

# Before you begin the asylum procedure

## **Why are you receiving this leaflet?**

You would like to apply for asylum in the Netherlands. The asylum procedure does not start immediately once you arrive in the Netherlands. You receive time to recover from your trip and to prepare for the asylum procedure. You receive at least 6 days for this purpose. This leaflet provides you with the detailed steps preceding the asylum procedure.

## Step 1: Registration

Report to the Dutch Aliens Police in Ter Apel.



The Aliens Police is a part of the Dutch police and supervises aliens in the Netherlands.

Employees of the Aliens Police will register your personal information, such as your name, date of birth, and nationality. They will also search your clothes and luggage and take your pictures and fingerprints.

You may also be asked questions about the travel route you took, or whether you have previously applied for asylum here or elsewhere in Europe and about the presence of family members here or elsewhere in Europe.

Do you have documents that can prove your identity, such as a passport, identity card, birth certificate, or driving licence? Or do you have documents that can prove your travel route or your reason for requesting asylum, such as airline tickets, boarding pass, diplomas, judgment, or newspaper article? If yes, hand in these documents during the registration. If not, make sure that you obtain these documents before beginning your asylum procedure. An employee of VluchtelingenWerk (Dutch Council for Refugees) can assist you in this matter.



VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (Dutch Council for Refugees) is an independent human rights organisation, founded to look after the interests of asylum seekers. VluchtelingenWerk provides you with information and explanations about the asylum procedure. VluchtelingenWerk personally informs and supports you throughout this procedure, and mediates in the case of problems with other organisations. In doing so, they work in close collaboration with your lawyer. VluchtelingenWerk does not make a decision on your application for asylum.

Your documents will be checked for genuineness by experts. The Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) will use these documents in the assessment of your application for asylum.

**Note!** Your personal information and your documents are important for the assessment of your application for asylum. Present exhaustive information and verify that the data is recorded completely and accurately. Never throw away personal documents. The Dutch government will never notify the authorities of your country of origin that you have applied for asylum in the Netherlands.

## Step 2: Tuberculosis examination

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious disease prevalent throughout the world. This disease may also occur in your country of origin. People with active pulmonary tuberculosis can infect other people, by coughing or sneezing, for instance. Therefore, you will be examined for this disease when you report to the Aliens Police in Ter Apel.

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease, which usually attacks the lungs. Consequently, the examination consists of taking a chest X-ray. If you are infected with tuberculosis, you will receive a drug treatment in the Netherlands.

## Step 3: Reception

The Dutch government will provide you with accommodations, meals, and medical care from the moment you report to the Aliens Police. Reporting in Ter Apel, registration, and the TB examination will usually take no longer than one or two days. The Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA) (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) maintains a reception site near the office of the Aliens Police in Ter Apel. If necessary, you can spend the night there.



COA Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers

The Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA) (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. COA ensures that you receive accommodations, meals, and health insurance. COA can also provide you with assistance in contacting a doctor. COA is an independent organisation and does not decide on your application for asylum.

Following your registration, you will be brought to another reception site of COA. This asylum seekers' centre is in the vicinity of the office where IND is processing your application for asylum.



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst  
Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie

The Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) is a part of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. The employees of IND will interview you concerning your identity, nationality, travel route, and the reason for leaving your country. They will investigate your personal story and the situation in your country of origin. They will then decide whether you will (temporarily) be permitted to remain in the Netherlands, or whether you will have to return to your own country.

## Step 4: Information

In the asylum seekers' centre, you can recover from your trip to the Netherlands. You can also prepare for the asylum procedure.

In the asylum seekers' centre, VluchtelingenWerk will provide you with information about the asylum procedure. During this meeting, an interpreter will assist you by interpreting everything said by you and the employee of VluchtelingenWerk. You will also receive a leaflet describing the entire asylum procedure.

Employees of VluchtelingenWerk will inform and support you also during the asylum procedure. The services of VluchtelingenWerk are free of charge. Your information is treated confidentially.

## Step 5: Medical advice



At the asylum seekers' centre, you will receive an appointment with a nurse. This nurse will ask you for your cooperation in a medical examination. This examination serves to determine whether you have psychological and/or physical issues that can influence your interviews with IND.

During this examination, the nurse will ask you questions. During this interview, an interpreter will assist you by interpreting everything said by you and the nurse. This will often be via telephone: In that case, the interpreter is not personally present. If necessary, the nurse will refer you to a doctor for further examination. The nurse or the doctor will report the results of the examination to the IND. However, they will only do so with your approval. During the asylum procedure, IND will take the information regarding your health into account.

It is important that you are honest about possible psychological and physical issues and that you inform the nurse or doctor about them. The report of the medical examination is confidential. The medical examination is not compulsory. You do not have to pay for the medical examination.

If you do not want to cooperate with the medical examination, you can state your position to the nurse. However, IND will in that case not be able to take your health into account during your asylum procedure.

## Step 6: Assistance of a lawyer

During your asylum procedure, you will be assisted by a lawyer. This lawyer is independent from the Dutch government. You will receive an invitation for a meeting with your lawyer from the Raad voor Rechtsbijstand (Legal Aid).

### *Raad voor Rechtsbijstand* *legal aid*

The Raad voor Rechtsbijstand (Legal Aid) ensures that you receive the assistance of a lawyer, if you cannot afford one. The Raad voor Rechtsbijstand will pay a fee to this lawyer for his assistance to you. The lawyer is not employed by the Raad voor Rechtsbijstand. The lawyer is an independent provider of legal assistance who will assist you in your asylum procedure.

Please check your mail daily for this invitation! The first meeting with your lawyer is very important for your asylum procedure and should not be missed.

At this meeting, the lawyer will prepare you for the interviews with IND. This preparatory meeting with your lawyer will take place in the office of the lawyer. You will receive directions and a free train or bus ticket to travel to your lawyer. During this meeting, an interpreter will assist you by interpreting everything said by you and the lawyer.

You do not have to pay for the assistance of your lawyer. Your information is treated confidentially.

## The asylum procedure

Once you have reported to the Aliens Police, it will take at least six days before your first interview with IND. This could take a little longer in practice. At the reception centre of COA, you will receive a letter from IND with an invitation to this initial interview.

You will receive more information about the asylum procedure from VluchtelingenWerk in a few days (refer to step 4).

## Frequently asked questions

Do you still have questions after reading this leaflet? You can ask these questions to your lawyer or to one of the employees of COA or VluchtelingenWerk.

### **Do you have a complaint?**

All organisations involved in the asylum procedure try to work professionally and carefully. However, you can submit a complaint if you deem to have been treated improperly by an organisation. Your lawyer or an employee of VluchtelingenWerk can assist you in this matter.

### **This is a joint publication of:**

Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA) | [www.coa.nl](http://www.coa.nl)  
Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND) | [www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl)  
Raad voor Rechtsbijstand (Legal Aid) | [www.rvr.org](http://www.rvr.org)  
VluchtelingenWerk Nederland | [www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl)

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