

asylos
research for asylum



Annual report and financial accounts

for the year ending 31st December 2022



We stand for
asylum decisions
based on evidence

Completed **72** Country of Origin Information (COI) research reports for use in individual asylum and human rights cases in **46** countries



Reviewed **2** UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs) covering the situation in Rwanda and published a commentary and a COI compilation on the same topic



10,778 unique downloads of our reports, repositories and commentaries



Highlights from 2022

Reviewed **42** CPINs published by the UK Home Office for use in asylum decisions



90% of lawyers who gave feedback on the COI research report they requested said that our research provided them with information they did not already have



Published **53** editions of our emergency COI repositories on Afghanistan and Ukraine, and on Afghan asylum seekers in Pakistan, Turkey and Iran.



Successfully transitioned ARC Foundation's projects and work over to Asylos to create a single centre of COI expertise in the UK



Published **1** disability focused COI report + good practice guidelines + a research training handbook



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Who we are

Asylos is an international network of over 60 volunteers who provide high-quality human rights research and documentation to people claiming asylum and their representatives around the world. This Country of Origin Information (COI) is essential to corroborate the testimony of individuals fleeing persecution, and often makes the difference between winning or losing a case.



Our Vision

A world in which all asylum decisions are based on fair process and accurate information.

Access to information

Country of Origin Information (COI) is accessible to all who need it. People seeking asylum and their legal counsel have access to relevant, timely and high-quality information to substantiate their claims.

Use of information

The asylum procedure is always evidence-based. Relevant, timely and high-quality Country of Origin Information (COI) is considered in every asylum decision.

Absence of prejudice

The asylum procedure is always unbiased. Processes involving people seeking asylum are conducted in a fair and impartial manner with no room for assumptions or preconceptions.

Societal Awareness

There is broad recognition within host societies of the importance of high-quality Country of Origin Information (COI) in the asylum procedure.

Organisational stability

Asylos is sustainable and fit to deliver its mission. This includes financial stability and a participatory organisational structure.

We are a charity

Asylos is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charities Commission for England and Wales (charity number 1158386) at Unit 12 Imperial Works, Fountayne Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4QL. Our principal office is located at Asterweg 20N, 1031 HN Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



Message from the Director ”

Dear friends and supporters,

Asylos was established in 2010 because our founders had experienced first-hand that a single piece of information can make or break an asylum case. Claims for asylum and other forms of protection are often won or lost on the facts. Asylum lawyers need to establish their clients' well-founded fear of persecution, and this may require very specific information. However, it is nearly impossible for asylum lawyers who are time and resource-pressed to establish such information, especially when supporting a wide range of clients from diverse backgrounds.

Asylos provides a bespoke Country of Origin Information (COI) research service for lawyers and NGOs who represent people seeking asylum worldwide. We leverage our team of over 60 volunteer researchers with networks in countries of origin who can collectively conduct research in 45 languages.

2022 was a particularly meaningful year for Asylos. Through a project transfer and subsequent closure of our long-term project partner, Asylum Research Centre Foundation, we have made significant progress towards the creation of a single centre of expertise on COI in the UK and beyond. As part of the transfer, we have broadened our portfolio of activities to include quality review of COI that is published by governments and intergovernmental organisations.

In 2022, we have seen thousands of people receive access to a fairer asylum procedure as a result of better access to relevant COI. At the same time, political efforts in the UK to make asylum claims inadmissible, detain and forcibly remove migrants to third countries, have continued to erode the fundamental right to claim asylum and to receive a fair and evidence-based procedure. Asylos' vision is a world in which all asylum decisions are based on fair process and accurate information, and we will continue to stand up for our vision and defend the right to asylum.

We thank all of you who supported and enabled our work in 2022 and who stand in solidarity with those who require international protection.



Sophie Kloos
Director
Asylos

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Kloos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

What we do



Consistently fill COI gaps

Our research investigates human rights violations in specific countries or deals with specific facts relating to the claimant's testimony. Our reports are free of charge and compiled on demand for asylum lawyers and NGOs who assist people fleeing persecution and grave threats with their claim for protection. In addition, we publish larger thematic research reports which fill information gaps.



Emergency response

We spot and respond to fast-changing emergencies that significantly impact migration patterns and increase the need for evidence across the migration sector.



Monitor government COI

We review COI products published by the UK Home Office and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and make recommendations for how they could be improved, thereby raising the quality of information that decision-makers rely on when deciding whether to grant individuals protection.



Capacity building

We train volunteer researchers, lawyers and NGO representatives on researching and using Country of Origin Information to represent their clients with better evidence, leading to fairer decision making on asylum claims.



Accessibility of high-quality COI

We administer a growing database of research reports and constantly invest in growing its audience and improving its functions. The database is accessible to anyone supporting people seeking asylum worldwide. Through outreach online and offline, we aim to ensure that our research can support as many people seeking asylum as possible.



Asylos' role in the sector

We conduct outreach and conversations with key COI actors, primarily in the EU and the UK, to ensure effective exchange of knowledge and research insights.



Organisational resilience

We will ensure that Asylos' staff and governance structures remain healthy, invest in the cohesion of the network, and further develop safeguarding policies and procedures.

Achievements and Performance in 2022



We continued to produce and provide new COI research reports

We produced **72** reports for people seeking asylum originating from **46** countries in total.

Reports produced in 2022 covered questions on:

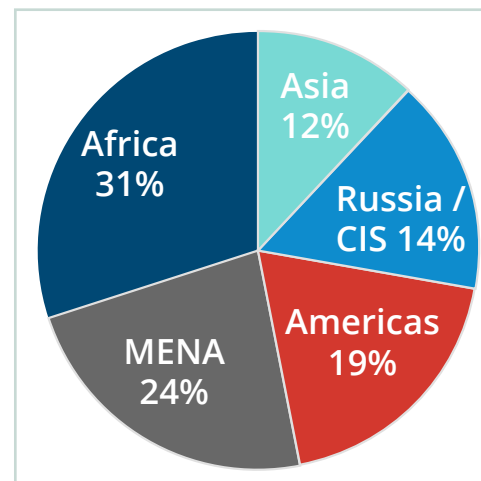
- ➔ Social group e.g. sexual orientation (28%)
- ➔ National – local governance practices (28%)
- ➔ Domestic security (17%)
- ➔ Gender (14%)
- ➔ Political opposition (8%)
- ➔ Civil status (5%).

The reports we produced were used at the following stages of the asylum procedure:

- ➔ Initial administrative application (22%)
- ➔ First Appeal (26%)
- ➔ Second or subsequent appeal (8%)
- ➔ Further submission/fresh claim (21%)
- ➔ 22% of reports produced were not applicable or used in other procedures such as statelessness, Article 8 and Article 3 claims.

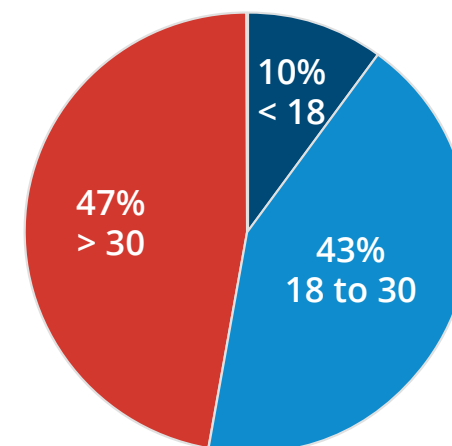
The completed reports were split as follows between our regional volunteer research teams:

Asia – 9 = 12%
Africa – 22 = 31%
Americas – 14 = 19%
Russia / CIS – 10 = 14%
MENA – 17 = 24%



Age breakdown of asylum applicants:

10% under 18
43% 18-30
47% above 30





Asylos received **90** research requests in 2022.

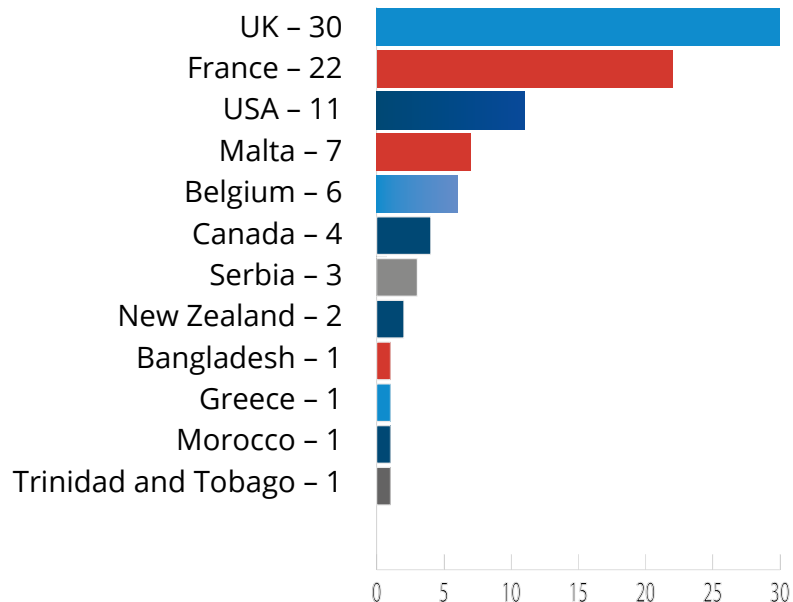
The top four countries for research requests were:

- Sudan
- Ethiopia
- Georgia
- Bangladesh.

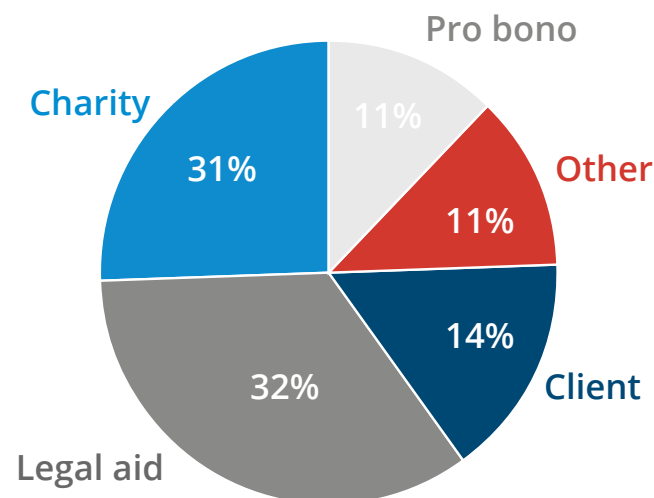
Our referrers support their clients either:

- through legal aid (32%)
- on a pro bono basis (11%)
- through charity funding (31%)
- financed by the client (14%)
- or through other means (11%).

Research requests came from 13 host countries:



This underlines the value and importance of Asylos providing COI reports free of charge.



We tracked the impact of our work

We continued to monitor the impact of our reports in order to further develop and refine our work. Our feedback collection has a time lag of at least one year, given the time it typically takes between a research request to Asylos and the actual date of the respective decision. We collect feedback on a quarterly basis and aggregate it once a year. In 2022, we continued to receive feedback on research reports that were requested in 2020 as well as gathered feedback on reports from 2021.

In total, for 2020 and 2021, we were able to obtain feedback on 49% of respective reports produced. In the 128 cases over this two-year period:

- ➔ For 90% of the feedback collected, requestors said that our research provided them with information they did not already have before.
- ➔ Where a case has received an outcome, 54% of them were successful. 43% of the feedback stated the cases were still pending.



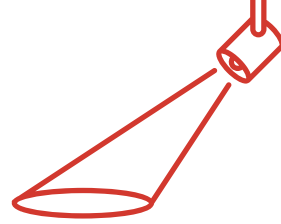
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“Asylos staff were highly professional and responsive. They reacted and responded to our call for support in spite of extremely narrow deadlines, understanding the importance of the ECtHR cases for the concrete individual but also for the EU/European future asylum and human rights legal practice.”

**Rados Djurovic,
Executive Director
Asylum Protection Center, Serbia**

“As an organisation Asylos has made significant efforts to reach out and understand the need for evidence on the frontline of asylum cases, to be led by the organisations and individuals who have experiences of the issues to be researched, and to make sure that they are adding to the information available for asylum decision-makers. The quality of the information and reports provided by Asylos is consistently high, and I have always found them to be incredibly responsible, responsive and willing to go the extra mile. My colleagues and I regularly rely on research and reports by Asylos to support our clients’ asylum claims.”

**Anne Skehan
Legal Practice Lead
Islington Law Centre, UK**



In the Spotlight



Asylum story

In July 2021, Asylos received a bespoke research request on Forced Child Labor and Exploitation in Ethiopia by caseworker Alice Giuliano, representing the family reunion case of Anaya* before the UK Home Office. Anaya is an Ethiopian woman granted refugee status in the UK.

Anaya fled Ethiopia in 2016, after being detained and sexually abused for participating in demonstrations against the Ethiopian government, which at the time was planning to evict Oromo people from their land. Anaya had six siblings left in Ethiopia. Two sisters were detained with her, but have never been found since, and four others, all minors are still living between Oromia and Addis Ababa. After the death of both their parents, Anaya's four younger siblings were left with no caregiver. They were staying at a family friend's house, in which they were taken out of school and forced into labour. The children were in a very vulnerable state.

The UK Home office initially rejected Anaya's request for family reunification, considering that her claims of abuse were not substantiated, that Article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution stipulates that children have the right to not be subjected to exploitative practices, the right to not to perform work that may be hazardous to their education or wellbeing.

They also considered that the Ethiopian police has the means of maintaining law and order in the country and that therefore the children could rely on the government for support.

On the basis of these arguments, Alice decided to request a bespoke research report from Asylos which looks into state support for children in Ethiopia. The Asylos report was intended to review the publicly available information about the government's means to maintain law and order, and provide support for children.

The Asylos report found evidence indicating that despite Article 36 of the Ethiopian Constitution and the international treaties and conventions that Ethiopia ratified for child protection, in practice, there is limited capacity to reach out and prevent child protection issues. In the appeal, Alice based most of her arguments on the sources presented in the Asylos report.

After the appeal, the UK Home Office withdrew their decision, and granted all four siblings their visas to the UK, and Anaya and her siblings were reunited.

* Name changed and other identifiable characteristics removed

We continued our thematic research

We conducted a mapping exercise and stakeholder survey to determine which COI gaps for people claiming asylum are the most urgent, and consequently, which thematic COI reports have the potential to benefit a large number of individuals who are susceptible to poor decision-making. Our thematic reports fill COI gaps by combining publicly available information with new information obtained from interviewing individuals with firsthand knowledge of the subject or recent knowledge of the country being researched.

Disability COI

In February 2022, we delivered a launch event to share findings from a joint project between Asylos and the Asylum Research Centre (ARC) Foundation about Country of Origin Information for persons with disabilities. The launch event was co-hosted by Garden Court Chambers. During the event, we presented our thematic report, "**Nigeria: Children and Young people with disabilities**", as well as findings from a rapid review of COI sources. We introduced models and understandings of disability, our "**Principles for Conducting COI research on Disability**" and presented a review of the legal context for international protection claims for persons with disabilities.



Consistently
fill COI gaps

"It was a pleasure to attend this webinar. Very many thanks to ARC/Asylos and Garden Court Chambers for the excellent, clear and clinically oriented presentation."

Muhammad Hussein
Disability-COI webinar
participant

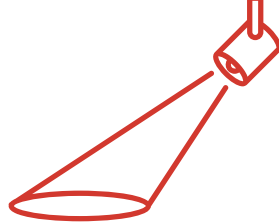
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"Asylos' 2019 (thematic) report "Albania: Trafficked Boys and Young Men" and their 2021 report "**Nigeria: Children and Young People with Disabilities**" have made an enormous difference to the prospect of very vulnerable children and young people being allowed to remain in the UK safely."

Anne Skehan
Legal Practice Lead
Islington Law Centre, UK

"Thanks Asylos and Asylum Research Centre (ARC) – ARC Foundation for this interesting webinar! It was extremely useful discussing together about disability in the context of international protection and discovering disability-focused COI sources."

Federica Frascolla
Disability-COI webinar participant



In the Spotlight

Statelessness

In the first quarter of 2022, during a scoping exercise aimed at legal representatives and charities in the UK, Asylos became aware of the absence of relevant Country of Origin Information (COI) about stateless persons and simultaneously, the low awareness of statelessness issues in the immigration and asylum legal sector.

Following a number of consultations with experts on the topic of statelessness, we embarked on a project to address information gaps about stateless persons who are seeking international protection and stateless status. With recommendations from these consultations, we identified and set up a steering committee made up of five highly qualified sector professionals to provide strategic advice and expert input to guide the project, based on lived experience of statelessness and/or relevant professional expertise. We also sourced and trained six volunteer researchers from our network, who conducted the COI desk research in four different languages (namely English, French, Dutch and Arabic).

We conducted in-depth interviews with five stakeholders, academics and practitioners whom we had identified as having current knowledge on the situation of stateless Palestinians in Lebanon. Together, these sources painted a troubling picture of the situation for stateless and undocumented Palestinians in Lebanon.

Sources highlighted the various forms and layers of discrimination perpetrated by state actors as well as within communities and families. This includes their rights as stateless persons, which are set out in international agreements; notably, Lebanon is not a party to international treaties that define and require states to provide protection to refugees who are stateless

or to stateless persons, in addition to lacking domestic legislation that ensures protection for those who are stateless, at risk of becoming stateless, or vulnerable to outcomes similar to those of stateless persons.

In 2023 we will publish a COI report “[Lebanon, Stateless Palestinians](#)” and “[Principles for Conducting Country of Origin Information Research on Statelessness](#)” which will enable practitioners to build their own capacity for statelessness COI research.



Consistently
fill COI gaps

”

“The lack of information and poorly defined processes can act as a huge barrier in front of vulnerable people; however, it can be enhanced through strengthening country of origin information. I’m happy to be a member of the steering committee with Asylos to produce the first step-by-step method for thematic COI about stateless Palestinians in Lebanon. As a Palestinian refugee, I’m thrilled to have contributed with my research and lived experience in shaping the report; hoping it will benefit people of my community”

Walaa Kayyal, member of Asylos Statelessness Project Steering Committee

We continued to respond to emergency COI needs

2022 saw fast-changing and concerning political situations in the UK and internationally that shaped migration patterns and opened up urgent needs for COI. We were able to respond at short notice at times requiring quick pivoting, decision-making and actioning of new projects and publications to respond to these needs.

The emergency work aimed to identify gaps in COI to address by compiling and regularly updating information, widely disseminating it to be used for both individual claims for asylum and for broader impact including policy and strategic litigation.

In order to fulfil the expanding needs of this project, in 2022 we appointed a consultant who led an emergency team made up of 48 people, of which:

- 14 were trainee solicitors from Clifford Chance and
- 34 were new volunteer researchers.

The volunteer researchers brought a wealth of expertise including language skills and contacts on the ground in:

- Afghanistan
- Pakistan
- Iran and
- Turkey.

“I have just become aware of your wonderful and intend to share it widely along with my own research efforts... So grateful for what you and so many others are doing!!”

Cyndy Levy
VECINA & VIISTA, Villanova, USA

“It's bang up to date, with a new edition every Thursday for the time being.”

Free Movement



The COI Repositories

The team produced five Emergency COI Repositories:

1. We provided an ongoing response to the needs emerging from the geopolitical situation in **Afghanistan** by publishing weekly updates to our Afghanistan COI Repository. 53 editions were published in total, covering a wide range of topics in line with demand from legal practitioners. Topics included the availability and accessibility of marriage certificates in Afghanistan, and human rights defenders working on disability rights in Afghanistan.
2. We produced three other repositories on the situation of **Afghan asylum-seekers in Pakistan, Turkey and Iran**. Topics included:
 - The availability and accessibility of tuberculosis testing in Pakistan
 - The availability and accessibility of public and private clinics for DNA testing for people claiming asylum in Iran and the availability and
 - Accessibility of medical care for Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey.
3. In response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, we launched a new Repository about the situation of **stateless and at risk of statelessness individuals from Ukraine** in April 2022.

We continued to respond to emergency COI needs



Emergency response

Dissemination

In order to get the information to the people and stakeholders who needed it the most we:

- ➔ shared each update with: a new mailing list of subscribers, an online legal network of 10,000 international lawyers, external Google groups and UK-based solicitors, barristers and OISC advisors working on refugee rights;
- ➔ worked with the local researchers to map experts and actors on the ground; and
- ➔ convened, with the support from the Justice Together Initiative and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, online events with lawyers, human rights officers and other stakeholders:
 - May 2022: situation of Afghan nationals in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Speakers included the Society for Human Rights and Prisoners (SHARP) in Pakistan, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) and the Afghan Pro Bono Initiative – 32 attendees.
 - July 2022: launch of the Ukraine Statelessness Repository – 27 attendees.

Reach

The Emergency COI Repositories provided high-quality research for lawyers working on strategic litigation, for example, legal actions seeking to evacuate Afghan female judges from Afghanistan to the UK, and were used by civil society organisations and coalitions involved in campaigns and advocacy work. Our Ukraine COI Repository was disseminated to over 170 organisations and individuals working on statelessness across Europe. One particular NGO in the Czech Republic used it in their daily work of their lawyers counselling Ukrainian refugees and working on strategic litigation to change Czech laws which do not provide protection for stateless people.



One volunteer researcher who worked on the Afghanistan COI Repository said:

“I felt very proud that Asylos was doing something so useful and so necessary. It felt great to be part of it. There is such a call for it being timely and up to date.”

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We monitored and sought to improve the quality of COI products produced by governmental and intergovernmental organisations



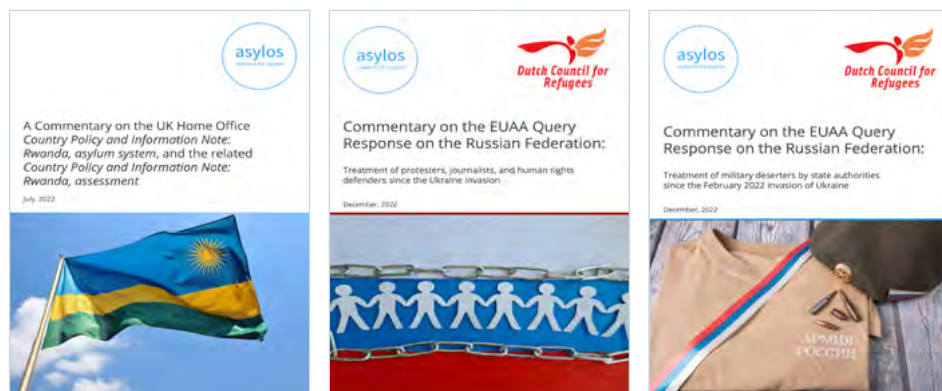
Decision-makers often rely on COI produced by governmental and intergovernmental organisations to give a concise overview of the facts in relation to specific demographic groups at risk of persecution or other harm. This COI is used to assist government officials in making international protection decisions.

Recognising their importance, in 2022 we started a new strand of essential work following the project transfer from the ARC Foundation. This project shines a spotlight on COI produced by governmental and intergovernmental organisations, and seeks to raise the bar of quality asylum decisions by highlighting gaps and shortcomings, and signposting additional COI that can help legal representatives to build a more full and balanced picture of country conditions.

We reviewed 42 UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs), making recommendations for how these reports could be improved.

We reviewed and **publicly commented on two UK Home Office CPINs covering the situation in Rwanda** and published a **COI compilation on the same topic**.

We published two commentaries in partnership with the Dutch Council for Refugees on EUAA (European Union Agency for Asylum): Query Responses on Russia, covering the **treatment of protesters, journalists and human rights defenders** and **military deserters** by the authorities since the invasion of Ukraine.



We monitored and sought to improve the quality of COI products produced by governmental and intergovernmental organisations

UK policy on Rwanda

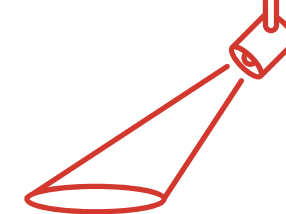
In April 2022, the UK government announced a new UK-Rwanda Asylum Partnership Agreement which would see people who are deemed to have arrived in the UK through illegal means, including those fleeing persecution and war, relocated to Rwanda to have their asylum claims processed there.

A publicly available commentary and complementary COI report was produced in response to the publication of a suite of CPINs on Rwanda by the UK Home Office. The Home Office produced the CPINs in order to assist them in assessing whether Rwanda could be classified as a 'safe third country of asylum', and whether persons of particular profiles relocated to Rwanda would face a real risk of being subjected to treatment contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Our reports identified gaps and omissions in the Home Office publication and provided additional relevant COI on the issues identified.

Reach

The commentary on the Rwanda CPINs received a lot of positive feedback from lawyers and NGOs, in particular how useful the published COI report on the Rwandan asylum system was. It also formed the basis for Asylos' submission to a House of Lords inquiry into the Memorandum of Understanding that underpins the UK-Rwanda asylum partnership arrangement. In December 2022, Asylos presented the findings of its commentary on the CPINs to colleagues working in Refugee Services at the British Red Cross.

The commentary received coverage in national and specialist news outlets, including [the Guardian](#), the Byline Times ("[Home Office Rwanda Plan Accused of Being 'Fundamentally Flawed'](#)" and "[The Human Rights Gaps in the Rwanda Scheme Revealed](#)"), and [Free Movement](#) (specialist immigration law publication).



In the Spotlight

“Excellent and in-depth analysis of the Home Office’s inadequate CPIN on Rwanda’s asylum system, pulled together at speed by Asylos’ wonderful team. Essential reading for anyone with a client who has been issued with a Notice of Intent for Rwanda.”

Sonia Lenegan, immigration, asylum and public law solicitor

”

“Your consolidation of the issues was great, and the info will be so useful.”

Independent Expert Witness on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

“This detailed and balanced report exposes huge gaps in the official Home Office assessment of Rwanda, lack of evidence to support the conclusions reached and highly selective quoting of some sources of information. The picture that emerges is of a retrospective attempt to justify a political decision already made by ministers.”

Colin Yeo, Free Movement

We created additional COI research capacity



We recruited and trained new and existing Asylos volunteers

In 2022, we recruited 46 new volunteers. We moved to an annual volunteer recruitment model and, in addition, we actively recruited additional volunteers to support the increase in volume of emergency research work required. In 2022, the network consisted of a total of 64 active volunteers regularly carrying out research.

Existing Asylos volunteers completed their annual refresher training of the core training modules including:

- Assessing and Selecting Source Material
- Writing the Report.

New volunteers completed the core training modules and a test research report. When required for specific cases, volunteer researchers also completed the annually refreshed thematic training modules:

- COI for Children and Young People
- Medical COI
- Private and Family Life
- COI for cases involving Disability.



"I have gone through the five modules including the thematic modules. I learned a lot and thoroughly enjoyed all the modules, even though it was a little overwhelming at the beginning."

Rongpangmenla Longchar
(Asia team)

"I really enjoyed the research training and learned a lot! It was a great chance to get to know the organization, and very concrete and to the point on COI research and what is expected in an Asylos report which I found very focused and practical. I hope I've absorbed enough of it, but it will surely be useful to keep close at hand during my research assignment!"

Deborah Casalini (Africa team)

We created additional COI research capacity

We invested in developing our research tools and standards



The thematic work on disabilities and the “**Nigeria: Children and Young People with Disabilities**” report in particular was the foundation from which we built our **Principles Document and Training Handbook**. From this we designed and delivered webinars for external stakeholders and launched a new disability thematic training module specifically for Asylos volunteers providing advice and guidance for conducting COI research on cases that involve people with disabilities. In addition, we made the Principles document and the Handbook available on our website, and they were downloaded a total of 59 times in 2022.

We delivered COI training webinars

In partnership with ARC Foundation, in 2022, we delivered 6 training session webinars for legal representatives and other people working to support people claiming asylum in the UK and beyond. Two sessions covered **Country of Origin Information** fundamentals and four sessions covered researching information for asylum claims involving **disability**.

In total 90 people attended our training; 56 were from the UK, 35 of whom were from so-called Legal Aid ‘deserts’.

100% of participants stated that as a result of the workshop, they felt more confident in researching and using COI, and 90% rated the training as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’.



Capacity
building

“The exercises were extremely helpful to understand how to approach research and using COI databases. It was the combination of insightful teaching together with the practical groups’ exercises. Great!”

Training participant

“Gaining insight into the breadth of issues in asylum claims by people with disabilities or family members with disabilities and breaking down the various aspects of a claim to research; the overview of different models of disability and terminology were all very helpful.”

Training participant

“Explanation of different approaches to disability and also the importance of researching intersectionality [were the most useful aspects of the training]. The legal section was vital for providing additional context.”

Training participant

We made our resources more accessible

Downloads of reports

All our research is made available to registered lawyers and other individuals representing people claiming asylum in our database on our website. Information in COI reports that are produced for an individual asylum claim can frequently apply to many other people seeking asylum.

- ➔ In 2022, our case-specific research reports were downloaded 1,362 unique times from our website, a 21% increase on 2021.
- ➔ 3,222 subscribers (lawyers, caseworkers, NGOs) receive our monthly research updates including newly produced reports. This represents a 15% increase from 2021.

Thematic reports (produced in 2021), the emergency repositories and the commentaries were made available for download from our website and externally on [the European Country of Origin Information Network](#) and were downloaded a total of 9,416 times.

Overall, Asylos' research publications (repositories, case-specific, thematic reports and commentaries) were downloaded 10,778 times in 2022. Together with the number of individual COI research reports produced, it gives an approximate indication of how many people have been helped by Asylos' research. Our assumption is that one unique download represents a use in approximately one case, knowing that some downloads will not lead to a use, whereas other downloads may lead to several uses.

In 2022, Asylos helped approximately 10,852 people claiming asylum

2021:
3,609



2022:
10,852



↑
67%



Research reports downloads

21%
↑

increase on 2021
in downloads
- a total of 1,362

Monthly research update downloads

15%
↑

increase on 2021
to 3,222
subscribers

We made our resources more accessible

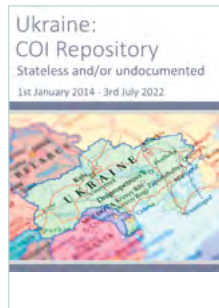


Accessibility of
high-quality
COI

Our thematic and emergency reports were downloaded a total of 9,416 times.



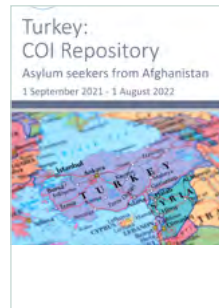
2,826



206



308



28



51

Number of downloads: Emergency response work

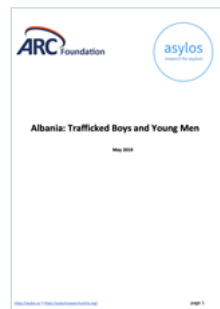
Afghanistan COI Repository – 2,826

Ukraine, Statelessness COI Repository – 206

Afghan asylum seekers in Pakistan – 308

Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey – 28

Afghan asylum seekers in Iran – 51



1,584



1,976



1,051



832

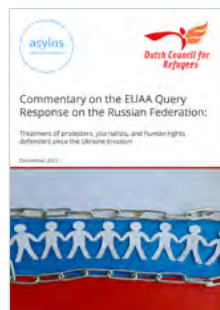
Number of downloads: Thematic reports

Albania, trafficked boys and young men (2019) – 1,584

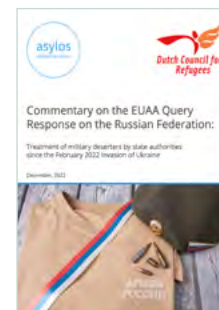
Ghana, state treatment of LGBTIQ+ persons (2021) – 1,976

Afghanistan, young male "westernised" returnees to Kabul (2017) – 1,051

Nigeria, children and young People with disabilities (2021) – 832



66



60



428

Number of downloads: Commentaries

Russia Federation, treatment of protesters, journalists, human rights defenders – 66

Russia Federation, treatment of military deserters – 60

Rwanda asylum system – 428

We made our resources more accessible



Website

We saw a significant increase in website traffic in 2022.

- 27,691 visitors to our main website compared to 18,474 in 2021
- 50,772 visitors to our database of research reports compared to 3,829 in 2021



49% ↑

27,691 website visitors
in 2022 (18,474 in 2021)



1226% ↑

50,772 visitors to our
research reports database
in 2022 (3,829 in 2021)

Social media

We continued to increase the number of followers on social media to the following totals:

- 2,245 on LinkedIn
- 3,581 on Facebook
- 3,860 on Twitter



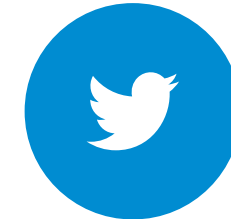
2,245

followers by
end of 2022



3,581

followers by
end of 2022



3,860

followers by
end of 2022

News and blog posts

We raised awareness of our work through two blog posts which we published on our website: [“Five Tips for Disability-focused COI research”](#) and [“Why declaring Rwanda a safe third country of Asylum is incoherent with available country information”](#).

Furthermore, we published 13 news items on our website to keep our members, beneficiaries and supporters up-to-date on our work.

We strengthened Asyllos' place in the sector

We completed a project transfer from ARC Foundation

In 2021, we ambitiously aimed to become the lead expert on Country of Origin Information (COI) in the UK and beyond. Thanks to a project transfer from our previous project partner, ARC Foundation, this has now become a reality. Our aim was to consolidate our work under one organisation in order to improve our efficiency, increase our capacity to address sector need, and reduce competition for funding. The work that was formerly done by ARC Foundation was transferred to Asyllos at the start of 2022. We secured funding for this new strand of work from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Justice Together Initiative and the Trust for London, and were then able to recruit two new members of staff.

Steering committees

Following on from our thematic report on disability, we set up a steering committee for the Statelessness thematic project which enabled us to work with new partners, particularly experts in statelessness. For all future thematic work we will use the same format and create a committee bringing subject experts together to use their expertise to steer the project, ensure it does not duplicate, to peer review and disseminate, and help ensure our work remains accurate and relevant.

We set up and are the chair of a COI Experts Network

The members of the COI Experts Network include senior representation and COI experts from the UNHCR, ACCORD, the Danish Refugee Council, the Dutch Refugee Council, the Swiss Refugee Council, the Asylum Protection Centre Serbia, and Asilo in Europa in Italy. We formed this group following requests from within the sector for an NGO group specifically focusing on COI. The launch meeting was in July 2022.



Asylos' role in the sector

Other partnerships

We started working with the European Network on Statelessness (ENS) early in 2022, and the partnership further developed whilst scoping for our new thematic topic.

Senior staff at ENS were involved at the start and throughout this project including recommending and making introductions to potential Steering Committee members, being an active member of the Steering Committee themselves and reviewing the work. The ENS have also invited Asyllos to present the findings of the report at their member event in Madrid in 2023.

We continue to rely on close working relationships with law firms, NGOs and law chambers to receive requests for individual COI research reports for asylum seekers. In 2022, we received requests from 47 different organisations, 39 of which were not for profit.



"I am so glad that Asyllos brought to life the COI-Expert group, which connects me with fellow COI experts. It is such a useful space to share our mutual challenges, ideas and work."

Stephanie Huber
ARC Representative



We continued to strengthen our governance, advisory structures and volunteer network



Organisational
resilience

At the end of 2022
we had 64 active
volunteers.

% split by regional team:

35% Africa
22% Americas
12% Asia
23% MENA
8% Russia/CIS

In 2022, we held a total of 11 network-wide calls, 5 board meetings and 3 fundraising sub-committee meetings. We held a two-day coordination meeting in May and one All Asylors Conference in October.

Our volunteer network

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Asylors. In order to conduct thorough and impactful research on COI cases, we prioritise researchers with an understanding of the countries and demographics that are being researched. Thus, we have built a network of highly skilled research volunteers who are spread out across the world and can conduct research on regions of high pertinence to them – either through lived experience or interest and expertise. Due to the unpredictable nature of global asylum trends, it is difficult to predict a steady stream of research requests and, it is therefore our greatest advantage to work with dedicated and motivated volunteers who can be called upon when needed, but do not have to establish rigid schedules for their Asylors work.



Aleena Khan ”
(Asia team)

“Refugee and asylum rights are important first and foremost because human rights are important in every context. More specifically, the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are often overlooked or undervalued by policy makers and politicians, which makes it that much more important for us as a community to support each other. I believe the world and the right to thrive within it belongs to us all; therefore, no person should be punished or persecuted for their nationality, religion, sexuality, gender identity. During my time with Asylors, I hope to support as many cases as I possibly can.... I hope to further understand my strengths as a researcher and my specific interests within the field of human rights and social justice.”



Joseph Blackmoore ”
(Americas team)

“During my time at Asylors, I hope the research I contribute to will help support the asylum claims of as many refugees as possible so that they can enjoy the same rights everyone is entitled to.”



Rongpangmenla Longchar ”
(Asia team)

“I hope to represent people who belong to minority communities like mine through my COI research work, and get hands on experience to learn and grow further in the field of refugee and asylum rights.”



Misha Nayak-Oliver ”
(Central and South
Americas team Co-ordinator and
Emergency COI Repository Coordinator)

“I hope to collaborate with like-minded colleagues to use human rights and the law to support individuals and groups in upholding their rights. The impact of our COI reports and decision-making processes across the world reflect the critical importance of our work.”

We continued to strengthen our governance, advisory structures and volunteer network



**Organisational
resilience**

Volunteer co-ordinators

Asylos' staff members work closely with the volunteer coordination team, comprising Asylos' 12 regional research coordinators (up to three per team) for Africa, Americas, Asia, MENA and the Russia/CIS team. Each coordinator oversees the work of the volunteer researchers in the respective team and contributes to the strategic development of the network and its functions.

Our annual coordination meeting took place in-person in Amsterdam on the weekend of 21-22 May with nine volunteers attending. The agenda included round table discussions, presentations, process reviews with the aim of sharing best practice, and improving processes and quality of the work.

One attendee said: "The coordination was a wonderful opportunity to meet in person, exchange thoughts and experiences and to find ways to continue building Asylos together. For the attendees this in-person meeting was crucial in order to get fully up to speed with the many developments at Asylos since our last meeting."

All Asylos Conference

In October of 2022, Asylos held its first in-person All Asylos Conference since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference took place over three days, just outside of Amsterdam, and was attended by 38 members of the Asylos network. Some of our members travelled from as far away as India, Brazil, and Canada to take part. Many others came from across Europe, whilst some members dialled in online.

Over the course of the conference, we hosted a multitude of interactive sessions on topics such as our multi-annual strategy, fundraising opportunities, network cohesion and volunteer empowerment. Each session finished with the creation of concrete action points for both the staff team and the volunteers to work on, in order to improve the functioning of the organisation.

The conference proved to be a powerful, enlightening experience, said one volunteer who found Asylos to be "a compass, a community and a home."

Another volunteer also noted during one of the interactive sessions that the conference made them feel that "Asylos is an organisation that has managed to unite some of the most dedicated and passionate people from across the world. To find so many people with hectic lives who put aside the time to work on such a great cause proves that Asylos is an organisation that is made up of commitment and love."

”

"For me, it was particularly exciting to actually meet teammates and others in the network in person.

I came back with so many practical takeaways and new relationships, so I'm very grateful to have been able to attend the conference."

Tanya Koshy
Asylos – Asia Team

"The conference seemed to flow seamlessly, and the agenda was packed with both substantive and organisational items, making it super diverse and exciting!"

Anna Magyarlaki, Trustee

Structure, Governance and Management



Organisational
resilience

Asylos is an international non-governmental organisation established in 2010. Its original constitution is dated July 29, 2014 and was amended on May 19, 2020. It is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. The constitution defines the charity's objects as:

"The promotion of human rights law as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations or regional conventions and declarations, and in national law. In pursuing this object, Asylos will focus on the advancement of human rights law with respect to people seeking asylum and stateless people in the UK and elsewhere."

Our trustees

The constitution allows for up to 12 trustees to be appointed. Trustees serve for renewable terms of three years, with the exception of the founding trustees, who served for renewable terms of four years. Trustees can serve until they either resign or their term ends without renewal. None of our trustees were remunerated for their trusteeship aside from expenses. Our trustees are responsible for setting the strategy and are responsible in law for the running of Asylos. All trustees, except where otherwise stated, served for the whole year:

Katharina Natter (Chair since October 2022)

Anna Magyarlaci (Vice-Chair since October 2022)

Phil Arnold

Alexandra Dufresne (Chair until October 2022, now regular Board member)

Stephanie Huber (appointed in March 2022)

Dick Oosting

Diamantoula Vlantoni

Liz Williams

Julia Vonk (appointed in October 2022)

Mira Wolf-Bauwens (left the Board in July 2022)

When new trustees are appointed, they are given a formal induction to the work of the charity and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of trustees, charity law and safeguarding. New trustees are nominated by the Board of Trustees, and appointed where they have the necessary skills to contribute to the charity's management and development.

Advisory Committee

Since 2012, Asylos has benefitted from an Advisory Committee to advise on research priorities and to support fundraising. The members are:

Thomas Klau (Chair of the Advisory Committee, co-founder of Asylos and editor of Eurointelligence)

Franziska Brantner (member of the German Bundestag, relinquished her duties as Advisory Committee member in 2022)

Géraud de Geouffre de la Pradelle (President of the Citizen's Enquiry Commission on France's role in Rwanda and a Patron of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine)

Gunnar Lund (former Ambassador of Sweden to France, the US and the EU)

Anila Noor (Refugee activist based in the Netherlands)

Salim Salamah (Activist focusing on the issue of statelessness among the Syrian-Palestinian population)

Satya Staes Polet (lawyer in a leading international law firm)

Nick Witney (senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations)

Colin Yeo (Founder and Editor of the Free Movement blog; barrister at Garden Court Chambers)



Organisational resilience

Staff

At the end of 2022, Asylos had five staff members (two full-time and three part-time), of which four are based in the Netherlands and one in the UK.

In 2022, we appointed the following people:

Emily Wilbourn – Programme Manager. New post from January 2022.

Fatima Ali – Programme Manager. New post from January 2022.

Laurence Hamieh – Operations Assistant. New post from August part time.

Patrick Annez de Taboada – Network Co-ordinator. Replacement from October.

Misha Nayak-Oliver – part-time consultant leading the emergency work.

Anna Magyarlaki – Interim fundraising consultant. September 2022 to January 2023.

Sally Marsh – Senior Fundraiser. To start January 2023.

Asylos' Director, **Sophie Kloos**, is responsible for the strategic management of the organisation, and the daily coordination and delegation of all Asylos-related tasks. The Programme Managers job share and fulfil all the work to do with thematic research, reviews of governmental COI and training. The Network Coordinator coordinates and supports the volunteers. The Operations Assistant runs our communications and supports the team. The Fundraiser raises funds and carries out the monitoring and evaluation function for Asylos.

Supported by our funding partners

Sigrid Rausing Trust

AB Charitable Trust

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Haella Foundation

Souter Trust

Allen Lane Foundation

Evan Cornish Foundation

Hilden Charitable Fund

Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund



Financial Review

During the year, the net funds raised from the general public, philanthropies, and trusts and foundations was EUR 289,000. Trusts and foundations are our biggest source of income and, in total, we raised a net income of EUR 275,000 from this source. We accrued EUR 162,000 from the previous year. Our total expenses in 2022 amounted to EUR 342,000.

As shown in the restricted funds column in the Statement of Financial Activities, restrictive income was EUR 73,000 which was raised for particular programmes or to be spent within a set time frame.

At the end of 2022, Asylos had EUR 34,629 in reserves. This represents 1.2 months of expenditure on charitable activities. It is the trustees' view that the charity ideally needs about three months' worth of expenditure to cover emergency situations and prevent disruptions to programmes. We will therefore aim to build further reserves over time.

Restricted funds and unrestricted funds that are earmarked to be spent in a certain time frame are not included in the trustees' view of reserve needs because these funds are held by the charity for only as long as is necessary to organise the relevant activities. Normally these funds are spent within one year of receipt.

INCOME	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2021
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	€95,031		€95,031	€104,302
Sigrid Rausing Trust	€69,535		€69,535	€69,535
AB Charitable Trust	€23,178		€23,178	€23,178
Dutch private donor	€15,000		€15,000	€15,000
Haella Foundation				€5,000
Allen Lane Foundation				€11,589
Leathersellers' Company Charitable Trust				€1,738
Austrian Private Philanthropist				€20,000
Evan Cornish Foundation				€5,795
Souter Trust		€3,477	€3,477	€4,634
Oak Foundation				€8,692
Hilden Charitable Trust		€5,795	€5,795	
Justice Together Initiative		€48,897	€48,897	
Trust for London		€14,486	€14,486	
Clifford Chance	€11,589		€11,589	
Other donations	€1,993		€1,993	€2,197
Interest and other	€223		€223	€11
TOTAL GROSS INCOME	€216,550	€72,655	€289,205	€271,671

Financial Review

EXPENDITURE

Payments	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2021
Network coordination	€94,788	€72,057	€166,845	€104,052
Volunteer meetings	€0	€33,841	€33,841	€218
Office costs	€16,465		€16,465	€12,822
(UK) Project costs	€9,563	€106,345	€115,908	€43,777
Governance and development	€8,847		€8,847	€5,195
TOTAL PAYMENTS	€129,662	€212,243	€341,905	€166,064

NET RECEIPTS/PAYMENTS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	2021
Net of receipts/payments	€86,888	€139,588	€52,700	€105,607
Transfer between funds				
Cash funds last year end	€22,862	€139,588	€162,450	€56,844
TOTAL CASH FUNDS	€109,750	€0	€109,750	€162,451

CASH FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds			
BNP Paribas (Belgium)	€11,737			
Transfer between funds	€98,013			
TOTAL CASH FUNDS	€109,750			

We focused on fundraising

We held quarterly finance and fundraising sub-committee meetings with a sub-group of the Board, the Director and the Fundraiser to monitor progress and ensure financial stability.

We confirmed grants with several new funders:

- Clifford Chance
- Justice Together Initiative
- Trust for London
- The Paul Hamlyn Foundation made an additional grant to us for our emergency work.

We raised EUR 1,993 in individual donations.

Declaration

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards. The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to ascertain to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulation 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In the interest of transparency and accountability to our donors we publish our annual report and accounts on our website. The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



20th June 2023

Katharina Natter

Date



#proofnotprejudice

