



# Information for asylum seekers

*People who fear returning to their own country can ask New Zealand to recognise them as refugees or protected persons. People who lodge a claim for refugee or protection status in New Zealand are known as asylum seekers.*

New Zealand has signed an international convention that supports the right of people to seek asylum. New Zealand is a signatory to:

- 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
- 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Refugee and protected person status is a legal status.

The Immigration New Zealand (INZ) branch that deals with refugee and protection claims is:

Refugee Status Branch

Level 12

280 Queen Street

Auckland CBD

Telephone: 09 928 2236

Fax: 09 914 5298

✉ Email: [RSB@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:RSB@mbie.govt.nz) [mailto:rsb@mbie.govt.nz]

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.00 pm

Refugee and protection claims may be made in person or in writing by a person in New Zealand. Claims may be made by signalling an intention to claim to a delegate of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment including an immigration officer and a refugee and protection officer. An intention to claim can also be signalled to a customs officer or a police constable. A claim must be later confirmed in writing by completing a claim form.

## Claim form

Each person in New Zealand seeking asylum must complete a confirmation of claim form.

Refugee Status Branch

PO Box 90533


Victoria Street

Auckland 1142, DX: CX10074

When you give the completed form to an RPO you must also give them any identity documents that you have. These include your passport and driver's licence.

## Getting help

You may hire a Licensed Immigration Adviser or lawyer to help you with your claim. Your immigration adviser must have a licence or be a practicing lawyer. If you can't afford a lawyer, you may be eligible for financial help. You can contact the Legal Aid Service or discuss this with your lawyer.

 A list of legal-aid lawyers | Ministry of Justice website [<http://www2.justice.govt.nz/find-a-legal-aid-lawyer/>]

## The claims process

The Refugee Status Branch (RSB) will process your claim. Immigration New Zealand won't deport anyone while their claim is being processed.

RSB will assign your claim to a refugee and protection officer (RPO). The RPO tries to decide your claim within 140 days from when you lodged it.

There are six steps to the claim process:

1. Complete a claim form.
2. Submit a written statement.
3. Attend an interview with an RPO.
4. Receive a report about your claim.
5. Make final submissions in support of your claim.
6. Receive the decision.

Currently interviews are being scheduled between 4–10 weeks from the date the claim is lodged.

The average processing time for a claim is currently 6–8 months.

## **Guidelines for the asylum process**

The RSB provides guidelines on children and minors, as well as confidentiality.

The children and minors guidelines are for RPOs, claimants, their representatives, and adults who determine the refugee or protected person status of minors or children.

The confidentiality guidelines help RPOs to ensure information provided by claimants, refugees and protected people is treated confidentially.

## **More information about the claims process**

This booklet describes the claims process in detail and your rights and responsibilities.

## **Recognition as a refugee or protected person**

If you are recognised as a refugee or protected person you can stay in New Zealand permanently.

For information about settling in New Zealand if you are recognised as a refugee or protected person view this video:

 Convention Refugees – settling into New Zealand [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuxqfnd-wsa>]

## **Services for asylum seekers**

While your claim is being processed you can use health care in New Zealand and apply for a work visa so you can get a job. If your children are with you, you can enrol them at school.

Below are brochures about services and support available to people seeking refugee or protected person status in New Zealand.

**Auckland**

**Wellington**

**Christchurch**