



INFORMATION TO ASYLUM SEEKERS  
IN NORWAY



**This pamphlet is published by the Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS). NOAS is a non-governmental human-rights organization established to provide information and legal assistance to asylum seekers.**

**This pamphlet offers important information for you as an asylum seeker in Norway.**

### **You can read about the following topics:**

- Who can be granted asylum?
- Transfer to another safe country
- What happens when you apply for asylum?
- Important advice related to your personal declaration and asylum interview
- Professional Secrecy
- Female asylum seekers
- Children

## **WHO OBTAINS ASYLUM?**

### **1. Asylum**

You have the right for asylum if your life or freedom is in danger or if you risk torture or other inhuman treatment because of your race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This is laid down in the UN Refugee Convention of which Norway is a state signatory.

Persecution particularly aimed against women and persecution due to sexual preference may also give grounds for asylum. Persecution both from authorities in your home country or by others, e.g. armed organisations or family members, may be grounds for asylum.

If the authorities in your home country are able to provide you with protection, or if you are safe in another part of your country, you will normally not obtain asylum.

### **2. Protection**

If you do not satisfy the criteria for obtaining asylum, the Norwegian authorities will nevertheless assess whether you may be in danger in your home country and therefore need protection. Reasons may include war or other factors that may put your life in danger. You may also risk torture or other inhuman treatment.

### **3. Humanitarian grounds**

You may, in special cases, obtain residency based on humanitarian grounds, e.g. if you or your child suffers from a serious illness and where the treatment is not available in your home country.

If you do not have good reasons for applying for asylum, you may at any time withdraw your application.

## Transfer to another safe country

If you have been registered in another safe country, with your fingerprints for example, prior to your coming to Norway, or if you have a visa issued by another safe country, then it is this country that is responsible for assessing your asylum application. You may, therefore, be sent to that country. This applies to member countries of the Dublin Co-operation, to include the European Union (EU) and Iceland.

The Norwegian authorities can require three to ten months to determine whether you were in a safe country and whether you should be transferred. Should the investigations take a longer time, then the UDI (the Norwegian authorities) may decide to interview you. However, the Norwegian authorities will not assess your asylum application prior to determining the transfer to another safe country. You will not be allowed to take up employment while you are waiting. If you are not to be transferred to another country, your application will be processed in Norway.

If you have a spouse or children under 18 years of age who have applied

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU APPLY FOR ASYLUM?

### 1. Registration as Asylum Seeker

You will be registered as an asylum seeker by the police. The police take your fingerprints and ask about your identity and travel route to Norway. You must hand in to the police your passport and other identity documents. You will then be sent to an asylum reception centre where you will remain during the initial stage of the asylum procedure.

### 2. Health Examination

During the first days you will undergo a health examination. The tuberculosis examination is compulsory. Examination for other diseases (such as HIV and hepatitis) is voluntary.

### 3. Information from NOAS

You will receive information from NOAS shortly after arrival at the centre. NOAS is a non-governmental organization established to provide information and advice to asylum seekers. You will first be shown an information film and given a pamphlet in your native language or a language you know well. After the film, you will have a meeting with an advisor who speaks your native language or

another you understand well. The meeting will last approximately 40 minutes. You will receive advice on how best to present your asylum application to the Norwegian authorities. The advisor will give you information on the requirements for obtaining asylum in Norway. It is important that you make use of this meeting and ask all the questions you have with regard to your asylum application.

## 4. Personal Declaration

After few days and while still at the reception centre you will fill in a personal declaration where you will explain why you are applying for asylum in Norway. For the personal declaration you can use your native language or another you know well. The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) will then translate your personal declaration into Norwegian.

You will in the personal declaration answer questions to include among others on:

- Your own background and that of your family members. This is important if you are to apply for family reunification at a later stage
- Why you left your home country
- Why you fear returning to your home country
- Flight and itinerary, i.e. how you came to Norway

You must fill in the personal declaration at the UDI's premises which are located at the reception centre. Should you have special reasons, you may ask the UDI to take the personal declaration to your room. You must deliver in both cases the filled-out personal declaration on the same day.

Asylum applications presented by those originating from certain countries can undergo a quick procedure. The personal declaration will therefore not apply. You can ask NOAS which countries are included in this procedure.

You must not allow others to fill in your personal declaration for you. Those who are unable to read and write will not fill in the personal declaration.

## 5. Interview with the Directorate of Immigration (UDI)

You will soon be interviewed by the UDI. The UDI is a state agency that will assess your asylum application. The interview normally lasts 4 hours. The UDI will use the information in your personal declaration and the interview to assess whether you are in need for asylum or residency on other grounds.

## 6. Interpreter

During the interview with the UDI an interpreter will be present who speaks a language you understand well. The interpreter is sworn to professional secrecy. The role of the interpreter is to interpret only. The interpreter must always remain neutral. If you have problems with the interpreter, you must immediately inform the interviewer.

You do not have the right to choose an interpreter for the interview with the UDI.

## 7. Temporary work permit

You may be granted a temporary work permit after the interview with the UDI and if the following conditions are met:

- You are above 18 years of age
- There is no doubt about your identity
- It has been decided that you will not be transferred to another safe country

It takes at least six months before you are granted a temporary work permit.

## 8. Medical treatment

You have the right for the basic medical treatment while you are waiting for the decision on your asylum application. For children under 7 years of age medical treatment is free of charge. Otherwise, all other patients are generally required to cover the costs partially. If you need to see a psychologist, you may apply to the UDI for the costs to be covered. Contact an employee at the reception centre for more information.

## 9. How long does it take to receive an answer from the UDI?

The UDI can take from few weeks to a year to process an asylum application. There are many reasons why the processing period varies. In some cases the UDI must undertake investigations, for example to see if you should be transferred to another safe country.

## 10. Reception centre

You will be offered to stay at a reception centre until your asylum application has been processed. If there are important reasons why you should stay in a particular area, you should immediately inform the reception centre. The reasons can, for example, include having close family members, an offer of employment, or strong reasons with regard to health. You may choose to live privately, but you lose the right for financial aid.

## 11. New information

If you obtain new and important information that is of relevance to your asylum application after the UDI interview, you must immediately notify the UDI of this information. You can contact employees at the reception centre to obtain more information about how to do this.

## 12. Crime

If you commit a criminal act, your asylum application will undergo a quick procedure so that you can be transported out of Norway, should you not have the need for protection. Criminal acts may also prevent you from entering Norway and many other European countries at a later date.

## 13. Rejection from the UDI – the right for appeal

If the UDI decides to reject your application, you have the right to appeal the decision. You will be assigned a lawyer. The UDI sends the decision to the lawyer who will explain to you why your application has been rejected. If you wish to appeal the UDI's decision, you must agree with your lawyer on the content of the appeal. The appeal should include commentary on the UDI's decision and the most important arguments of your application. Your lawyer will be paid for five hours of work by the Norwegian authorities. The appeal must normally be sent within three weeks.

## 14. Appeals examined by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE)

Normally, you may remain in Norway while your appeal is being examined. This does not apply if the UDI has decided that it is obvious that you are not in need for protection

The appeal is examined by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE). The UNE is a state agency that examines appeals against rejections issued by the UDI. If the UNE needs more information you will be summoned for a meeting.













## 15. Rejection from the UNE – obligation to leave

If the UNE rejects your appeal, you are under the obligation to leave Norway within the period of time assigned by the police. This is normally two weeks. You will then no longer have the right to remain in Norway, nor will you be allowed to stay in a reception centre.

You should contact the police or the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to agree on the departure procedure. If you leave the country on your own, you must notify the reception centre of the date of your departure.

If you do not leave the country voluntarily, the police will deport you to your home country. You will owe the Norwegian State the costs incurred in the deportation.

## 16. Courts of law

The final rejection can be appealed in the Norwegian courts. If you wish to do so, you must normally cover the expenses required by a lawyer and the courts.

## IMPORTANT ADVICE RELATED TO THE PERSONAL DECLARATION AND ASYLUM INTERVIEW

You are responsible for ensuring that the Norwegian authorities receive the information they need to assess your need for protection. We have the following important advice for you:

- Explain thoroughly and tell the interviewer in details why it was necessary for you to leave your home country and why you fear returning.
- Norwegian authorities already have knowledge of the situation in your home country. It is therefore important that you should concentrate on what you yourself have experienced and your situation if you should be returned to your home country.
- Be as accurate as possible with all the facts.
- If there are experiences you find difficult to explain, you may first want to talk about it with one of NOAS' advisors.
- If you are uncertain about how safe it is to tell all to the Norwegian authorities, it is very important that you talk about it with one of NOAS' advisors.

- If you arrive together with children under 18 years of age, it is important also to explain their situation and experiences.
- If you have questions you do not understand during the interview, it is important to ask the interviewer for explanation.
- Tell the truth. Incorrect information can lead to rejection because the Norwegian authorities do not believe your explanations.
- If you have documents that are of relevance to your asylum application, you should take them with you to the interview. The interpreter can translate the contents to the UDI.

### Women Asylum Seekers

Sometimes women experience other forms of persecution than that faced by men. It can be difficult for women to talk about their experiences to men.

If you wish, you may speak with a woman advisor from NOAS. After viewing the information film, please inform NOAS as soon as possible.

You may also ask for a woman interviewer and a woman interpreter during the UDI interview. Please inform NOAS during the meeting with one of their advisors.

### Do you have children with you?

Many asylum seekers arrive together with children under 18 years of age. The UDI normally interviews children above 12 years of age. It can be important for children to explain their experiences using their own words. In some cases, where parents and children have experienced the same persecution, it can affect children more seriously. The UDI has employees experienced in interviewing children. The interview is less formal than that for adults.

If you agree that your child/children above 12 years of age can be interviewed, please inform NOAS during the meeting.

Are you under 18 years of age?

If you are under 18 years of age and arrive in Norway alone, without parents or other adults who are responsible for you, then you have special rights.

Reception centres have sections designated for children and youth who arrive alone in Norway.

You can have help from a guardian. The guardian is an adult who takes care of your interests. The guardian will be present during the interview with the UDI.

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You will also have help from a lawyer. The lawyer will help you with your asylum application in Norway. You will normally meet the lawyer before the interview with the UDI, and the lawyer will help you to prepare for the interview. You will also meet the lawyer after the interview. Together you will go through the interview and check that all is accurate.

The Norwegian authorities will try and find your parents in your home country, if possible.

Many who are adults claim to be under 18 years of age because they believe that this will give them a better chance to be granted asylum. Therefore and in many cases the UDI undertakes a medical examination that can determine the age of an asylum seeker. You may yourself decide whether you wish to be examined or not, but your asylum application will be undermined if you refuse to take the examination. If the examination reveals that you are above 18 years of age, you will be treated as an adult, and you will be transferred to a reception centre for adults.

### **Professional Secrecy**

The Norwegian authorities, the interpreter, the lawyer and NOAS are sworn to professional secrecy. This means they cannot pass on information about your asylum application to the authorities in your home country or others. You should therefore not be afraid to explain thoroughly why you need protection.



The police register newly-arrived asylum seekers. In addition, the police also deport asylum seekers if they do not leave Norway voluntarily after their application has been rejected.



The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) is a state agency that processes asylum applications, family reunification, visas and citizenship. The UDI is also responsible for reception centres, settlement and integration of asylum seekers who are granted residence in Norway.

Mail address: P.O. Box 8108 Dep., 0032 Oslo  
Street address: Hausmannsgt. 21, Oslo  
Tel.: (+47) 23 35 15 00, fax: (+47) 23 35 15 01  
Website: [www.udi.no](http://www.udi.no), e-mail: [udi@udi.no](mailto:udi@udi.no)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) assists, among other, with voluntary repatriation

Mail address: Postboks 8927 Youngstorget, 0028 Oslo  
Street address: Storgata 10 A, 2nd floor, Oslo. (Open weekdays between 10 am and 12 noon.)  
Tel.: (+47) 23 10 53 22. (You can call weekdays between 1 pm and 5 pm)  
Webside: [www.iom.no](http://www.iom.no), e-mail: [iomoslo@iomosl.org](mailto:iomoslo@iomosl.org)



The Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) is an independent state agency that examines appeals against rejections issued by the UDI.

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The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the UN agency in charge of international refugees. The UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic countries is located in Stockholm, Sweden. In Norway the UNHCR co-operates with NOAS.



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