

# *Humanitarian visa*

**Humanitarian visas** are granted by some countries to fulfill their international obligation to protecting refugees from persecution. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is often used as the main criteria in assessing whether or not there is a legitimate claim for protection, as this defines a refugee as a person:

- who is outside their country of origin or legal residence

- who is unable, or unwilling to return to their country of legal residence because of a legitimate fear of persecution regarding their race, religion, nationality, group membership, or a political belief, as defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- who has not been convicted of a serious crime by a fair tribunal.

Persons primarily seeking better economic opportunities may reasonably quote war, famine or environmental disasters as their main motive for leaving their countries of legal residence, for

which reason humanitarian visas may be difficult to obtain.

## Australia

Humanitarian visas are listed as “Subclass 200”<sup>[1]</sup> and have several distinct forms

- 201: In-country Special Humanitarian Program Visa
- 202: Global Special Humanitarian Program Visa (“SHP”)
- 203: Emergency Rescue Visa
- 204: Woman at Risk Visa

## European Union

Humanitarian visas are not yet issued by the European Union, but have been recommended by Alexander Betts, who is the director of the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. He is the author of a book *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*<sup>[2]</sup> Betts cites these as an alternative to the current choice for families between

- refugee camps, which are often makeshift and overcrowded, with minimal facilities for hygiene, health care or education
- dangerous journeys, often arranged by [people smuggler]s at very high cost.

- urban poverty as undocumented entrants working illegally

The European Union Migration and Home Affairs directorate is considering establishing a unified agency <sup>[3]</sup>

## Russian Federation

Humanitarian visas may be issued to stateless persons or citizens from countries such as the USA who may be considered potentially hostile, and traveling to for a variety of reasons including cultural or political exchanges, sports events, scientific or technical conferences and providing temporary

specialist services such as humanitarian relief.<sup>[4]</sup>

## USA:Humanitarian parole

Humanitarian visas are also known as humanitarian parole in the USA which are documents granted for short-term urgent humanitarian relief, typically for up to one year. People who would otherwise be unable to enter the U.S. may be granted humanitarian parole in exceptional personal circumstances, but these do not permit them to obtain permanent residency.<sup>[5]</sup>

See also

- 1954 Convention Travel Document for stateless persons
- Certificate of identity for stateless persons or others
- Identity document
- Nansen passport the predecessor of the current Refugee travel document
- Refugee travel document issued by the country of origin
- Travel Document

## References

1. *Findlaw Australia article: What are the Types of Humanitarian Visas Available in Australia?*

2. *Alexander Betts (2013). Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement. Cornell University. ISBN 978-0801477775.*
3. *EU Policy: Common European Asylum System*
4. *Russian Visa Center, USA advice page*
5. *USA Today, What Is a Humanitarian Visa?*

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