

## Project Overview

Many refugees leave behind or get separated from their family during flight. While legal family reunification (FR) processes in theory should benefit any qualifying family member, refugees worldwide, particularly children, often face significant difficulties accessing family reunification. These include difficulties understanding the application process, obtaining documentation within or outside their country of origin, accessing the relevant embassy, meeting the related costs (DNA, travel, etc.) or other obstacles.

In mid-2019 the UNHCR Office of the Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Situation launched a project to enhance access to FR for children and youth at-risk in six locations (Cairo, Egypt; Tripoli, Libya; Addis Ababa and Shire, Ethiopia; and Kassala and Khartoum, Sudan). The project targets primarily European and North American FR cases with a focus on assisting children to reunite with one or both parents.

In addition to working closely with UNHCR Regional Bureaux and Country Offices in Europe and North America, the project has engaged a legal partner, the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) who works with a team of in-house lawyers, NGO and *pro bono* partners in Europe and North America to provide legal assistance to file and/or litigate FR applications for complex cases and assists UNHCR in advocacy efforts aimed at lifting certain FR requirements and practices that negatively and disproportionately impact refugees.

Additionally, UNHCR partners with RefugePoint to provide deployments of expert staff to UNHCR in the target six locations. These staff have expertise in both child protection and durable solutions and serve as the focal points for FR case identification, support and overall systems strengthening.

## Map of Family Reunification Project Locations



The type of support the project could provide, depending on the location, include:

- Identify cases and individuals for possible family reunification assistance within the refugee population;
- Complete formal Best Interests Assessment or Best Interest Determination reports for the purpose of FR, which can be submitted in support of an FR application;
- Facilitate the provision of documents for the purpose of FR;
- Provide counselling to individuals in the FR process, including referral of family members abroad to service providers or legal assistance;
- Organize and execute logistics for the purpose of FR, including but not limited to:
  - a. Facilitate POCs movement from one location to another to facilitate Embassy interviews;
  - b. Liaise with host governments for exit visas and formalities;
  - c. Advocate for vulnerable cases to be fast-tracked by the relevant Embassies;
  - d. Assist to obtain necessary travel documents (ICRC TDs, CTDs, etc) and facilitate the travel both logistically and when possible, financially;
  - e. Facilitate DNA testing when required;
  - f. Refer cases for financial travel assistance and support;
- Answer queries from NGOs, private and *pro bono* lawyers who need inputs or assistance to help move cases forward, so long as the relevant consent is obtained;
- Participate and organize working group meetings with Embassies;
- Respond to protection concerns on individual cases as FR is pending;
- Ensure integrity and fraud prevention in the FR process;
- Gather case examples which can be used for advocacy;
- Assist with identification of precedent cases for strategic litigation
- Ensure legal assistance, where applicable, is available to FR applicants

## Contact Information by Location

Legal practitioners and NGOs seeking to contact the project's experts can refer below to the following functional email addresses:

**Sudan:** [sudkhfr@unhcr.org](mailto:sudkhfr@unhcr.org)

**Ethiopia:** [ethadfru@unhcr.org](mailto:ethadfru@unhcr.org)

**Egypt:** [arecafru@unhcr.org](mailto:arecafru@unhcr.org)

**Libya:** [frulibya@unhcr.org](mailto:frulibya@unhcr.org)

This contact information is also published on UNHCR's *Telling The Real Story* website [www.tellingtherealstory.org](http://www.tellingtherealstory.org), a social media platform dedicated to communicating with communities about the dangers of onward movement.