving country. For further discussion on the legal basis for family reunification, refer to the upcoming UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection.

6. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNHCR ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Types of activities for UNHCR's engagement

Although family reunification procedures are mainly the responsibility of States, UNHCR has a role to play in safeguarding refugees' fundamental right to family unity and enhancing refugee access to family reunification procedures. Close coordination between operations in departure and receiving countries and regional bureaux is essential to ensure systemic efficacy of UNHCR's family reunification work.

UNHCR structures its work on family reunification in both departure and receiving countries around the five pillars below. These pillars should be read as sequential; in order to build a comprehensive approach to advocacy, policy and knowledge building, and partnerships, it is necessary to first understand the landscape of needs, gaps, hurdles and actors working on family reunification. This understanding of context will then inform the degree and nature of operational engagement under each of these pillars. A gradual approach to increasing engagement in family reunification may be considered (see also Section 6.3 on Planning and Reporting).



PILLAR I: GATHERING EVIDENCE

Data collection is key to informing advocacy around systems change. **UNHCR triages the information it collects with partner data and legal framework analyses [including in the [Rights Mapping and Analysis Platform \(RiMAP\)](#)] to influence authorities in making the necessary systemic changes to facilitate access to family reunification.**

Data on family separation and status of family reunification applications, including location of separated family members, their legal status, documentation or data concerning family reunification applications, etc., should be regularly recorded and updated in ProGres v4.⁸ Verification exercises, participatory assessments, community forums, and individual counselling sessions all provide opportunities for the collection of relevant population data, including family links in third countries. Self-service modalities [such as kiosks, my.unhcr.org scheduling tools, Safe Mobility Offices (SMOs), and other tools that will form a part of the upcoming Digital Gateway] should also include specific fields to improve refugees' ability to record, access and update their information.

⁸ See [UNHCR Operational Guidance Note: Complementary Pathways for Admission to Third Countries Data Recording in proGres v4 and v3](#).

Partners working with communities, and particularly RLOs and diaspora groups, often have information on family ties or could include routine questions to capture this data in interactions and outreach. Data sharing agreements (DSAs)⁹ can also improve efficiency by streamlining information-sharing between UNHCR and partners.

PILLAR II: ADVOCACY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

The analysis of trends and shortcomings of legal systems feeds into an evidence-based advocacy strategy developed and implemented by UNHCR in receiving States and globally.

UNHCR develops concrete messaging and advocacy strategies to target specific components of State procedures that are hindering or preventing the reunification of refugee families. Interventions through strategic judicial litigation and advocacy for legislative/policy change may take into consideration commitments made by States in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), Global Refugee Forum (GRF), and High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM).¹⁰

Developing communications products targeting States, entities within the broader protection regime, and the wider public can be a powerful form of advocacy, influencing public opinion and policy. This is particularly true of communications featuring storytelling from refugees with experience of family separation and/or reunification.

Some key global advocacy lines include:¹¹

- ➔ Family unity and (by extension) access to family reunification are basic human rights and must be protected in all circumstances.
- ➔ Family reunification is a rights-based pathway that is non-discretionary and States bear the main responsibility to ensure the right to family unity is effectively protected.
- ➔ Beneficiaries of international protection should have equal access to family reunification as refugees.
- ➔ Applications for family reunification should be processed in a positive, humane and expeditious manner.
- ➔ States should adopt a broad and flexible approach to the term “family”.
- ➔ Reunification should be facilitated with the least possible delay.
- ➔ Access to legal assistance (where required) and to appeal should be ensured.
- ➔ State family reunification procedures should be practically and realistically accessible.
- ➔ Any relevant exit procedures should be waived or expedited for individuals seeking to depart for the purposes of family reunification.

⁹ See [UNHCR General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy \(GDPP\)](#).

¹⁰ To be read in conjunction with the UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection.

¹¹ [UNHCR recommendations on flexible approaches to family reunification procedures in Europe](#), February 2023.

PILLAR III: POLICY AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

(a) Policy and guidance

UNHCR's supervisory responsibility is set out in paragraph 8(a) of its Statute, and in Article 35 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and Article II of the 1967 Protocol.¹² **Monitoring State compliance with refugee-specific international obligations, including respect of family unity, and intervening where the regulatory system does not offer adequate protection of refugees' rights, is a compulsory function of the Office.** In line with these, UNHCR is the primary agency to issue, disseminate and monitor implementation of relevant policy and guidance on refugee family reunification. UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection (forthcoming) will provide the policy framework for legal standards and engagement in this area.

Responsibility for monitoring State compliance and practices, context-specific challenges and associated risks, at the local level sits with UNHCR country operations and regional bureaux. This, in turn, will inform support offered to States to overcome hurdles identified, and inform targeted advocacy.

(b) Knowledge and skills development

Separated family members may come to the attention of UNHCR at any point of contact and/or through the community. Personnel who have direct contact with persons with and for whom we work should have an understanding of basic protection principles relevant to preserving/restoring family unity, and the tools to safeguard those. **UNHCR operations that directly deliver protection, solutions and assistance services should include relevant content on family unity within internal inter-unit trainings.** Based on an analysis of the protection context, capacity gaps and needs, this may include:

- impact of family separation;
- legal components of family reunification;
- relevant applicable legal frameworks for family reunification through national procedures;
- existing support systems (of partners) to help families;
- relevant UNHCR, national and partner policy and guidance.

(c) Communications with Communities (CwC)

Communicating with refugee and diaspora communities on family reunification promotes knowledge and agency by ensuring access to accurate information on eligibility criteria and reliable sources of support. Refugees within communities should be engaged as agents of information-sharing and such networks within countries of departure and diaspora should be encouraged and supported. Offices may consider developing a communications plan including some or all of the following or including these elements in broader communications on rights, protection procedures and services:

- **harnessing opportunities to communicate with communities on family reunification**, such as through regular community forums, meetings with community leaders, and participatory assessments, to disseminate information, identify potential beneficiaries/support needed for family reunification, in line with [UNHCR's Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People \(AAP\)](#)¹³; RLOs should be consulted in the design and delivery of key messages around family reunification;
- **sharing information on procedures and available support** (including through State webpages, on help.unhcr.org, or partner platforms);

¹² Which obliges all Contracting States to "cooperate with UNHCR in the exercise of its functions and ... facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of this Convention".

¹³ See [UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#) and [UNHCR Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People \(AAP\)](#).

- **developing specific tools to disseminate information**, such as WhatsApp channels, adjusted to the needs of the refugee population and with the engagement of refugee and diaspora communities to ensure relevance;
- **identifying refugees departing/arriving on family reunification** (who are willing to share their story) and flagging them to External Relations/Communications colleagues to produce [stories](#), [videos](#), etc.

For more ideas on the role of communications and ways to include family reunification in communication plans, please refer to the upcoming Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways (section 6).

PILLAR IV: WORKING WITH AND COORDINATING PARTNERS

(a) Types of partners and their roles

Supporting refugee family reunification does not require UNHCR to set up parallel structures. Instead, it relies on tapping into the existing resources that are best placed to support with identification of individuals, information provision on family reunification procedures, and referrals to actors providing legal and administrative support. To do so, UNHCR:

- identifies partners best suited to undertake such activities/ or already working in the area, including refugee- and community-led organizations;
- develops and maintains resources and frameworks for information provision (such as help.unhcr.org);
- works with partners to develop their capacity, and creates a culture of support and learning;
- liaises between relevant partners engaged in family reunification work in countries of departure and receiving countries;
- supports fundraising efforts and network building activities;
- harnesses communication opportunities to promote partnerships and highlight partner contributions.

Partners in facilitation of family reunification may include inter alia:

PARTNER	ROLE
STATES	Responsible for family reunification. Often various departments/ministries are in charge of separate components of the family reunification procedure as it sits between asylum and migration. Achieving family reunification outcomes requires enhanced coordination between various government bodies to ensure consistency in approaching refugee family reunification cases.
RED CROSS RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT/ ICRC	ICRC has a unique function of particular relevance to family reunification—its family tracing capacity. As an agency mandated to support tracing in conflict situations, ICRC is key in reunifying families. The national offices of the Red Cross and the Federation also play key roles in supporting family reunification applications and processes on the ground.
IOM	IOM has specific experience in migration facilitation. On family reunification, it has been providing administrative support, particularly as contracted by the German Federal Foreign Office under the Family Assistance Programme (FAP) . Given this experience, IOM would be an asset to include in conversations around systems building. It may also be valuable to consider how the role of IOM could be expanded as a provider of migration assistance to refugees in the context of enabling family reunification.

PARTNER	ROLE
RLOS AND DIASPORA GROUPS	Disseminate accurate information, and signpost to legal and administrative service providers, assist with some administrative and migration related components. While RLOs and diaspora groups may require additional fundraising and skills enhancement support, they are often best suited to fill gaps in administrative, legal and/or context-specific practical support for family reunification through building information provision frameworks, tailoring and delivering messages to communities, providing administrative support with form filling etc.
NON-PROFIT/ CIVIL SOCIETY LEGAL SUPPORT PROVIDERS	Legal services providers, such as national and international legal organizations (such as IRAP) provide specific assistance and counselling of refugees free of charge on family reunification procedures. They assist with applications, are engaged in strategic litigation, conduct legal research to inform advocacy, build the capacity of partners to provide legal support through trainings and/or providing oversight, produce materials/tools on procedures and eligibility. Engagement with both types of legal support through cooperation, coordination, training could be considered. UNHCR currently partners with them at the global, regional and local level, however their services remain insufficient due to immense needs and many refugee families continue to struggle to secure legal assistance with family reunification.
PRIVATE LAW FIRMS	Commit hours to representing refugee families, assist with applications, perform strategic litigation, conduct legal research to inform advocacy, build the capacity of partners to provide legal support through seconding resources, trainings and/or providing oversight, produce accessible information materials/tools on procedures and eligibility. These services are provided on both pro bono and commercial basis. Engagement with both types of legal support through cooperation, coordination, training could be considered.
PRIVATE SECTOR (INCL. LAW FIRMS)	Ensure publicity around family reunification, provide support including funding, hire applying refugees to assist them to qualify for family reunification.
OTHER IMPLEMENTING AND OPERATIONAL PARTNERS OF UNHCR	Include family reunification assistance in existent and new Project Framework Agreements (PFAs) and operational partnerships with protection/legal/community outreach.

Where networks of partners to support family reunification (and possibly other complementary pathways, see Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways) require building, UNHCR (at global, regional and national level) may help with their identification, further development, preparedness and coordination. UNHCR encourages States representatives, particularly decision-makers in addition to technical focal points, to engage in multistakeholder discussions concerning family reunification at the country, regional and global levels. Full representation of all responsible actors in family reunification platforms, including the [Global Family Reunification Network](#) (FRUN), is key to effective coordination and meaningful cooperation.

(b) Training and support to partners

With the goal of establishing sustainable systems, **UNHCR works with new and existing partners to identify training and capacity development needs, and jointly design/deliver trainings** on topics including:

- applicable legal frameworks;
- family reunification basics and support;
- family tracing and available documents delivered by the Red Cross movement;
- child protection;
- anti-fraud mechanisms.

Such structures may include options for peer-to-peer shadowing and support amongst various partners, or UNHCR's direct capacity development activities, and development and implementation of more standardized training curricula. Government representatives, centralized and consular representations, may also be offered UNHCR trainings/workshops on family reunification and on the obstacles and good practices to make procedures accessible for refugee families.

Capacity development of relevant external actors, including relevant governmental departments engaged in refugee family reunification, and other actors such as NGOs, civil society groups, RLOs and civil society organizations (CSOs), diaspora groups and others (see Pillar IV), should be considered as part of multi-year planning exercises, based on gaps identified as part of situation analysis.

(c) Fundraising support to partners

Support may also exceptionally include fundraising for and with partners, including through humanitarian appeals, in cluster situations etc. This may particularly be the case where UNHCR is the lead agency in a response. Operations may additionally support partners with fundraising strategies and appeals to ensure family reunification work remains within their capacity. It may be an option for example, for RLOs to offer services for payment, where context appropriate and with sufficient integrity safeguards and oversight in place.

PILLAR V: EXCEPTIONAL DIRECT CASE WORK/SUPPORT OR RESETTLEMENT CONSIDERATION

(a) Direct case support

Where robust systems of partner service providers exist, interventions by UNHCR in individual cases will be limited to scenarios where UNHCR is the only or most appropriate entity to fulfil a particular function of the procedure. Beyond information provision and signposting/referrals to partners as appropriate, support from UNHCR to individual families may include (as required):

- verification of UNHCR-issued documentation;
- interventions with the State authorities of the country of departure to facilitate and/or expedite exit procedures (in locations where UNHCR is the most effective advocate);
- advocacy with State authorities in the receiving country on a particularly vulnerable/urgent case.

In exceptional circumstances where local partners do not currently have the resources (e.g., skills, knowledge, training, funding, staffing), and an alternative regional/international partner with expertise is unavailable to step in, operations may consider whether it is appropriate for UNHCR to temporarily perform additional case support functions.

These may include:

- interviews for the purposes of identity and relationship verification;
- referrals to government and other agencies for documentation issuance;
- requests of exit procedures;
- referral to legal partners, etc.

These functions could be performed by the case workers typically operating in resettlement, protection personnel or those with child protection expertise if cases involve children.

Such interventions must be part of a longer-term vision, which involves sustained efforts to identify and strengthen partnerships over time, and the gradual devolution of responsibilities from UNHCR to appropriate actors as they become more attuned to and proficient in family reunification. All procedures for such cases should be outlined in the UNHCR country-specific standard operating procedures (SOPs).

(b) Resettlement consideration

Restoring family unity is one of the eligibility criteria of UNHCR-assisted resettlement. Family reunification, however, is a State-owned procedure and requires a separate set of steps. As per the [Resettlement Handbook](#) (see also FAQs at Annex 3), resettlement referral for a family who would otherwise qualify under the relevant national family reunification provisions in the receiving country should only be considered where there are strong protection needs and where established family reunification procedures will not adequately restore family unity.

This may apply, for example, where dependent family members are excluded from eligibility (usually because they are outside of the immediate family group as defined by the relevant State or they may be same sex couples in countries where same sex partnership is not recognized by law) or in certain exceptional circumstances where there are immediate protection needs or vulnerabilities necessitating an expeditious solution which would not be addressed by national family reunification procedures on account of long processing times or delays to eligibility.

Factors to take into account when considering to rely on resettlement also include whether family reunification procedures are likely to be accessible (considering case-specific protection risks, and context-specific practical or logistical barriers), and the likelihood of a positive decision, notably considering applicable financial or evidentiary requirements of the family reunification procedure.



6.2 Relevant UNHCR functions

In line with the [Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities \(RAAs\)](#), country operations, regional bureaux, divisions, and entities at headquarters each serve functions in support of family reunification.

Headquarters divisions and entities lead on the development of globally applicable guidance on the legal standards relevant to refugee family reunification and support States in compliance, undertake structured and strategic global advocacy, and consistently engage with global stakeholders.

Regional bureaux provide regional oversight, including by developing regional data strategies, advocating with, engaging and coordinating regional actors, and managing regional partnerships to support resource mobilization and advocacy in support of family reunification.

In country offices, UNHCR's activities in support of family reunification cross-cut functional units with elements of registration and data management, communications, community-based protection, external engagement, solutions and child protection amongst others. **Integrating family reunification activities into existing roles makes effective use of existing resources and ensures family reunification is streamlined as an important responsibility of the organization.**¹⁴

Below are some examples of how this could be done by operations:

UNHCR FUNCTION	ACTIVITIES
REGISTRATION/ DIMA/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	• Ensure accuracy and completeness of data entered into proGres and through Digital Gateway tools. • Ensure relevant data fields (type of relationship, location of family members, their status, age) are consistently included in data collection exercises and IM reports and dashboards; • Provide guidance on data entry; analyse data and trends; issue reports and findings; • Work with other UNHCR teams (protection, solutions) to develop and implement self-service tools and forms that feed into proGres v4 and reflect on the above data fields.
CHILD PROTECTION	• Identify child refugees separated from their families; • Conduct or support local systems that conduct Best Interests Determination (BID) to determine whether family reunification is in the best interest of the separated children; • Provide counselling to children and their family members on the procedure and its potential outcomes; • Refer cases for resettlement consideration where family reunification is not attainable within a reasonable time period (see below "solutions/resettlement")
(SNR) PROTECTION OFFICER	• Coordinate all aspects of family reunification activities as part of the operation's protection strategy; • Identify operational and implementation partners to undertake various family reunification activities; • Identify partner needs and work to enhance their capacity; • Develop and deliver advocacy messages to governments and other relevant entities; • Include family reunification-related activities in regional/operational/field protection strategies and relevant SOPs and ensure their implementation; • Coordinate the network of partners linking countries of departure and receiving countries.

¹⁴ For more information see also the suggested division of roles laid out in the UNHCR Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways.

UNHCR FUNCTION	ACTIVITIES
SOLUTIONS/ RESETTLEMENT	- Facilitate issuance of exit permits for individuals pending family reunification; - Facilitate/refer to additional service providers (including medical); - Support with departure arrangements by referring to relevant partners (such as Miles4Migrants for air travel); - In cases where attaining family reunification through the existent procedure is not feasible or has significant protection shortfalls, consider and process individual cases for resettlement.
COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION	- Develop and disseminate messages and information campaigns for family reunification amongst communities; - Work with community leaders to develop communication guidelines and referral frameworks to assist with various components of family reunification procedures.
COMMUNICATIONS/ EXTERNAL RELATIONS	- Support with communication strategies and development of concrete messages to promote access to family reunification; - Create publicity around successes and failures of individuals' efforts to reunite; - Support with partner identification and network/coalition building efforts; - Give visibility to family reunification in communication efforts, where relevant.

It is recommended that each Protection/Solutions unit, at country office and regional bureaux level, establish a family reunification focal point.

The family reunification focal point coordinates with relevant functional units within UNHCR at country, regional and HQ level and with partners to support improved access to family reunification in the local/regional context. The focal point helps to ensure family reunification functions do not exist in a vacuum and relevant linkages to activities conceived to support other solutions, particularly skills-based pathways, are made.

For smaller operations with limited capacity, bureaux may be best placed to undertake family reunification coordination functions. In contexts where family reunification needs are perceived to be low, this focal point may serve mainly as an internal contact point to respond to enquiries/challenges as they arise.

6.3 Planning and reporting for family reunification activities

Family reunification activities, which often cross-cut multiple UNHCR functions, should be mainstreamed into multi-year regional protection planning. In each location, the degree and nature of UNHCR activities will be based on an analysis of the country context, including the legal and administrative framework, political and security situation, needs and gaps in support for family reunification, partner capacity, and degree of inter-agency coordination. For comprehensive guidance on planning and programming, refer to the [UNHCR Programme Handbook](#).

To measure progress and achievements, the UNHCR COMPASS results framework includes reporting for family reunification movements under [Core Impact Indicator 4.2b](#) Number of people who departed through complementary pathways, and [Core Outcome Indicator 15.3](#) Number of people admitted through complementary pathways from the host country.

Many families successfully reunite without support provided by UNHCR. When UNHCR does play a role in facilitating family reunification, the use of ProGres to record family reunification-related activities is recommended. For further guidance, refer to the [UNHCR Operational Guidance Note: Complementary Pathways for Admission to Third Countries Data Recording in proGres v4 and v3](#).

7. REFERENCES

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the upcoming UNHCR Guidelines on international legal standards relating to family reunification for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection which set out legal standards relevant for refugees and beneficiaries of other forms of complementary protection to access to family reunification. In the case of unaccompanied or separated children, or children otherwise considered to be at risk, additional guidance should be sought from the UNHCR BIP Guidelines. For guidance on the use of proGres for recording family reunification-related events and assistance, refer to [UNHCR Operational Guidance Note: Complementary Pathways for Admission to Third Countries Data Recording in proGres v4 and v3](#).

8. MONITORING

The Division of International Protection, Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service, is responsible for monitoring these Guidelines globally, in consultation with the regional bureaux, who monitor and support their consistent application in respective country operations.

9. CONTACT

The contact for these Guidelines is the Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service, Division of International Protection at hqdiprcps@unhcr.org. Inquiries concerning the context-specific application of these Guidelines and/or relating to individual cases should first be addressed to the relevant regional bureaux focal point/s.

10. DATES

These Guidelines will enter into force upon issuance and will be reviewed by 31 December 2034.

11. HISTORY

These Guidelines update and replace the UNHCR Note on Family Reunification, July 1983.

12. PLACEMENT

These Guidelines will be uploaded to the [Intranet](#) and as part of the upcoming UNHCR Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – Terms and definitions¹

Best Interests (of the child) Principle | A principle set out in Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which affirms: “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” A child’s best interests are determined by a variety of individual circumstances, such as the age and level of maturity of the child, the presence or absence of parents, and the child’s environment and experiences.

Best Interests Procedure (BIP) | UNHCR’s framework for child protection case management. Starting with identification, it is a multi-step process, that includes an assessment made by personnel regarding the individual protection needs of children of concern to UNHCR. The Best Interests Assessment (BIA) is designed to ensure that any action taken gives a primary consideration to the child’s best interests. It can be done alone or in consultation with others, by personnel with the required expertise, and requires the participation of the child.

Complementary Forms of Protection | Mechanisms used by States to regularize the stay of persons found to fall outside the scope of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, but who are nevertheless in need of international protection.

Departure and Receiving Country | For the purposes of these Guidelines, these terms are used to identify the direction of movement and activities required in each respective location. In most practical scenarios, family reunification is instigated after one member of the family reaches a country where they are granted asylum status or other form of complementary protection. However, it may also be triggered for the cross-border reunification of families separated during flight and residing in different hosting countries, or when individuals seek to reunite with family in their country of origin through voluntary repatriation.

Note: For the purposes of these Guidelines the use of the terms “sponsor”, “petitioner”, “applicant” and “beneficiary” have been avoided, due to their varying use dependent on jurisdiction/context.² These Guidelines will rather refer to the location of the respective individuals by using the terms “departing” and “receiving” family member.

Dependency | While the relationship or bond between the persons in question will normally be one which is strong, continuous and of reasonable duration, dependency does not require exclusive, complete and utter dependence, such as that of a parent and minor child, but can be mutual or partial dependence. For UNHCR, this “relationship of social, emotional or economic dependency” is presumed between close family members. For other family members, it must be established on a case-by-case basis. In particular, dependency of children may continue after they reach the age of majority if they remain within the family unit and retain economic, social and emotional bonds. Dependency should also be recognized if a person has a disability and is incapable of self-support, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration.

The dependency determination requires a detailed examination of all available evidence, must be culturally sensitive and take into account the specific context of refugees, as well as their personal circumstances which make the reasons for dependency compelling. Given the disruptive factors of the refugee experience, the impact of persecution and the stress factors associated with flight to safety, refugee families are often reconstructed out of the remnants of various households, who may not fit neatly into preconceived notions of a nuclear family but who depend on each other for mutual support

¹ For a complete glossary of terms refer to the [UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms](#).

² It is noteworthy that in the context of community sponsorship the term “sponsor” has a similarly divergent meaning to that utilized by some States for the purposes of family reunification. Under community sponsorship, “sponsor” refers to individuals, groups or organizations who provide reception and integration support to refugees or other persons in need of international protection upon arrival in a receiving country (admitted through resettlement or complementary pathways).

and survival. This requires a broader definition of dependency, namely one that includes not only financial but also physical, psychological, and emotional attachment. Emotional dependency should therefore factor equally with financial dependency.³

Family | There is no single, universally agreed-upon definition as to what constitutes a family. The immediate family is often accepted as consisting of spouses and their minor or dependent unmarried children. Extended family is generally considered any family relationship beyond this immediate core/nuclear family unit. This distinction is commonly applied in State family reunification procedures and can be determinative of eligibility. In this context, UNHCR advocates for an inclusive interpretation of the term “family” as determined on a case-by-case basis, requiring an open, flexible approach and broad interpretation, considering biological and social connections, cultural variations as well as physical, emotional and economic ties or dependency factors.

Family Unity Principle | The legal principle that gives effect to the protection of the family as the fundamental group unit of society. Respect for the right to family unity requires not only that States refrain from action which would result in family separations, but also that they take measures to maintain the unity of the family and reunite family members who have been separated.

Family Reunification/Reunion (FR(U)) | The process of reuniting family members who have been involuntarily separated through displacement.

Family Reunification Procedures | The legal, rights-based and State-provided avenues that allow refugees to access their right to family unity regulated by national, regional and international law. Family reunification procedures include individuals with nuclear and extended family relations in line with the principle of dependency which ensures that family members—who may not be close family members but are nevertheless dependants—are able to enjoy the right to family life and family unity.

Legal Admission Pathways | Pathways for regular migration of temporary or permanent nature intended to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration of individuals between different countries for the purposes of inter alia work, study, treatment or others. They are embedded in the migration frameworks of the States and rely on relevant entry visas.

Person in Need of International Protection | Applies to State- or UNHCR-recognized refugees and subsidiary protection status holders, asylum-seekers and those who fled their countries of origin due to threats to their lives or physical integrity resulting from armed conflict and violence, or serious human rights violations. The term applies to all refugees, regardless of having submitted a formal asylum claim or having been adjudicated through refugee status determination procedure. The need for international protection arises when a person is outside their own country and unable to return home because they would be at risk there, and their country is unable or unwilling to protect them. Risks that give rise to a need for international protection classically include those of persecution, threats to life, freedom or physical integrity arising from armed conflict, serious public disorder, or different situations of violence.

Refugee | Any person who meets the eligibility criteria under an applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR’s mandate, or in national legislation. Under international law and UNHCR’s mandate, refugees are persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder. Sometimes—notably in statistical contexts—the word “refugee” is used to designate individuals or groups who have been formally

³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [Submission by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the case of Abdi Ali Mahamud v. the Netherlands \(Appl. no. 64534/19\)](#) before the European Court of Human Rights, 8 April 2021.

recognized by States or UNHCR as entitled to refugee status following an asylum or other status-determination procedure. When this limited non-legal meaning is intended, it should be clearly indicated. The clearest designation in such contexts is “recognized refugee”.

Third-Country Solutions | Pathways for refugees to relocate from a State in which they have sought protection (host country) to a third State (receiving country).

ANNEX 2 – Guide to UNHCR’s position on dependency and family relationships in the context of solutions

While there is no single, universally agreed legal definition of family, the State family reunification procedures tend to define family in terms of strict nuclear family relationships in place, thereby limiting access to family reunification for extended family members regardless of the type of relationship they have with the family member in the receiving country.

UNHCR continuously advocates with States to adopt a broad and flexible approach to the term “family” in all activities, including under national family reunification procedures. The below discussion provides additional guidance to UNHCR colleagues on the approach of the Office to dependency for the purposes of preserving family unity and reuniting separated families (through whichever solution is determined to be most appropriate).

How should dependency be determined?

Dependency does not require exclusive, complete and utter dependence, such as that of a parent and minor child, but can be mutual or partial dependence. Instead, the principle of dependency requires that economic and emotional relationships between refugee family members be given equal weight and importance in the criteria for reunification as relationships based on blood lineage or legally sanctioned unions.¹

In some cases, the difference in the composition and definition of the family is determined by cultural factors, in others, it is a result of the refugee experience. Given the disruptive nature of the refugee experience, the impact of persecution and the stress factors associated with flight to safety, refugee families are often constructed out of remnants of various households, who may not fit neatly into preconceived notions of the nuclear family but who depend on each other for mutual support and survival.

The question of what constitutes a family should be informed by the principle of dependency and, in the case of children, Best Interests Procedures (BIP). Relevant considerations include biological and social connections, cultural variations as well as social, emotional and economic ties or dependency factors. Colleagues should adopt an open, culturally sensitive and inclusive interpretation to considerations of family membership.

Relationships based on the principle of dependency

Spouses:

Including legally recognised spouses, religious and customary marriages, couples who are engaged to be married, and common-law couples—all equally applying to same sex couples. Noting that estranged spouses may qualify individually for reunification in relation to their children and/or other family members/dependants. Consideration of polygamous or child spousal reunification may only be applicable in exceptional circumstances, informed by an individualized assessment of protection needs (see below).

Same sex couples:

Most family reunification procedures rely on formal evidence of a spousal relationship, which is often unattainable for same sex unions. In a country of origin or departure, marriage or partnership

¹ UNHCR Background note for the agenda item: Family reunification in the context of resettlement and integration - Protecting the family: challenges in implementing policy in the resettlement context, Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Geneva, 20-21 June 2001, available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ae9aca12.pdf>

registration for same sex couples may be unavailable by law or available de jure only, while exposing the individuals to risks to their safety and security. Equally, conditions may not allow same sex couples to live as common law partners, or evidence that they have lived as such. In the absence of formal registration of a union, a generous approach to relationship confirmation reliant on the sum of available non-documentary evidence (such as witness testimonies, photographs, etc.), with due consideration to the conditions in the country of origin/departure. Where a same sex couple is unable to meet the strict evidentiary prerequisites for family reunification under national procedures of a receiving country, UNHCR may consider other pathways to preserve family unity, including resettlement.

Parents and dependent children:

Although most States make a distinction between minor children and older children, dependency of children may continue after they reach the age of majority (either 18 or 21 depending on the jurisdiction in question) if they remain within the family unit and retain economic, social or emotional bonds. It is UNHCR policy to promote the reunification of parents with (at least) those dependent children, regardless of age. This applies to biological, adopted and foster children (whether legal or on a customary basis). Marital status of an adult child may be an indication of continued dependency (or lack thereof) but is not determinative.

Reunification of unaccompanied/separated children with their parents/caregivers and/or (adult/child) siblings:

Because of the special needs of children for a stable family environment, the reunification of unaccompanied/separated children with their families (parents or legal/customary caregiver and/or other dependent family members including siblings), whenever this is possible and in their best interests, should be treated as a matter of urgency. If the child has arrived first in a country of asylum, the principle of family unity requires that the child's next-of-kin be allowed to join the child in that country unless it is reasonable under the circumstances for the child to join the next-of-kin in another country.

Other dependant members of the family unit:

Members of the extended family unit may include dependant parents of an adult refugee, any dependant relative who formed part of the pre-flight family unit, any relative where dependency has occurred post-flight, any dependant relative living with a disability, other dependant members of the family unit (non-relatives). In some circumstances, UNHCR also supports the reunification of an unaccompanied child with another unaccompanied child (related or not), where previous relationship of dependency is established and subject to BIP.

Polygamous unions and marriages involving child spouses:

Under international law polygamous unions and marriages involving child spouses are considered forms of gender-based violence and/or violations of the rights of the child. UNHCR will only support polygamous or child spousal reunification in exceptional circumstances, informed by an individualized assessment of protection needs and agreed upon with the respective regional bureau and HQ. Given the specific and serious protection challenges that supporting reunification of refugees in polygamous and child families would entail, additional considerations and procedural safeguards are required. Important considerations will include the current composition of the family and the principle of family unity, the best interests of any concerned child, the protection needs, wishes and informed consent of each family member, as well as the national legislation of the receiving country. All cases involving children should be guided by the best interests of the child as determined by the [BIP Guidelines](#) and relevant Guidelines found in the [BIP Toolbox](#).

ANNEX 3 – Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

How can UNHCR assist in reuniting a family split between hosting countries?

In such situations, UNHCR or partners, as appropriate in the local context, may conduct an individualized assessment of the protection situation and impact of family separation to evaluate where the protection needs of the entire family would be best met and to determine the feasibility of available options to restore family unity. Best Interest Procedures for unaccompanied and separated children should be followed, including the completion of Best Interests Assessments/Determinations as required.

Advocacy with the respective State authorities and practical assistance may be required to facilitate relocation of one part of the family to join the other. UNHCR, ICRC and/or IOM may be best placed to perform these functions, according to the context. Where relocation to the same country is not possible on account of the (lack of) legal provisions of the hosting countries for family reunification connected to the family members' legal status, operations may consider whether another third-country solution, including resettlement, could restore family unity.

What support can UNHCR provide to family members remaining in their country of origin and wishing to depart for the purposes of family reunification?

UNHCR advocates for all States to give effective access to the right to family unity. Countries of origin equally have a responsibility to allow and, where necessary, facilitate members of refugee families to reunite with their refugee family member elsewhere in the country of departure, including by granting exit permission.

Practical support may be warranted in case of complications and administrative procedural issues arising. It may be necessary to support with obtaining documentation or to facilitate departure from the country of origin, for example. Where it is at all feasible without placing themselves at risk, the family members in the country of origin should try to obtain authorization to leave, where such is required. In many cases, they are required to make a formal application to the competent authorities. However, it frequently occurs that intervention with the authorities of that country is also necessary. In principle, families in this scenario are eligible for UNHCR support with family reunification so long as the receiving family member is a person in need of international protection.

It should be stressed that interventions, including advocacy and direct case support, should be carefully considered against the local political background and in close consultation with the respective regional bureau, with HQ assistance. Development of a set of country-specific SOPs in this context is advisable. In the case of unaccompanied and separated children, departure from their country of origin will need to be determined through the national Best Interests Procedure/System.

Should UNHCR respond positively to requests from States for information and/or interventions in individual cases?

In the spirit of cooperation, State authorities on occasion approach UNHCR directly to request practical assistance with facilitating a particular family reunification case, or group of cases to

overcome logistical and capacity challenges, to verify documentation and/or recognition status or cross-reference family composition. Where possible within the scope of these Guidelines and with the relevant data protection mechanisms in place, and in consultation with the regional bureau and relevant HQ departments (most notably RCPS, PPLA and DPO), offices should seek to accommodate such requests either directly or through coordination with relevant partners. Such requests provide opportunities to create best practice at the local level and positively influence future processing modalities globally.

At all times offices should be mindful of whether UNHCR is the most appropriate entity to be providing the required information, data protection elements and guided by the “do no harm” principle.



Should UNHCR share completed Best Interest Assessments/Refugee Status Determinations/Resettlement Referral Forms with legal partners?

Requests of this nature would be considered as data subject access requests under the [UNHCR Policy on the Protection of Personal Data \(DPP\)](#) (para. 3.2). Generally speaking, data subjects have a right to access their personal data. It is for UNHCR to decide the format in which the personal data requested will be provided, guided by the DPP and the [UNHCR General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy \(GDPP\)](#).

UNHCR will consider sharing documents containing personal data with legal representatives where UNHCR has obtained and documented the informed consent of the concerned individual/s for this purpose, or the legal representative holds Power of Attorney to make this request on behalf of the individual. Any transfer of information directly to a third party must be done with due regard to Information Sharing Protocols with the given partner and in line with data sharing frameworks.

Decisions on whether to share completed BIA/BID forms with legal partners and legal representatives, and or Powers of Attorney for the purpose of family reunification should be made on a case-by-case basis and be guided by the best interests principle and data protection considerations. Where found to be in the child’s best interests, a completed BIA/BID form should be shared in a time-efficient manner to prevent undue delay to the recommended outcome; some parts of the form may be redacted where this serves to protect the best interests of the child. Consent/assent of the child should be obtained, and a Note for the File included in the child’s case file indicating the purpose of sharing and how consent/assent was obtained.

Colleagues should consult Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Guidance and/or the [UNHCR Resettlement Handbook](#) upon receiving a request for a copy of an RSD assessment and/or RRF. RSD assessments and resettlement submissions contain not only personal data of the individual, but also of others, as well as UNHCR assessments and analysis. The Personal Data Controller, in consultation with the Senior Resettlement colleagues in bureaux or RCPS, will likely approve sharing only redacted extracts, removing any personal data and any information that could give rise to protection or other risks to the individual, family members and other parties, as well as UNHCR personnel and interpreters.



Does support provided by UNHCR differ in emergency contexts?

During emergencies, preventing family separation and restoring family unity must be a priority. UNHCR’s usual functions to support effective family tracing and reunification remain essential, including through registration procedures, information dissemination and facilitating access to casework services of partners. UNHCR should heighten and focus advocacy on ensuring that family reunification procedures remain accessible in emergencies through existing coordination structures

and platforms as well as bilateral negotiations.

In an emergency situation, UNHCR (and partners) may offer additional assistance to States to help them adapt programmes to the urgency of the response required. If there are urgent security concerns for departing family members, or if the usual framework of support for family reunification is interrupted, UNHCR may consider additional direct case interventions, as appropriate, according to capacity and a risk management approach.

For further guidance on UNHCR's role in Emergency Response colleagues should refer to the [UNHCR Emergency Handbook](#).



**When should a case with family links be referred to resettlement?
When should a case in the resettlement pipeline be encouraged to pursue
family reunification under national procedures instead?**

A resettlement referral for a family who would otherwise qualify under the relevant national family reunification provisions in the receiving country should only be considered in cases where there are strong protection needs and where established family reunification procedures will not adequately restore family unity. This may apply, for example, where dependent family members are excluded from eligibility (usually because they are outside of the immediate family group as defined by the relevant State) or in certain exceptional circumstances where there are immediate protection needs or vulnerabilities necessitating an expeditious solution which would not be addressed by national family reunification procedures on account of long processing times or delays to eligibility.

If a case that is potentially eligible for family reunification comes to light in the context of resettlement processing, factors to consider when determining whether to proceed with resettlement or encourage the family to pursue family reunification procedures directly with the concerned third country will also include: a) whether family reunification procedures are likely to be accessible (considering case-specific protection risks as well as context-specific practical or logistical barriers); and b) the likelihood of a positive decision, notably considering applicable financial or evidentiary requirements of the relevant State's procedures.

When members of a refugee family are in one or more countries of first asylum, it may be necessary for UNHCR country offices to intervene to ensure their admission to the same country of resettlement in accordance with family unity principles. Such intervention is often required to prevent the separation of foster children, adult dependents, fiancé/es, or other persons with dependency from the basic family unit. The assistance of the relevant bureaux should be requested when the matter cannot be resolved by the country offices concerned. For further guidance, see the [Chapter on the Restoring Family Unity Category of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook](#).

Annex 4 – Bibliography

Right to family under international and regional refugee, human rights, and international humanitarian law instruments

The principle of family unity is inherent in the universal recognition of the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society, which is entitled to protection by society and the State:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html, Article 16(3).
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, 999 UNTS 171, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html, Article 23(1).
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, 993 UNTS 3, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36c0.html, Article 10(1).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html>, preambular para. 5.
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 18 December 1990, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3980.html, Article 44.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 13 December 2006, www.refworld.org/docid/4680cd212.html, preambular para. (x).
- Council of Europe, European Social Charter, 18 October 1961, ETS 35, <https://rm.coe.int/168006b642>, Part 1, para. 16.
- Council of Europe, European Social Charter (Revised), 3 May 1996, ETS 163, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3678.html>, Part 1, para. 16.
- Organization of American States, American Convention on Human Rights, “Pact of San Jose”, Costa Rica, 22 November 1969, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36510.html, Article 17(1).
- Organization of African Unity (OAU), African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (“Banjul Charter”), 27 June 1981, CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3630.html>, Article 18(1).
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 11 July 1990, CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990), www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38c18.html, Article 18(1).

People have a right to marry and to found and maintain a family and family life, as well as to be free from arbitrary or unlawful, including discriminatory, interference with their family:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html>, Article 16(1).
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, 999 UNTS 171, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html, Article 23(1).
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966, 993 UNTS 3, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36c0.html, Article 10(1).

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 21 December 1965, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 660, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3940.html>, Article 5.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html>, Article 16(1).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html, preambular para. 6 and Articles 8(1) and 16(1).
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 18 December 1990, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3980.html, Article 14.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 13 December 2006, www.refworld.org/docid/4680cd212.html, Articles 22 and 23.
- UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), CCPR General Comment No. 19: Article 23 (The Family) Protection of the Family, the Right to Marriage and Equality of the Spouses, 27 July 1990, www.refworld.org/docid/45139bd74.html, para. 5.
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- American Convention on Human Rights, “Pact of San Jose”, Costa Rica, 22 November 1969, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36510.html, Article 11(2).
- African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (“Banjul Charter”), 27 June 1981, CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3630.html, Article 18.
- OAU, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 11 July 1990, CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990), www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38c18.html, Article 10

Children’s right to family unity and family life is particularly protected by international law:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> preambular para. 5 and Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 22 and 24.

UNHCR’s (ExCom) Conclusions

All ExCom Conclusions No. 1 – 109 (1975 – 2009) are available at <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/578371524.pdf>

on the fundamental character of the right to family unity:

- ExCom Conclusion No. 22 (XXXII), 1981, para. B(2)(h) in the context of mass influx.
- ExCom Conclusion No. 24 (XXXII), 1981, para. 1.
- ExCom Conclusion No. 47 (XXXVIII), 1987, para. (d).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 84 (XLVIII), 1997, para. (a)(i).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 85 (XLIX), 1998, paras. (u), (v) and (x).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 88 (L), 1999, para. (a).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 93 (LIII), 2002, para. (b)(iv).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 100 (LV), 2004, para. (d) in the context of mass influx.
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- ExCom Conclusion No. 105 (LVII), 2006, para. (n)(iii).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 107 (LVIII), 2007, paras. (h)(iii) and (xviii), in the context of resettlement

on the guiding Principle of Family Unity in all actions taken on behalf of refugee children:

- ExCom Conclusion No. 47 (XXXVIII), 1987, para. (d).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 84 (XLVIII), 1997, paras. (a)(i) and (b)(i). ExCom Conclusion No. 88 (L), 1999, para. (c).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 105 (LVII), 2006, para. (n)(iii).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 107 (LVIII), 2007, paras. (b)(vi) and (h)(iii)

on State responsibility to reunify separated refugee families:

- ExCom Conclusion No. 15 (XXX), 1979, para. (e).
- ExCom Conclusion No. 24 (XXXII), 1981.
- ExCom Conclusion No. 85 (XLIX), 1998, para. (x) & (w)
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on UNHCR's role in coordinating role in promoting family reunification:

- ExCom Conclusion No. 9 (XXVIII), 1977, para. (b).

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