

UK's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme

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In news– Recently, the UK government has introduced the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme, which allows residents to host displaced Ukrainians in their own homes or independent accommodation for six months to a year.

What is the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme?

- **The scheme allows individuals, charities, communities groups and businesses in the UK, across nationalities, to bring in Ukrainians.**
- **In Phase One of this scheme, the sponsor can choose whom to support**, be it an individual, more than one adult or adults with children.
- Hosts will be subject to safeguard and security checks, so will the guests.
- While they are **expected to give rent-free rooms, the UK government will offer "an optional thank-you payment of £350 a month"**, which can continue till 12 months of sponsorship.
- **Local authorities will be given £10,000 for helping each Ukrainian refugee through this new scheme**, besides funds for providing education to school children.
- With this Ukrainians with international passports can directly apply online for entry without the need to visit a visa application center.
- **They can remain in the UK for three years** and will have "full and unrestricted access" to state benefits, healthcare, schooling, and employment.
- **They will need to be vetted before entry and biometric checks will be made in the UK after arrival.**

- Until now the Gateway Protection Programme, a UK refugee resettlement scheme, partnered with UNHCR has been in action since 2004, where local authorities have provided for housing.
- In 1938, the British government had conducted a nine-month rescue operation for Jewish children fleeing the Nazi pogrom.
- Called Kindertransport (Children Transport), the parents or relatives had to provide a £50 bond, to be “assured of their ultimate resettlement”, and it was assumed they could reconnect with their families once the crisis was over.
- In **1939, the UK** again stepped up to help refugees soon after the passing of **Norwegian statesman and polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen.**
- **The Nansen passports, recognised internationally as refugee travel documents,** from 1922 to 1938, issued by the League of Nations, were discontinued.
- Then resumed the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, with its headquarters in London.

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-

- It was **established on December 14, 1950** by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The UN refugee agency emerged in the wake of World War II to help Europeans displaced by that conflict.
- The agency is **mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.**
- Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees.
- It **strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum** and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

- **It also has a mandate to help stateless people.**
- **In 1954, UNHCR won the Nobel Peace Prize** for its groundbreaking work in Europe.