

# Your asylum application

## Information about the General Asylum Procedure

### **Why have you received this leaflet?**

You wish to apply for asylum in the Netherlands. Asylum means protection in another country for people who are not safe in their own country and cannot get protection there.

When you apply for asylum, you are officially asking the Dutch government for a residence permit. You need this permit to live in the Netherlands. The asylum procedure will start once you submit your asylum application. The asylum procedure is a legal procedure in which the Dutch government determines whether you can be granted a residence permit.

This leaflet explains the steps of the asylum procedure. It also explains what you have to do (your obligations) and what you can expect from the Dutch government (your rights).

## Which organisations will you encounter?



The **Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers** (COA) is responsible for the reception and support of asylum seekers in the Netherlands during the asylum procedure. The COA makes sure you have food and health insurance and can help you contact a doctor, if necessary. The COA is an independent organisation and does not decide on your asylum application.

[www.coa.nl](http://www.coa.nl)



**GezondheidsZorg Asielzoekers** (GZA) provides assistance if you are ill or have any medical questions. There is a GZA health centre at or near every COA reception location. The GZA can arrange appointments for you with a doctor's assistant, nurse, GGZ practice support worker or general practitioner.

[www.gzasielzoekers.nl](http://www.gzasielzoekers.nl)



**VluchtelingenWerk Nederland** (VWN) is an independent human rights organisation that promotes the interests of asylum seekers. VWN will provide information about the asylum procedure, inform and support you throughout the procedure, and mediate in the event of problems with other organisations. They work closely with your lawyer on this. VWN does not decide on your asylum application.

[www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl)

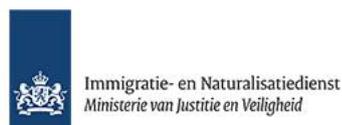
[www.forrefugees.nl](http://www.forrefugees.nl)

## Raad voor Rechtsbijstand

The **Raad voor Rechtsbijstand** (RvR) ensures that you get help from a lawyer if you cannot afford one yourself. The RvR will pay the lawyer a fee for the services provided. The lawyer does not work for the RvR.

The lawyer is an independent legal aid provider who assists you during your asylum procedure.

[www.rvr.org](http://www.rvr.org)



The **Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst** (IND) is part of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. The IND employees will investigate whether you are entitled to asylum in the Netherlands. For that purpose, they will ask you about who you are and why you have applied for asylum in the Netherlands. They will investigate your story and the situation in the country you came from, and decide whether you are permitted to temporarily or permanently stay in the Netherlands.

[www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl)



There are **security guards** in the IND buildings and COA reception centres. You can recognise them by their uniforms. They are there for your safety. You can also ask them questions about what is and is not permitted in the IND and COA buildings and premises. The security guards have no influence on the decision about your asylum application.



The **Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie** (IOM) is an independent organisation that supports migrants worldwide. The IOM can help you if you want to leave the Netherlands independently. The IOM provides practical information about your return and reintegration and can assist you in arranging your departure from the Netherlands. Ask a VWN employee or your lawyer to help you with this.

[www.iom-nederland.nl](http://www.iom-nederland.nl)



Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek  
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid

The **Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek** (DT&V) is part of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. If the IND denies you asylum, the DT&V will help you arrange your return to your country of origin.

[www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl](http://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl)



Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen  
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid

The **Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen** (DJI) is part of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. You are staying in a secure facility while you are in immigration detention. The DJI manages the building. DJI employees wear a uniform. They will care for and assist you during your stay in the secure building.

[www.dji.nl](http://www.dji.nl)

## What is expected of you?

It is important that your statements during the procedure support the reasons for your asylum application. You will also be expected to show the IND any evidence you have or can obtain (such as your documents or letters supporting your statements).

Before your application interview, you received a leaflet from the IND about sending documents. That leaflet explains how to send documents relevant your asylum application to the IND after you register.

Notify the IND if you have any personal circumstances that should be taken into account. The IND can then take any necessary appropriate measures during the interviews or during your reception at the COA. The IND will give you a much support as possible.

## Preparing for your asylum procedure

During the Rest and Preparation Period (Rust- en Voorbereidingstermijn, RVT), you will live in a COA reception centre.

During the RVT, you will undergo a medical examination to determine whether you are able to tell us about your reasons for requesting asylum. During the RVT, a VluchtelingenWerk (VWN) employee will also provide information about the asylum procedure. VWN provides assistance and support during the asylum procedure. The

help is provided free of charge. You will meet your lawyer shortly before the start of your asylum procedure. Your lawyer knows the laws and regulations on asylum, and will help you prepare for your detailed interview. This is the interview with the IND in which you explain why you are requesting asylum. Your lawyer's help is usually free.

If you have children aged 15 or above, they will have a separate detailed interview. If you have children aged 12–15 who have their own reasons for applying for asylum, they can have their own detailed interview with the IND if they wish. You can notify your lawyer of this.

## **The asylum procedure, day by day**

On the day of your appointment with the IND, you must go to the IND office. This is where the General Asylum Procedure (Algemene Asielprocedure, AA) begins. The AA usually takes 6 days. There is also a longer General Asylum Procedure: the AA+, which usually takes 9 days. The AA+ is intended for asylum applications that require further investigation by the IND, and asylum seekers who need more attention due to mental or physical problems. After the RVT, the IND will decide whether you will follow the AA or AA+ procedure.

During the asylum procedure, you may stay at the same reception centre you stayed in during the preparation of the procedure. In some cases, you may be moved to a reception location closer to the IND office after the rest and preparation period. You will be taken to the IND office for the interviews with the IND unless it is so close that you can go on foot. Given below is a description of your asylum procedure on a day-to-day basis.

### *General Asylum Procedure (AA)*

#### **Day 1: detailed interview**

The detailed interview is a meeting with an IND employee. During this interview, you provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for your asylum application. The IND employee will also ask you questions during the interview. If you wish, you can ask VWN to attend the detailed interview with you. You can also arrange this through your lawyer.

An interpreter will attend the detailed interview. The IND employee will ask the questions in Dutch. The interpreter will translate the questions into a language you understand, and translate your answers into Dutch. The interpreter is independent, does not work for the IND and has no influence on the decision concerning your asylum application. Please note: if you and the interpreter have trouble understanding each other, it is important to say so straight away. In that case, the IND will try to arrange a different interpreter. It is important that there are no misunderstandings caused by not understanding the questions correctly. The IND employee will draw up a report of the detailed interview.

If you and your spouse have applied for asylum together, you will each have a separate interview with the IND.

It is important that you explain all the facts that prove you need protection. Be honest, complete and clear about what has happened to you and why you cannot get protection in your country of origin. If you cannot remember a specific event exactly, tell the IND employee. They are aware of the general situation in your country. It is important that you explain your situation: why do you personally need protection? Provide as many relevant details as possible. If you have any scars or physical or mental complaints related to the reason for your asylum application, it is important that you tell the IND employee. The IND may then decide to offer you a medical examination if it considers this useful for assessing your application. You can also have a medical examination carried out yourself at your own expense. An interpreter will also be present at the examination. You will receive the report of the detailed interview from the IND or your lawyer.

### **Day 2: discussion of detailed interview**

Your lawyer will discuss the report of the detailed interview with you. An interpreter will be present to translate everything you and your lawyer say. If anything is missing from the report or has not been written down correctly, your lawyer will report this in a letter to the IND.

### **Day 3: initial decision**

The IND will assess whether you satisfy the conditions for an asylum residence permit. The outcome of this assessment determines the further course of your asylum procedure. There are 3 possibilities:

1. You satisfy the conditions for an asylum residence permit. You will receive a decision letter from the IND (through your lawyer) stating that your asylum application has been approved. You may continue to live in the Netherlands permanently or temporarily. Your lawyer will explain how this affects you.
2. The IND needs more time for its investigation and cannot decide on your asylum application within 6 days (or 9 for the AA+). The IND will continue to process your asylum application in the Extended Asylum Procedure (VA). The decision on your asylum application will follow later. You will receive another leaflet with information about the Extended Asylum Procedure.
3. The IND determines that you do not satisfy the conditions for an asylum residence permit. You will receive a letter from the IND (through your lawyer) stating that the IND intends to reject your asylum application. This is called a statement of intent. The letter will also explain the reasons for the rejection and its consequences for you. Your lawyer will discuss the letter with you.

### **Day 4: response to decision**

If the IND intends to reject your asylum application, you will discuss the matter with your lawyer. Your lawyer can send the IND a written response in which you can officially respond to the IND's intended decision and explain why you disagree with it.

### **Day 5 and 6: decision**

After reading your response, the IND will assess whether their intention should be amended. The outcome of this assessment determines the further course of your asylum procedure. You will receive a letter from the IND (through your lawyer) to report the outcome of the assessment. Your lawyer will explain how this affects you. There are 3 possibilities:

1. After reading your response, the IND believes that you satisfy the conditions for an asylum residence permit. You will receive a decision letter from the IND (through your lawyer) stating that your asylum application has been approved. You may continue to live in the Netherlands permanently or temporarily. Your lawyer will explain how this affects you.

2. The IND needs more time for its investigation and cannot decide on your asylum application within 6 days (or 9 for the AA+). The IND will continue to process your asylum application in the VA. You will receive another leaflet with information about the Extended Asylum Procedure.
3. The IND determines that you do not satisfy the conditions for an asylum residence permit. You will receive a decision letter from the IND (through your lawyer) stating that your asylum application has been rejected. The letter will also explain the reasons for rejection and the consequences for you. For example, you may no longer be allowed to stay in the Netherlands and will have to return to your country of origin. The letter also explains what to do if you disagree with the decision and outlines your options for returning to your country of origin. Your lawyer will discuss the letter with you.

### *General Asylum Procedure 9 days (AA+)*

If the IND processes your asylum application in the AA+, your asylum procedure will usually take 9 days:

- Day 1 and 2: detailed interview;
- Day 3 and 4: discussion of the detailed interview with your lawyer;
- Day 5: initial decision;
- Day 6 and 7: reaction to decision (response) by lawyer;
- Day 8 and 9: second decision.

## **Withdrawing your application**

You may withdraw your application at any time. In that case, it is advisable to contact a lawyer or the IND directly. If you withdraw your asylum application with the IND, you will no longer be allowed to stay in the Netherlands, unless you are allowed to be here for another reason. You will also no longer be entitled to refuge. If you withdraw your asylum application, you may be subject to an entry ban. This means that you may not travel to or be in the Netherlands and most other countries in Europe. You may reapply for asylum after withdrawing your application, even if you are subject to an entry ban.

## **After the asylum procedure**

After the AA or AA+, you will move to another COA reception centre.

### **Your application is approved**

If the IND approves your asylum application, you can temporarily or permanently remain in the Netherlands. You will receive a residence permit, you are allowed to work, and you can bring any family members over. The COA will help you find housing. Important information for your home will be documented in a meeting with the COA. Based on that information, you will be assigned a municipality in the Netherlands. That municipality will look for a suitable home for you. You will only be

offered one home, and you must accept it. Until you have your own accommodation, you may stay at the COA reception centre. The IND will inform you of your rights and obligations after your asylum application has been granted. VWN employees can help you integrate into Dutch society. They will help you establish contact with various organisations, and can assist you in moving to the municipality and finding schooling or work. VWN can also help you move your family members.

### **Your application is rejected**

If the IND rejects your asylum application, you can appeal the decision with a Dutch court in consultation with your lawyer. This means that you officially inform the court that you disagree with the IND's decision. You can usually remain in the Netherlands during the appeal process. If this is not allowed, you can ask the court for permission to stay in the Netherlands during the appeal procedure. Your lawyer will help you with this. The court will consider whether the IND has correctly applied Dutch law when deciding on your asylum application.

If the IND rejects your asylum application, you will be taken to a different asylum seekers' centre. You will usually have 28 days to arrange your departure from the Netherlands. After that period, you are no longer entitled to shelter, and may no longer live in the asylum seekers' centre. You can still contact VWN for assistance and information after the asylum procedure.

### **Return**

Officially, you are personally responsible for your return to your country of origin. However, the Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek (DT&V) will help you prepare your departure. DT&V will contact you after your asylum application has been rejected. If you do not leave on your own within the designated period, you will be deported.

If you wish to speak with the DT&V about your return sooner, your lawyer or a VWN employee can put you in touch with them. You can also contact the DT&V yourself using a special form on the DT&V website:

- Dutch: <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/ondersteuning-bij-terugkeer/hulp-van-dtv>
- English: <https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/return-assistance/documents/leaflets/2016/12/22/if-you-no-longer-want-to-stay-in-the-netherlands>

If you wish to voluntarily return to your country of origin, you can contact the Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie (IOM). The IOM can provide practical information and assist you with your departure. The IOM usually has a walk-in consultancy at the asylum seekers' centre.

## **Personal data processing**

Personal data is any kind of information about you. The organisations that collaborated on this leaflet are listed below. They process personal data while processing your application, notification or request. They will ask you for your details and will also ask other organisations or individuals if necessary. These organisations use and store your data and share it with other organisations if required to do so by law. Privacy legislation sets out obligations for organisations that process your data.

For example, they must handle your data carefully and securely. The privacy law also establishes your rights, such as:

- the right to access your data stored by organisations;
- the right to know what organisations are doing with your data and why;
- the right to know with which organisations your details have been shared.

To find out more about your rights and how your personal data is processed, visit the respective organisation's website.

## **Asylum application in aliens detention**

People who are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands and do not leave the country of their own accord can be placed in aliens detention. Aliens detention means being held in a secure facility (detention centre). Its purpose is to keep people who are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands available for deportation.

If you are in aliens detention and applying for asylum, or if you have applied for asylum and then been placed in aliens detention, your asylum application will be processed at the Justitieel Complex Schiphol (JCS). The IND must decide on your application within six weeks.

You will usually be taken to the JCS building, but it is also possible that you will stay where you are now. If you go to the JCS and are applying for asylum for the first time, an IND employee will have you fill in a paper or digital questionnaire upon arrival. This is called an application form.

You will then have an initial interview with the IND, called the application interview. The application interview is an important meeting, during which the IND asks questions. The goal of this interview is to obtain information about who you are and where you have come from, your journey and your reason for being in the Netherlands. You will be asked about:

- your identity, nationality, origin and place of residence;
- family;
- documents;
- education;
- work and military service;
- residence in other countries;
- your journey to the Netherlands;
- a brief explanation of your reason for seeking asylum.

Be honest and always give your real details. Do not use data from a false document. Also notify the IND if you have used an alias. Providing incorrect or incomplete information to the IND may adversely affect the decision on your asylum application.

The IND will draw up a report of the interview. You will receive a copy of the report through your lawyer. You will be assigned a lawyer who will help you prepare for the asylum procedure. Your lawyer knows the laws and regulations on asylum, and is aware of the importance of the detailed interview. The detailed interview is the meeting with the IND in which you explain why you are requesting asylum. You do not

have to pay for the lawyer; the Raad voor Rechtsbijstand does this for you. You can also ask a lawyer to help you during the asylum procedure at an earlier stage. However, you will have to arrange and pay for this yourself.

The General Asylum Procedure (AA or AA+) in aliens detention is the same as for asylum seekers who are not in aliens detention. The beginning of this leaflet describes the AA or AA+ procedure day by day.

### **The simplified asylum procedure**

If you come from a safe country, it is unlikely that you will be granted asylum. The IND will process your application in a simplified and accelerated procedure. During this procedure, you will only have one interview with the IND. This also applies if you already have an asylum residence permit in the Netherlands, another EU Member State, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland. The IND will assess the reasons you have provided for requesting asylum and decide whether you will be granted an asylum permit.

#### *List of safe countries*

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kosovo, Croatia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Czech Republic, Tunisia, Vatican City, United Kingdom, United States, Iceland, Sweden and Switzerland.

This list is subject to change; countries may be added or removed. This depends on the security in a country. The latest version of the list of safe countries can be found on the Dutch government's website: [www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl)

### **After the asylum procedure**

If the IND rejects your asylum application, you can appeal the decision with a Dutch court in consultation with your lawyer. This means that you officially inform the court that you disagree with the IND's decision.

You can also ask the court for permission to stay in the Netherlands during the appeal procedure. Your lawyer will help you with this.

The court will consider whether the IND has correctly applied Dutch law when deciding on your asylum application. In many cases, you will be allowed to await the court's decision in the Netherlands. However, you will have to remain in the secure facility.

### **Return**

If you are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands, you are personally responsible for leaving the country. However, the Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek (DT&V) will contact you to help arrange your departure. The DT&V will only do this once your asylum application has been rejected. If you wish to speak with the DT&V about your return sooner, your lawyer can put you in touch with them. You can also contact the DT&V yourself using a special form on the DT&V website:

- Dutch: <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/ondersteuning-bij-terugkeer/hulp-van-dtv>
- English: <https://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/return-assistance/documents/leaflets/2016/12/22/if-you-no-longer-want-to-stay-in-the-netherlands>

If you wish to voluntarily return to your country of origin, you can contact the Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie (IOM). The IOM can provide practical information and assist you with your departure. The IOM often has a walk-in consultation at the detention centre.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **When does the General Asylum Procedure begin?**

You will have your first interview with the IND after registering with the police as an asylum seeker. This is called the application interview. You will have at least 6 days to prepare for the asylum procedure (AA or AA+) after the application interview. In practice, it usually takes longer before the asylum procedure starts. In some cases, you may not be given any preparation time. At the COA reception centre, you will receive an invitation from the IND for the detailed interview.

### **How long will I have to wait for a decision by the IND?**

The General Asylum Procedure usually takes 6 (AA) or 9 (AA+) working days. Sometimes, the IND may be unable to decide within that period, for example, if you fall ill during the asylum procedure. In that case, the IND may extend the AA or AA+ by 6 or more additional working days. The IND offices are usually closed on Saturdays and Sundays: these do not count as working days. The IND may also decide to process your asylum application through the Extended Asylum Procedure. In that case, it can take up to 6 months from the date on which your asylum application was signed before the IND makes a decision. You will receive another leaflet with information about the Extended Asylum Procedure.

If the IND is unable to decide within 6 months, you will be notified of this. If the IND has not sent you a decision 6 months after you submitted your asylum application and you have not received a message from the IND about the matter, you can send the IND a letter requesting a quick decision on your asylum application. Your lawyer can help you with this.

### **I would prefer to tell my asylum story to a woman. Is that possible?**

Yes, you can specify this during the application interview (i.e., an interview with the IND). The IND will try to arrange a female IND employee and interpreter to attend the detailed interview. If you would prefer to tell your story to a man, you can also specify this during the application interview. In that case, the IND will try to arrange a male IND employee and male interpreter for the detailed interview.

### **What should I do if I am sick or pregnant?**

If you are sick or pregnant, tell the nurse during your examination for medical advice (see leaflet: Before the asylum procedure). This is especially important if you have or think you may have a contagious disease such as tuberculosis, scabies or hepatitis B. Anything you tell the nurse will be kept confidential. The nurse will never share information about your health with others without your permission. If you fall sick during the asylum procedure, tell a COA, IND or VWN employee. They can help you obtain the medical help you need. If you are sick on the day of your meeting with the IND or your lawyer, ask a COA staff member to notify the IND or your lawyer.

## Questions

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please talk to your lawyer or a COA, IND or VWN employee.

## Complaints

All organisations involved in the asylum procedure are professional and meticulous. If, nevertheless, you feel that you have not been treated properly by an organisation, you can file a complaint. Your lawyer or a VWN employee can help you with this.

This leaflet is a joint publication of:  
Afdeling Vreemdelingenpolitie, Identificatie  
en Mensenhandel (AVIM)  
Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA)  
Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND)  
Koninklijke Marechaussee (KMar)  
Raad voor Rechtsbijstand (RvR)  
VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (VWN)  
Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie  
(IOM)  
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[www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl)

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