

25 September 2006

# No Margin for Error

## **Implementation of UNHCR's *Procedural Standards* for refugee status determination at selected UNHCR field offices in 2006**

**"The importance of these procedures cannot be overemphasized. ... A wrong decision might cost the person's life or liberty."**

UNHCR training manual (1989)

**"The *RSD Procedural Standards* should be implemented in all operations where UNHCR has responsibility to conduct RSD pursuant to its mandate."**

UNHCR *Procedural Standards* (2003/2005)

## **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

**Several large UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field offices have failed to fully comply with the modest standards of fairness that the UN refugee agency set for its refugee status determination (RSD) procedures nearly three years ago.**

Every year, at least 80,000 people who say they are in danger of persecution depend on UNHCR's RSD procedures to obtain protection as refugees. This study looked at the procedures used in 2006 at five of the largest UNHCR RSD operations in the world: Egypt, Hong Kong, Kenya, Lebanon and Turkey. It also examined the RSD procedures used by UNHCR's office in Israel, where UNHCR handles most of the initial phases of RSD but the final decision is made by the government. It measured the field offices' procedures against UNHCR's *Procedural Standards for RSD under UNHCR's Mandate*, which was issued to internally in November 2003 and published in September 2005.

Most of the *Procedural Standards* are on their face mandatory for field offices, though some sections are proposed as recommendations of best practices. The UNHCR standards have themselves been criticized for falling short of the normal benchmarks of due process that UNHCR advocates for governments.

Of the five offices, only one, UNHCR-Cairo (Egypt), had fully complied with all of the mandatory sections. None had fully implemented the best practice recommendation that rejected asylum-seekers should be given specific reasons for rejection in writing. The following summarizes major gaps:

- Failure to give all required information to asylum seekers early in the RSD process: **Hong Kong, Israel, Kenya**
- Failure to give a full RSD interview to all applicants: **Israel, Lebanon**
- Violation of the right to counsel: **Hong Kong, Israel, Kenya**
- Rejecting applications in an accelerated manner without full opportunities for case development, assessment and appeal: **Hong Kong, Israel, Lebanon**
- Failure to speed processing of special needs cases: **Israel**

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### **BACKGROUND**

**R**efugee status determination (RSD) is the doorway to the protection and assistance that the international community provides to refugees. In around 80 countries the UN High Commissioner for Refugees acts as the gatekeeper to protection, assessing individual refugee applications when no group-based refugee policy is in place and when the host government has no asylum system of its own.

In this role, the UN's refugee agency effectively decides among asylum-seekers who can be saved from deportation and in some cases released from detention, who can get humanitarian assistance, and often who can apply to resettle to third countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and some states in the European Union. In 1989, UNHCR wrote, "The importance of these procedures cannot be overemphasized. ... A wrong decision might cost the person's life or liberty."<sup>\*</sup>

For the past few years, UNHCR has received more individual RSD applications than any single government, making the High Commissioner the biggest RSD decision-maker in the world. The quality of UNHCR's RSD procedures affects the fate of around 89,000 people per year.<sup>+</sup>

Nearly every independent assessment of UNHCR's RSD procedures has raised serious concerns about them, chiefly about lack of basic fairness safeguards. UNHCR typically withholds most evidence from scrutiny, and does not provide a meaningfully independent appeal. Some UNHCR offices have resisted asylum-seekers' rights to legal representation. Specific reasons for rejection have not normally been given.

UNHCR officials have repeatedly stated their intention to improve UNHCR's RSD practices. In November 2003, UNHCR distributed to its field offices the agency's first ever comprehensive set of standards for UNHCR RSD procedures, called *Procedural Standards for RSD under UNHCR's Mandate*. They were then published for the public in September 2005. In the introduction, UNHCR called refugee status determination a "core protection function," and wrote "the *RSD Procedural Standards* should be

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<sup>\*</sup> Determination of Refugee Status, RLD 2 (1989).

<sup>+</sup> According to UNHCR, there were approximately 37,000 individual RSD applications at 78 UNHCR field offices in 2005, with each application including an average of 2.39 family members.

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implemented in all operations where UNHCR has responsibility to conduct RSD pursuant to its mandate.”

Refugee advocates welcomed the *Procedural Standards* as a step forward, but noted that they still fell short of the standards UNHCR advocates for governments, especially in terms of allowing asylum-seekers to see evidence considered in their cases and providing access to an independent appeal. On the critical issue of giving reasons for rejection, the *Procedural Standards* gave only a “best practice” recommendation to give specific individualized explanations to rejected asylum-seekers. Nevertheless, the *Standards* made clear that asylum-seekers can have legal representatives assist them in the UNHCR RSD process, provided for accelerated processing of applicants with special needs, banned the use of accelerated procedures to reject “manifestly unfounded” claims, and itemized specific topics about which UNHCR offices should provide information to asylum seekers as early as possible in the RSD process.

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report examines the impact of UNHCR's *Procedural Standards* in actual practices by field offices. It does not address concerns about whether UNHCR RSD should actually be held to higher standards; instead, this report simply measures UNHCR practices against the modest benchmarks that the agency has set for itself. Given that these standards are lower than those that UNHCR otherwise advocates, any non-compliance by any field office raises serious concerns, first for the safety of refugees who may be errantly refused protection, and second about UNHCR's commitment to RSD reform.

## COUNTRIES PROFILED

Of the roughly 80 countries where UNHCR is solely responsible for RSD, this report examines only five: **Egypt, Hong Kong, Kenya, Lebanon** and **Turkey**. The list is small because RSDWatch reports only on countries where it could obtain reliable data.

Though a short list, the five UNHCR offices examined represent a substantial slice of UNHCR's global RSD activity. The list includes three of UNHCR's five largest RSD operations in 2005 (Kenya, Turkey and Egypt),

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and all were among the 15 largest UNHCR RSD operations. All of the countries profiled in this report received roughly 1000 or more new refugee applicants in 2005. Because the UNHCR office in Kenya alone received more than 39,000 refugee applicants, these five UNHCR offices represent more than half of the new RSD applications submitted to UNHCR last year.

In addition to these five countries, this report also includes information about UNHCR RSD practices in **Israel**. Technically, UNHCR is not solely responsible for refugee status determination in Israel. Instead, UNHCR assists the government in RSD by receiving applications, interviewing asylum-seekers, assessing cases, and making recommendations to a government committee. However, the system at its initial stages depends extensively on the work of UNHCR; the UNHCR assessment and recommendation are the main materials – in most cases, the only materials – on which the government makes RSD decisions. Israeli government lawyers have repeatedly told courts that they rely on UNHCR to determine refugee status. In addition, Israel detains and bars from seeking asylum most Arabs, Sudanese and Iranians. In these cases UNHCR often conducts RSD without government involvement. Because the Israeli system depends so heavily on UNHCR, it is appropriate to assess the RSD procedures in reference to the UNHCR *Procedural Standards*. But because the Israeli government ultimately issues RSD decisions, this report does not assess the mechanisms for giving reasons for rejection or allowing appeals, since these are not clearly UNHCR's responsibility.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In August 2006, RSDWatch distributed a questionnaire to contacts in multiple countries who work regularly with UNHCR RSD procedures. The timing was determined in order to allow the results to be published before the annual "Pre-EXCOM" consultations between UNHCR and non-governmental organizations, which take place at the end of September. By the time the questionnaire was distributed, the *Procedural Standards* had been in the hands of UNHCR field offices for more than two and a half years.

The questionnaire used to solicit information for this report is posted on the RSDWatch website ([www.rsdwatch.org](http://www.rsdwatch.org)).

RSDWatch regularly receives information from many sources about UNHCR practices in different countries, but works to ensure that it only

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publishes reliable information. In this report, data is taken from independent lawyers, non-governmental organizations, and UNHCR staff members. In some cases RSDWatch received information from more than one source in reference to a single UNHCR office. RSDWatch reports data only if the source is professional, has actual knowledge of UNHCR RSD procedures, and can provide information that is precise, concrete and verifiable. Regrettably, some of RSDWatch's sources feared that publication of their individual or organizational names could jeopardize their standing with UNHCR; the names of sources are therefore not published in this report.

A draft of this report was sent to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva in advance of publication in order to provide UNHCR an opportunity to comment. UNHCR staff provided helpful clarifications on some factual matters, which are reflected in this final version. In some cases, information provided by UNHCR conflicted with other information received by RSDWatch. Where there was no definitive way to resolve the conflicting reports, these instances led to a report of "N/A" for some field offices on some procedural criteria. The "summary findings" section was not written until UNHCR had an opportunity to comment and the rest of the report.

## **ASSESSING IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS**

**T**he remainder of this report consists of summary pages for each of the countries profiled, noting whether the *Procedural Standards* have been implemented by the local UNHCR field office in question.

This report covers seven distinct procedural rights that are included in the *Procedural Standards*. The content of each right is discussed in detail on the RSDWatch website in the "UNHCR RSD Standards" section. In this report reference to each specific standard is linked by hypertext to the section of RSDWatch explaining the content of the standard in more detail.

#### **Right to information**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page353.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page353.htm)

#### **Right to an interview**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page3100.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page3100.htm)

#### **Right to an interpreter**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page3260.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page3260.htm)

#### **Right to counsel**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page3206.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page3206.htm)

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#### **Avoidance of accelerated rejection**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page2775.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page2775.htm)

#### **Accelerating special needs cases**

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page2775.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page2775.htm)

#### **Right to appeal\***

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page3422.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page3422.htm)

#### **Reasons for rejection (best practice)\***

[http://www.rsdwatch.org/index\\_files/Page3476.htm](http://www.rsdwatch.org/index_files/Page3476.htm)

This is not an exhaustive list of procedural rights in UNHCR RSD procedures, and it does not include all topics covered by RSDWatch's original questionnaire. In some cases, RSDWatch solicited information about subjects beyond the limits of the *Procedural Standards* which may be used in the future but was not relevant for this report. In other cases, the information that RSDWatch received on certain procedural issues was consistently vague and conflicting. For example, RSDWatch sought information about whether UNHCR interviewers read back portions of interview transcripts to asylum-seekers, as required by the *Procedural Standards*. The information received on this subject was too tentative and incomplete to be reported.

RSDWatch asked its sources only to provide descriptive information about how UNHCR conducts RSD; RSDWatch then analyzed the descriptions and compared them to the *Procedural Standards*. When the local UNHCR practice does not violate the terms of the *Procedural Standards*, it is reported at “**Full Compliance.**” Where the local practice violates the *Standards*, it is reported as “**Non-Compliance.**” However, in several cases we list as an alternative “**Incomplete compliance.**” Technically, this is a form of non-compliance. However, it was evident in assessing data that some UNHCR offices have taken partial steps toward adhering to the *Standards*, but were either not complying in full or were not complying in all cases. Such instances should be differentiated from cases where a UNHCR office fails to implement a rule in its entirety or violates a norm so substantially that the violation outweighs the compliance. The difference is

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\* This report indicates only compliance with and implementation of UNHCR's *Procedural Standards* applicable to UNHCR offices. In terms of the right to appeal and reasons for rejection, these *Standards* fall short of international norms of due process and UNHCR's repeated advice to governments. The *Standards* state that rejected applicants should have the chance to appeal and that their appeals should be considered by staff different from those involved in the first instance decision. UNHCR does not offer the chance to appeal to a different authority that is institutionally independent. Normally, UNHCR staff considering appeals work in the same office and often under the same supervisors as those considering first instance cases. The *Procedural Standards* recommend, but do not strictly require, field offices to provide specific individualized reasons for rejection in writing.

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in many cases a matter of degree and is admittedly subjective, but we believe the distinction is nevertheless important.

On the subject of giving reasons for rejection, field offices are graded in terms of “**implementation**” rather than “compliance.” This terminology is more appropriate because the *Procedural Standards* only make non-binding recommendations about reasons for rejection.

Where data is unknown or information is conflicting, we report it as “**N/A.**”



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### Report on UNHCR office in: **EGYPT**

#### Right to information

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Cairo publishes a detailed booklet that is distributed to all asylum-seekers at registration.

#### Right to an interview

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Sudanese and Iraqi asylum-seekers are provided group-based temporary protection, and do not normally have access to regular RSD interviews.

#### Right to an interpreter

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

#### Right to counsel

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

#### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

#### Accelerating special needs cases

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

#### Right to appeal

#### **FULL COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Cairo has a separate RSD appeals unit, though it is still within the same office and is not a fully separate authority with institutional independence.

#### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

#### **PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**

UNHCR-Cairo has recently provided short (one paragraph or in some cases one sentence) individualized summaries of the reasons for rejection to applicants who have legal representation. In September 2006, UNHCR-Cairo began providing rejection letters with 10 general categories of reasons for rejection that can be checked off. However, UNHCR-Cairo declined to implement the *Procedural Standards*' recommendation that rejected applicants also be given specific individualized information to explain why a specific category applies to them.

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# Report on UNHCR office in: **HONG KONG**

### Right to information

### INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE

UNHCR-Hong Kong distributes a written information sheet prepared in 7 languages to asylum-seekers. The sheet does not note that female applicants may request interpreters and interviewers of the same gender. UNHCR-Hong Kong states that it provides oral counseling on criteria for family unity and durable solutions, but only after an applicant is recognized. There is dispute over whether UNHCR-Hong Kong effectively informs asylum-seekers about complaints procedures. This information is not included in the standard information sheet given to asylum-seekers, but it is posted inside the UNHCR office. However, UNHCR-Hong Kong does provide information in writing and orally about the refugee definition and the RSD process.

### Right to an interview

### FULL COMPLIANCE

### Right to an interpreter

### FULL COMPLIANCE

### Right to counsel

### INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE

UNHCR-Hong Kong accepts written statements from applicants prepared with legal assistance, but in some cases requires applicants to write their own statement as well in person at the UNHCR office without legal advice. UNHCR-Hong Kong allows applicants to bring legal representatives with them to RSD interviews, but only if they have a Hong Kong practicing certificate. This violates the *Procedural Standards*, which say specifically that well-informed non-lawyers may act as representatives in UNHCR RSD. In addition, UNHCR-Hong Kong has imposed a "Code of Ethics" on legal representatives, the terms of which are disputed. Among other things, the imposed Code appears to violate normal rules of attorney-client confidentiality.

### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

### NON-COMPLIANCE

In cases where asylum-seekers are detained at the airport, UNHCR-Hong Kong rejects some asylum-seekers in an accelerated manner, which then facilitates the applicant's immediate deportation. Rejected asylum-seekers have the opportunity to appeal. Such rapid decision-making prevents the full provision of information, advice, careful preparation and assessment that are necessary on the part of both applicants and decision-makers to have a minimally reliable RSD. This practice appears to take place in the context of government pressure. However, UNHCR-Hong Kong's use of the accelerated procedure raises serious concerns that *bona fide* refugees could be errantly rejected, without recourse to appeal, and then subject to *de facto* refoulement, with UNHCR's formal blessing.

### Accelerating special needs cases

### N/A

UNHCR-Hong Kong has accelerated procedures for torture victims, unaccompanied children, people in detention and women with special needs. Information was unclear about whether UNHCR-Hong Kong has similar procedures for the elderly, people with urgent medical needs, or the disabled.

### Right to appeal

### FULL COMPLIANCE

### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

### PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

UNHCR-Hong Kong uses the standard form recommended by the *Procedural Standards*, but individual reasons are given to rejected asylum-seekers orally only, not in writing. The oral reasons vary in their level of specificity. The *Procedural Standards* recommend providing individualized reasons in writing on the rejection letter form.

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# Report on UNHCR office in: ISRAEL

### Right to information

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Jerusalem provides information orally only at RSD interviews rather than before the interview and "as early as possible" as the *Procedural Standards* require. The information does not cover all of the topics required by the *Procedural Standards*.

### Right to an interview

#### **INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Jerusalem has rejected some applicants without providing an interview, based solely on written submissions. This is strictly prohibited by the *Procedural Standards*. Palestinians are not interviewed and are not allowed to begin refugee applications (see below).

### Right to an interpreter

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH LIMITS**

Interpreters are not always immediately available in rare dialects. Confidentiality is sometimes a concern because the small size of some communities in Israel makes it difficult to locate interpreters who do not already have a personal relationship with the asylum-seekers. It is not known whether female interpreters are always available in all languages.

### Right to counsel

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

Contrary to the *Procedural Standards*, UNHCR-Jerusalem has actively opposed the role of lawyers in its interviews, in some cases refuses to speak to lawyers about their clients' cases, and prohibits applicants from bringing legal representatives to RSD interviews. UNHCR does not necessarily pass all written documents produced by legal representatives to the government body that makes the final RSD decision. In 2003, the local representative of UNHCR distributed a position paper opposing the role of lawyers in RSD.

### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Jerusalem developed, in cooperation with the Israeli government, a "short procedure" for accelerated rejection of weak applications. The *Procedural Standards* prohibit using accelerated procedures to screen out "manifestly unfounded" applications. UNHCR-Jerusalem refuses to allow any registration by Palestinians in Israel, regardless of whether they have ever been eligible for assistance from UNRWA, and even though UNRWA does not operate inside Israel. Palestinian asylum-seekers are thus rejected by UNHCR without any consideration of their individual cases, in violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention article 3, which prohibits discrimination by nationality in refugee policies.

### Accelerating special needs cases

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Jerusalem has no special procedures to accelerate processing for vulnerable or special needs cases, though applicants in detention generally are given priority.

### Right to appeal

#### **NOT APPLICABLE TO UNHCR**

Because the final RSD decision is made by the Israeli government, appeals are not a direct UNHCR responsibility. However, in practice appeals can be submitted only to UNHCR, which can forward them with a recommendation to the same government committee that makes first instance decisions.

### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

#### **NOT APPLICABLE TO UNHCR**

Rejection letters are issued by the Ministry of Interior, not by UNHCR, and include short (at most, one or two paragraphs) explanations for the rejections.

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# Report on UNHCR office in: KENYA

### Right to information

### INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE

UNHCR-Nairobi provides information to refugees and asylum seekers both orally and in writing, but the practice is inconsistent. Some nationalities, especially Somalis, are reportedly told immediately to go to refugee camps without receiving complete information about RSD. Others are given more information, but not in all cases. Applicants are not informed in all cases about all topics required in the *Standards*, especially the criteria for refugee status, procedures for RSD and family unity, or their rights and responsibilities in Kenya.

### Right to an interview

### FULL COMPLIANCE

Several nationalities receive recognition as refugees on a *prima facie* basis and are not interviewed in all cases.

### Right to an interpreter

### FULL COMPLIANCE

### Right to counsel

### NON-COMPLIANCE

UNHCR-Nairobi refuses to accept written testimonies prepared by asylum-seekers' legal representatives, and refuses to allow asylum-seekers to bring legal representatives with them to first instance RSD interviews. This violates UNHCR's *Procedural Standards*. Legal representatives are permitted at appeals interviews, but only if they are a lawyer. This also violates the *Procedural Standards*.

### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

### N/A

During the 2005 Kenyan registration crisis that led to a massive influx of thousands of refugee claims, UNHCR-Nairobi rejected many applicants after short interviews. They were given a chance to appeal in writing. It is not clear whether UNHCR-Nairobi used an accelerated procedure to reject manifestly unfounded claims, which the *Procedural Standards* strictly prohibit.

### Accelerating special needs cases

### FULL COMPLIANCE

### Right to appeal

### N/A

UNHCR-Nairobi has issued conflicting written instructions to asylum-seekers about the deadline for filing appeals. Some letters of rejection state that appeals must be filed within 7 days, which is shorter than mandated in the *Procedural Standards*. But other written information given to asylum-seekers says the deadline is 30 days, the minimum provided for in the *Procedural Standards*.

### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

### PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

UNHCR-Nairobi informs applicants their claims have been rejected with a generic form with general categories of reasons checked. This in part implements a recommendation of the *Procedural Standards*. But UNHCR-Nairobi does not follow the recommended best practice of providing specific individualized explanations sufficient to allow the person to make an informed decision about whether and how to appeal.

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# Report on UNHCR office in: **LEBANON**

### Right to information

**N/A**

UNHCR-Beirut provides information to asylum-seekers orally only. It is not clear if information is provided on all topics required by the *Procedural Standards*, especially on complaints procedures; nor whether the information is provided as early as possible. UNHCR-Beirut is preparing a more detailed information booklet for distribution to asylum-seekers. However, asylum-seekers consistently report that they are not provided sufficient information by UNHCR.

### Right to an interview

**INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE**

Iraqi asylum-seekers are provided group-based temporary protection, and do not normally have access to regular RSD interviews, which is not prohibited by the *Standards*. However, UNHCR-Beirut delays interviews with applicants if it suspects they have submitted fraudulent documents or previously applied and were rejected under a different name. This effectively prevents some applicants from having a full oral interview in which to air their refugee claims.

### Right to an interpreter

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

Interpreters are not always immediately available in rare dialects.

### Right to counsel

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

**NON-COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Beirut rejects or puts on hold applications where UNHCR concludes the application is based on fraudulent documents. This effectively amounts to a means of accelerated rejection of allegedly fraudulent applications, a practice strictly prohibited by the *Procedural Standards*.

### Accelerating special needs cases

**INCOMPLETE COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Beirut screens out most vulnerable cases as required by the *Procedural Standards*, except cases of urgent medical need.

### Right to appeal

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

New interviews are always granted in appeals of credibility-based rejections.

### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

**NOT IMPLEMENTED**

UNHCR-Beirut provides general letters of rejection, but they are not detailed or specific to the individual.

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# Report on UNHCR office in: **TURKEY**

### Right to information

N/A

Information received from UNHCR officially and from other sources conflicted substantially about whether UNHCR-Ankara provides information to asylum-seekers orally only or in writing as well. There was also dispute about when the information is provided. Some sources state that information is provided to asylum-seekers normally on the day of the RSD interview, rather than before the interview and "as early as possible" as the *Procedural Standards* require. But UNHCR-Ankara states that information at least about the asylum procedure is given earlier when asylum-seekers register. UNHCR-Ankara notes that it also has a specialized information leaflet addressing the needs of female asylum-seekers.

### Right to an interview

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

Iraqi asylum-seekers are provided group-based temporary protection, and do not normally have access to regular RSD interviews

### Right to an interpreter

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

Female interpreters are not always available in all languages. Applicants requesting female interpreters are offered the chance to delay their RSD interviews until an interpreter is available.

### Right to counsel

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

### Avoidance of accelerated rejection

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

### Accelerating special needs cases

N/A

UNHCR-Ankara states that it has accelerates all special needs cases as required by the *Procedural Standards*, but other sources report that there are no accelerated procedures for torture victims, women in need, the elderly, or people with urgent medical needs.

### Right to appeal

**FULL COMPLIANCE**

UNHCR-Ankara has a separate RSD appeals unit, though it is still within the same office and is not a fully separate authority with institutional independence.

### Reasons for rejection (best practice)

**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**

UNHCR-Ankara allows legal representatives access to UNHCR's assessment of individual cases. However, only applicants with legal representation are able to benefit from this practice. UNHCR-Ankara normally provides denied applicants a rejection letter with general categories of reasons of rejection checked, but without individualized specific information.