



# UN Migration Agency (IOM)

## Vision

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM currently counts 172 member states. A further 8 states hold observer status, as do numerous international and nongovernmental organizations.

IOM's strategic approach focuses on:

1. Capacity enhancement for government officials with respect to the most recent migration issues.
2. Policy advocacy and identification and development of effective policies for addressing those challenges and to identify comprehensive approaches and measures for advancing international cooperation.
3. Policy-oriented research to further scrutinize migration related issues and develop appropriate policies.
4. Regional cooperation in order to contribute to the economic and social development of states through research, dialogue, design and implementation of migration-related programs aimed at maximizing migration's benefits.

## Work in Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran became an IOM Member State in 2001 following a decade of collaboration with the agency during the 1990s.

Activities during this period included the evacuation from Iran to their home countries of thousands of third country nationals caught up in the Iraq-Kuwait conflict, and the voluntary repatriation of some 370,000 Afghan refugees - a joint operation conducted with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR.) In recent years IOM activities in Iran have focused on:

1. Technical cooperation with Iranian government partners to promote effective migration management and migration for development.
2. Facilitation of the resettlement of Afghan refugees from Iran to third countries. This includes cultural orientation, health screening and organizing their travel.
3. Facilitating the return home from Iran of skilled, qualified Afghans who can contribute to the rebuilding of their war-torn country.

## Refugee Resettlement

IOM arranges the travel of most of the world's refugees accepted for resettlement by third countries. It also provides pre-departure medical screening, to ensure that they are healthy to travel, and cultural orientation, to prepare them for their new lives abroad. Many refugees who have spent years living in camps suffer from ill health, do not speak the language of their new country and need a crash course in survival.

In Iran, which hosts one of the largest Afghan refugee populations in the world, IOM has helped nearly 30,000 refugees to resettle in Australia, Canada and Scandinavia since 2000. In the past decade it has provided nearly 9,000 pre-departure medical screenings.

## Technical Cooperation

International migration, if properly managed, can contribute to the growth and prosperity of countries of origin and destination, as well as benefiting individual migrants and their families.

IOM's technical cooperation activities in Iran focus on building the capacity of government officials to optimize the contribution that effective migration management can make to achieve the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The programme shares best international practices in a wide range of areas including humanitarian border management, combating human smuggling and trafficking, identification of trafficking victims, migrant health, engaging Diasporas and deploying remittances for development.

## Return of Qualified Afghans

For nearly 40 years Afghanistan has suffered from a series of man-made and natural disasters that have created millions of refugees and economic migrants and devastated the country's fragile economy.

IOM's Return of Qualified Afghans programme, which began in 2002, was designed to encourage qualified and skilled Afghans to return home and contribute to the reconstruction of their country.

The programme matches applicants with job vacancies, mainly in the public sector, and offers generous subsidies when they return to Afghanistan. Iran has supported the programme from the outset.

In 2016 the programme facilitated the return of 65 highly qualified specialists from Iran to work in Afghan ministries, universities, schools, hospitals and other public sector agencies. IOM operates similar return programmes for qualified Afghans from Europe.



*An Afghan refugee family prepares to leave Iran for resettlement in Australia. Photo: IOM*