



Information on measures in support of victims of the conflict in Syria (Federal Council decree of 6 March 2015)

On 6 March 2015 the Swiss Federal Council published new measures to protect Syrian citizens. Under this decree, 3,000 people will be allowed to enter Switzerland over a maximum of three years.

The measures will be carried out in two different ways:

- 1) A maximum of 1,000 people will be given the opportunity to apply for an entry visa for Switzerland. This will apply only to the immediate family (spouse and underage children) of provisionally admitted foreigners (F permit holders).
- 2) Another 2,000 people will be authorized to enter Switzerland over the course of three years. This measure will be applied in collaboration with the UNHCR by means of a so-called 'resettlement' programme.

N.B. This resettlement programme focuses on those registered with the UNHCR in Lebanon. People in need of protection who are in another country can apply for a humanitarian visa at a Swiss representation. The SRC has no influence over the selection process for resettlement. **To be considered for resettlement, it is very important for these people to contact the UNHCR directly and mention any relations they may have in Switzerland.** Other selection criteria also apply. Further information about these measures can be found at the following link:
<https://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/de/home/asyl/syrien.html> (resettlement, fact sheet).

Entry procedure for members of the immediate family of provisionally admitted foreigners from the armed conflict in Syria:

Who does this procedure apply to?

The procedure is limited to 1,000 people in need of protection. Only the spouses and children under 18 years old of Syrians already living in Switzerland as provisionally admitted foreigners (F permit holders) are eligible.

Important: The family relationship must have already existed before the person in Switzerland arrived here (separation by flight).

At the time of the application the spouse or underage children must be in Syria or living without official residence status in one of the neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey or Egypt).

Submitting an application

The F permit holder, who is already in Switzerland, must submit a justified and appropriately documented application to the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) for preliminary evaluation. The application must include the exact personal details (first name, surname, date of birth, citizenship, marital status, relationship to the F permit holder) and if possible copies of the passports and marriage certificate. All documents in Arabic must be translated into German, French, Italian or English by an accredited translator.

If no passports or other identity documents are available:

in such cases, a photograph of the person should be submitted, with the first name, surname





and date of birth written on the back. The photograph must enable the person to be identified.

It must also be stated in the application at which representation (as a rule, Istanbul, Beirut, Amman or Cairo) the visa application will be submitted.

The SRC can provide you with a sample application for you to adapt and submit to the SEM.

The application must be sent **by registered post** to the following address:

**SEM
Department of Visas & Permits
Quellenweg 6
3003 Bern - Wabern**

The following still applies to other family members: Anyone whose life or physical integrity are directly, seriously, and tangibly endangered may continue to apply to enter the country with an "ordinary" humanitarian visa. Please note that humanitarian visas are awarded in very few cases.

Important: Please contact us in the case of special family circumstances, e.g. children who are alone but no longer underage, or family members who are alone and who had always lived with the family member in Switzerland but would no longer benefit from these measures.

How the SEM checks the applications

The SEM checks the application and accompanying documents and then informs the applicant in a notification letter whether, on the basis of a preliminary evaluation, the requirements have been met for granting an entry visa. The SEM also checks whether the information provided in the applicant's asylum application are consistent with the information in the visa application.

If the notification letter is positive, the applicant will be instructed to forward the notification letter to the persons concerned asking them to contact the relevant Swiss representation in order to carry out the entry procedures.

In the event of a positive notification, the persons concerned should make an appointment to obtain a humanitarian visa with the representation within three months.

N.B. In the event of a positive notification, the persons concerned must still submit a normal visa application to the Swiss representation. To do this they must make an appointment at the Swiss representation. The following documents must be presented at the appointment:

- Completed visa application form (1 form per person)
- <https://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/de/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>
- 2 photos
- Copies of passports
- Notification letter from the SEM
- Marriage certificate in the case of spouses and family register or birth certificates in the case of children (translated if they are in Arabic)
- Passport

The Swiss representation then checks the entry application within its areas of competence.





What can I do if the application for preliminary evaluation is refused?

The SEM may refuse the application for preliminary evaluation. This may be for various reasons. Unfortunately it is not possible to appeal against a refusal. The persons concerned may, however, apply to the Swiss representation for a humanitarian visa. At this moment it can be claimed once again that the requirements for a family reunification are met. In principle in that case the criteria for humanitarian visas apply (see the SRC information sheet on humanitarian visas).

What do I need to do if the Swiss representation approves my entry into Switzerland

If your family lacks the financial resources to pay for the journey, you may make a substantiated application to have the cost of the journey covered for you. The application should be submitted to the SEM.

What must I do once my family members have arrived in Switzerland?

The humanitarian visa is valid for 3 months. During these first three months, the applicant living in Switzerland is responsible for taking care of the family members.

Before the end of these three months, an application can be made either for asylum or for provisional admission in the canton of residence of the family member already in Switzerland.

N.B. Until the family members have registered with the canton (provisional admission) or with the Federal authorities (asylum application), the hosts are liable for supporting them, including accommodation and health insurance. They may only receive financial support once they have registered. They may register as soon as they arrive in Switzerland.

What support can be obtained from the SRC?

Please contact the SRC Syria Visa Advisory Service if you have any questions. The SRC can provide you with a sample application for you to adapt and submit to the SEM.

The SRC can also help you to check your applications are complete; however, it cannot complete or sign your applications on your behalf.

Contact details:

Syria Visa Advisory Service
Integration & Return Division
Health & Integration Department

Postal address:
Rainmattstrasse 10
P.O. Box
3001 Bern

Telephone:
031 387 72 00
(Monday–Friday, 14:00–16:00)
syrien@redcross.ch
www.redcross.ch

On appointment only

