

Chile becomes latest nation to resettle Syrian refugees through UN-backed programme

13 October 2017 – Sixty-six Syrian adults and children arrived in Santiago, Chile from Lebanon on Thursday, making the South American country the newest to resettle Syrian refugees under a United Nations-backed programme.

"We congratulate Chile's Government and society for extending their hand in solidarity with Syrian refugees in need and for participating in the response of the international community to one of the greatest humanitarian crises since the Second World War," Michele Manca di Nissa, regional representative of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), [said](#).

At Santiago airport, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet welcomed the refugees.

"The State of Chile has the obligation, but also the privilege, of extending its hand, because we are a land of democracy, peace and respect," Ms. Bachelet said in her welcome message, expressing wish that the refugees, step by step, start leaving behind their fear, pain and uncertainty, and find a land that welcomes them with friendship and good will.

The Syrian refugees attended a pre-departure orientation session delivered by experienced trainers at the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)). These sessions help to prepare the refugees for their initial period of resettlement by providing them with accurate information about life in Chile, as well as by helping refugees develop realistic expectations about their future.

They will be hosted in two different communities in Chile: Villa Alemana, some 100 kilometers northwest of the capital, Santiago, and Macul in the central-eastern part of the Greater Santiago area.

The adults and children will all receive intensive Spanish-language classes and help from psycho-social professionals of the Vicaría de Pastoral Social Caritas, the organization responsible for following up and helping them integrate.

The children will attend local schools and kindergartens from March next year, while the adults will be helped to find employment to speed up their integration and ensure their and their families' autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Chile's Syrian resettlement programme aims to resettle 120 highly vulnerable Syrian refugees from Lebanon.