The Irish Refugee Advisory Board and UNHCR published Our Voices, Our Lives - Protection, Integration and Ireland's asylum system, which is based on a consultation which took place in April 2026, facilitated by UNHCR and the Irish Refugee Advisory Board, a refugee-led group working to ensure voices of refugees are heard in policy decisions. Individuals with a refugee background discussed recent changes in the Irish international protection context, such as the transposition of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and the future publication of the Migration and Integration Strategy. The group was asked to share challenges and recommendations in the following three areas:

- Family reunification and citizenship
- Well-being in the international protection system
- Integration.

Participants described long delays, poor communication, language barriers and inflexible documentation requirements in family reunification and citizenship processes. New 2026 family reunification rules, including waiting periods and income thresholds, were seen as major obstacles that worsen family separation and mental health. In the protection system, participants welcomed faster decisions but worried about limited support, digital-only procedures, detention and poor living conditions in accommodation centres. Integration was described as a two-way process hindered by racism, isolation, language barriers and unequal access to services. The report recommends faster processing, clearer and more accessible information, more flexible documentation rules, trauma-informed services, stronger wellbeing supports, anti-racism initiatives and greater investment in community-based integration and refugee-led organisations.

Source(s)

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (15 September, 2026), [Our Voices, Our Lives - The Irish Refugee Advisory Board Consultation Report], https://www.unhcr.org/ie/news/announcements/our-voices-our-lives-irish-refugee-advisory-board-consultation-report

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