

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights provides free legal advice and representation to asylum seekers in Serbia.  
For more information visit: [www.azil.rs](http://www.azil.rs); contact number: +381 11 308 5328, cell: 064 8246 508  
E-mail: [bgcentar@bgcentar.org.rs](mailto:bgcentar@bgcentar.org.rs)



Belgrade Centre  
for Human Rights



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

## Information for Persons Seeking Asylum in the Republic of Serbia

### What is Asylum?

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In accordance with international law, the Republic of Serbia grants asylum to foreigners who fear persecution in their country of origin, and meet certain criteria as established in the Law on Asylum. Asylum seekers, who have submitted an application, and persons who are granted asylum in Serbia, (formally called refugees) are granted certain rights and hold certain obligations during their stay in Serbia. The Republic of Serbia may also choose to grant subsidiary protection to some foreigners who do not meet the criteria for asylum in Serbia.

### To whom can Asylum be granted?

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The Republic of Serbia grants **asylum** to persons who:

- Have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin due to their:
  - ✧ Race;
  - ✧ Sex (gender);
  - ✧ Language;
  - ✧ Religion;
  - ✧ Nationality;
  - ✧ Membership in a particular social group; or
  - ✧ Political opinion

Additionally, the Republic of Serbia also may grant **subsidiary protection** to persons who would be subjected, if returned to their country of origin to one or more of the following:

- Torture;

- Inhumane or degrading treatment; or
- Threat to her/his life due to generalized violence caused by either:
  - ✧ External aggression;
  - ✧ Internal armed conflicts; or
  - ✧ Massive violation of human rights.

## What is the Procedure?

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### Application:

- Approach the police – at the border or inside the country, and tell them you would like to **apply for asylum**.
- If you prefer, you could first contact Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization which provides free legal assistance and may help you prepare and submit your application form and guide you through the process. (See Belgrade Centre for Human Rights' contact details below)
- Your application shall be referred to the Asylum Office, within the Ministry of the Interior, which will ultimately decide whether to grant or decline your request, or if you may instead qualify for subsidiary protection.
- The asylum procedure is free of charge. You will not be expected to pay any administrative taxes or fee at any point during the procedure.

### Registration:

- During the registration process, the Asylum Officer will take your photograph, fingerprints, and ask you to hand over all personal identity documents (i.e. passport, identity card/document, residence permit, visa, birth certificate, travel ticket etc.) that they may need while registering and establishing your identity. These documents will be returned to you as soon as your registration has been completed.
- Once your registration is complete, you will be issued an identity card establishing your identity as an asylum seeker in the Republic of Serbia.

### **Interview:**

- After the official registration of your asylum claim, an interview will take place. During the interview, you are expected to present and explain reasons for seeking asylum to the officials of the Asylum Office. In particular you will be asked about:
  - ✧ your identity;
  - ✧ the grounds on which your asylum application is based;
  - ✧ your movement after leaving your country of origin; and
  - ✧ whether or not you have previously sought asylum in any other country.
- The interview is the most important part of refugee status determination, and you have the right to request professional free legal assistance.

### **Decision:**

- The Asylum Office will decide on your claim within two months. You may be interviewed more than once.
- If your application is declined, you have the right to file an appeal with the Asylum Commission within 15 days.

## **Rights and Obligations of Asylum Seekers during the Application Procedure:**

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### *Rights of Asylum Seekers in Serbia:*

- To be provided with interpretation in either your native language or another language that you can understand.
- To free legal assistance during the asylum procedure.
- To request the presence of your legal representative during the interview conducted by the Asylum Office or other authorities.
- To a face-to-face interview, carried out by an authorized Asylum Officer.
- To contact the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Serbia.
- To the confidentiality of all information obtained from you, that those will not be made available to anyone outside the asylum process.

- To be exempt from punished for unlawful entry or stay in the Republic of Serbia, provided that you submitted an application for asylum without delay.
- Not to be deported from the Republic of Serbia before the asylum process is completed, and to stay in the Republic of Serbia throughout the asylum procedure.
- To free accommodation at the Asylum Center in Banja Koviljaca and in Bogovadja with full board and access to basic services (health care, education).
- To freedom of movement in the territory of Republic of Serbia.
- If the Asylum Office delivers a negative decision, you have the right to lodge an appeal within fifteen days.

*Obligations of Asylum Seekers in the Republic of Serbia:*

- To comply with the registration process, and to cooperate with the Asylum Office and other competent authorities at all stages of the asylum procedure. (This includes temporarily handing over all identification papers, travel documents and other documents which are needed for your identification during the registration process to an authorized officer).
- To tell the truth regarding all facts concerning your application, as any false information could result in the rejection of your request for asylum.
- To respect the constitution and legal system of the Republic of Serbia.
- To abide by the *House Rules*, if accommodated at the Asylum Centre in Banja Koviljaca or in Bogovadja.
- To stay on the territory of the Republic of Serbia during the process.
- To avoid violence, criminal activity or unlawful behaviour.

## **The rights of Refugees in the Republic of Serbia**

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Persons who are granted asylum by the Asylum Office are given **refugee status** in the Republic of Serbia. **Refugee status** includes the following rights:

- The right to an identity card in Serbia, valid for up to 5 years (and up to 1 year for a person granted subsidiary protection).

- The right to a travel document for a person over 18 years of age (available to persons with subsidiary protection in exceptional cases).
- The right to family reunification.
- Equal status as to citizens of the Republic of Serbia, with respect to the right to: intellectual property protection, free access to courts of law and legal aid, exemption from the payment of court fees and other fees payable to state organs, and the right to freedom of religion.
- Equal status to other permanently residing foreigners in the Republic of Serbia with respect to the right to: work, employment, freedom of movement, property ownership and freedom of association.

For more information on the asylum application in the Republic of Serbia, or on the rights and obligations of **asylum seekers** and **recognized refugees**, please see the contact information below for the relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations and entities.

#### Belgrade Centre for Human Rights

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Belgrade Centre for Human Rights is a non – governmental organization funded by the United nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that provides free legal advice and representation to asylum seekers in Serbia.

Address: Beogradska 54, 11 000 Belgrade

Tel: 011 2457 376, 064

Mob: 064 8246 508

[www.azil.rs](http://www.azil.rs)

#### APC – Asylum Protection Center

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Asylum Protection Center is a non-governmental organization which provides legal aid and protection to asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs and to other persons that have migrated due to hardship in their country of origin.

Address: Sime Igumanova 14, Belgrade, Serbia

Tel: +381 11 2457 376

[www.apc-cza.org](http://www.apc-cza.org)

### The Police

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BEOGRAD, Department for Aliens, Savska 35

NOVI SAD, Department for Aliens, Bulevar Kralja Petra I, 11

NIS, Department for Aliens, Bulevar 12.februar 89

NOVI PAZAR, Department for Aliens, Kej 37. Sandzacke divizije bb.

LOZNICA, Department for Aliens, Trg Ante Bogicevica 4

### UNHCR – UN Refugee Agency

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Provides information to asylum seekers in Serbia.

Representation in Serbia: Krunska 58, Belgrade

Tel: 011 3082 100

[www.unhcr.rs](http://www.unhcr.rs)

### Asylum Center in Banja Koviljaca

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- Pending the adoption of the final decision on asylum applications, asylum seekers will be provided with accommodation and basic living conditions at the Asylum Centre, operated by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees in Western Serbia, in Banja Koviljaca, near the city of Loznica, some 170 kilometers from the capital city of Belgrade.
- The Asylum Center is an open institution where asylum seekers have freedom of movement, where residents are expected to comply with House Rules.

Address: Narodnog Fronta bb. Banja Koviljaca, tel: 015 820 267

### Asylum Center in Bogovadja

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- The Asylum Centre in Bogovadja offers accommodation to asylum seekers near to the Municipality of Lajkovac, cca. 100 km from Belgrade.
- The Asylum Centre is an open type accommodation centre, where asylum seekers are granted the freedom of movement and are expected to comply with the House Rules.

Address: Bogovadja bb, Bogovadja, tel: 014 78 035

#### Reception Center for Foreigners in Padinska Skela

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- The Reception Center for Foreigners is a closed facility for foreigners who do not have permits to reside in the territory of Serbia.
- For this reason, residents do not have freedom of movement.
- Asylum seekers may be temporarily placed in this Center for the purpose of establishing or confirming their nationality and identity.
- The Center is operated by the Ministry of the Interior, and is located near the Serbian capital, Belgrade.

#### House for underage (minor) foreigners, "Vasa Stajic," Belgrade

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The House for minors provides care and accommodation for unaccompanied underage foreign citizens. Temporary legal guardians are assigned for minor residents. Underage and unaccompanied asylum seekers may be temporarily accommodated in the house before being transferred to Asylum Center in Banja Koviljaca or in Bogovađa.

#### Youth Education Institute in Nis

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The Youth Education Institute in Nis is equipped with a special unit devoted to the accommodation and care of unaccompanied foreign minors. Minors seeking asylum may be temporarily accommodated at the Institute before being transferred to the Asylum Centre in Banja Koviljaca or in Bogovadja.

More information, and an English translation of the *Law on Asylum*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 26 November 2007, is available at:

[www.unhcr.rs](http://www.unhcr.rs) and [www.azil.rs](http://www.azil.rs)