



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN SLOVAKIA



MINISTERSTVO
VNÚTRA
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY





1. Are you seeking international protection?

Did you leave your home country because your life or freedom is in danger, or do you face serious violations of your human rights, for instance because of your race, your religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group? Or because you hold certain political opinions?

Are you unable or unwilling to return home for those reasons? Or do you think you may face a serious risk of harm in the form of for example a death sentence, torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, or threat to your life because of violence in situations of war? Are you unable or unwilling to return home for these reasons?

When you are seeking international protection in Slovakia, these are some of the things that you may be asked about.

2. What does “international protection” actually mean?

International protection means either asylum (refugee protection) or protection under human rights law. In order for you to qualify as a refugee, you need to have specific reasons to fear persecution in your home country. These reasons may be related to, for instance, your race, your religion, your nationality, political opinion, or your membership in a particular social group (such as based on your family ties or your gender).

If you have other humanitarian or compelling reasons not to return to your home country, you may qualify for protection under human rights law, known as subsidiary protection in the European Union.

If you left your country only for economic or other personal reasons, then there are not sufficient grounds for you to be recognized as a refugee or person in need of subsidiary protection. You will then not be given international protection.

3. What if you decide not to seek international protection in Slovakia?

If you decide not to seek international protection, then your case will not be considered by the Migration Office. If you do not have valid documents that enable you to legally stay in Slovakia (such as a passport with a valid visa in it), you will be asked to leave the country. You also have the possibility to return home voluntarily with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



4. If you want to seek international protection, what are the first steps to take?

- If possible, you should say that you wish to seek international protection immediately at the border, upon entry into Slovakia, or in the transit zone of the airport.
 - If you are already in the territory of Slovakia and you wish to seek international protection, you should as soon as possible go to the nearest police station that is authorized to receive asylum claims (Foreigners Police Department). If you are in a detention centre for foreigners or in prison, you may seek international protection there.
 - You can state in simple terms that you want to seek asylum. Explain that you are afraid to return to your home country because your life or your freedom are in danger, or because you face serious human rights violations.
- You will be asked to sign a form called “Declaration of the Foreigner” in which you need to state that you wish to seek international protection and give reasons as to why you are seeking it.
- If you are older than 14 years, you will be fingerprinted by the police authority. If you have travel documents and/or an ID card, these will be temporarily taken from you and copies will be sent along with your declaration and other documents to the Migration Office for verification purposes. Your travel documents and/or ID card will be returned to you by the police once the asylum procedure is completed.
- After you have stated that you wish to seek asylum, you will either have 24 hours to go to a reception centre by yourself, or the police will take you there.

5. What will happen at the reception centre?

In the reception centre you need to complete the first steps of the asylum procedure, such as an initial interview and a medical examination by qualified health care specialists. The reception centre is a closed facility, which means that you have to stay until the results of the medical examination are available. After that, you may ask for permission to temporarily leave the facility.

While you are staying at the reception centre, you will receive an asylum-seeker registration card. You will also be informed about your rights and obligations in the asylum procedure, as well as on internal rules in this facility that you need to comply with. You will be asked to sign an official record that you have been informed on your rights and responsibilities.

In both reception and accommodation centres you will be provided with the following: accommodation, meals, basic hygienic package, urgent medical care, pocket money, conditions for free time activities, social counselling. You might also benefit from the services of NGO based in the centre (Slovak Humanitarian Council) like Slovak language classes, free time activities, legal and psychological counselling and become familiar with Slovak culture.

The next step in the procedure is an initial interview.

6. What does the initial interview look like?

The staff of the Migration Office will conduct an initial interview with you and fill out a form called “Questionnaire for Asylum-seeker”. You will be asked to provide some information about yourself and give reasons as to why you are seeking international protection. Such information is required for the Migration Office to be able to assess and decide your application. You may also be asked about details of your journey to Slovakia. You have the right to have an interpreter in your mother tongue, or any other language that you are able to communicate in. An interpreter will be arranged for by the Migration Office.

The initial interview is a very important part of the asylum procedure, so make sure you are prepared to state all the details you remember about the flight from your home country and reasons why you cannot return there. Share everything that is important for your case, why you left your country and who was threatening your life or freedom, or how your human rights were being violated. Do not forget to show all supportive documents or data (including for example photos) you may have with you. If you do not have such documents, you may be asked to describe them and explain the reasons why you do not have them with you.

It is important that the information you provide during the interview is accurate to your best knowledge and memory. If you do not understand a question fully, you should say so. If you do not know the answer to a question, it is better to say so. If you do not remember a detail at the time of the interview, say so, and communicate to the Migration Office when you remember it. If you notice that a detail you provided during the interview was wrong, or can be misunderstood, explain this to the Migration Office. Ask the interviewer how you can communicate to them to provide further explanations if you remember details after the interview.

7. In which languages are forms filled out?

The Slovak authorities will fill out the “Questionnaire for asylum-seeker” and “Declaration of the Foreigner” in Slovak language. The content will be translated for you and you may ask for any revisions or additions. You will be asked to sign it in order to confirm that you agree with the written content.

8. How long will you have to stay in the reception centre?

During the first steps of the asylum procedure, you need to stay at a reception centre. The average length of stay in a reception centre is about 3-4 weeks.

9. What will happen after you leave the reception centre?

Once you have completed the procedures at the reception centre, you have two options. Either you can stay in private accommodation, which you need to find and pay for yourself, or you can choose to be transferred to an accommodation centre.

Accommodation centres are open facilities and are meant for asylum-seekers who cannot pay for their own accommodation and cost of living. You can live in an accommodation centre until a decision on your application for asylum is effectively delivered to you.

10. What will happen next in your asylum procedure?

After your asylum claim is registered and an initial interview is done, you may be invited for a second interview. The asylum interview is an opportunity for you to give more detailed information and facts about your own case. This interview is also conducted by staff of the Migration Office, in the reception centre, the accommodation centre, in a detention centre or prison, if your movement is restricted.

The staff of the Migration Office will check what is happening in your country and may ask you more detailed questions about the information you have given them. If you had not already done so, make sure you use this opportunity to show all documents or data (including for example photos) you may have with you that may support your asylum claim.

It may still happen that you are invited for yet an additional interview if more clarifications are needed. If you are not able to attend the interview, you should inform the Migration Office explaining the reasons of your unavailability.

11. Should you be afraid of giving information?

You can speak without fear because everything you say, including your personal data, is treated as strictly confidential. Staff of the Migration Office are not allowed to share any of the information you provide with people in your country of origin or others without your permission.

It is important that you tell the truth, to the best of knowledge and your memory, and that you clarify possible inconsistencies in your statement. Try to explain in as much detail as possible what happened in your country that forced you to leave, or makes you decide not to return.

12. Can I speak in my own language during the interview?

You have the right to have an interpreter in your mother tongue or other language you are able to communicate in.

13. Who will decide on my application, and when do I get the decision?

All applications for international protection in Slovakia are assessed and decided on by the Migration Office.

The period within which a decision must be taken is 6 months. This period may be extended, and if this is the case, you will be informed about it in writing.

14. What if you receive a negative decision?

If you receive a negative decision on your application for international protection, you can request a review of the decision by means of a so-called “administrative action”. You will find instructions on how to appeal the decision in the document that you receive from the Migration Office.

If you decide not to request a review of a negative decision on your case, you will need to leave the territory of Slovakia



15. Are you entitled to legal aid?

Yes. The staff of the Migration Office have the duty to inform you about your right to request at any time the legal assistance from legal counsel or another person who can provide legal counselling. You may also request assistance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Legal counselling at first instance is usually provided by staff of the Slovak Humanitarian Council (NGO). You can also choose another lawyer to represent you in the asylum proceedings. If the Slovak Humanitarian Council helps you with your case, you do not need to pay anything. If you choose your own lawyer, you need to pay for that lawyer yourself.

If you receive a negative decision on your asylum application and wish to appeal the decision, then you are entitled to free legal aid provided by the Centre for Legal Aid.

16. Have you been accepted and provided international protection?

If you are granted either asylum or subsidiary protection, you can benefit from integration services that are being provided by the Slovak Humanitarian Council. By signing the integration contract Slovak Humanitarian Council will help you to find affordable accommodation, find employment, help access education or requalification. They will also provide you with social, cultural, legal and psychological counselling. You will be provided with a free of charge Slovak language course. The Migration Office has also its own integration managers, who e.g. facilitate the contact between you and various institutions and assist you when dealing with practical matters.

In case you are granted asylum or subsidiary protection, the Migration Office provides you with one-time financial contribution of 1,5 times the minimal subsistence level for an adult person and the Integration financial allowance of 1,75 times the minimal subsistence level for the first 6 months upon receipt of your application for such support.

If you are granted asylum, you will obtain a permanent residence permit in Slovakia and have similar rights and obligations as Slovak citizens, though with some exceptions.

If you are granted subsidiary protection, you will obtain a temporary residence permit in Slovakia for one year. If the reasons for subsidiary protection still persist, you may apply for extension of subsidiary protection each time for two years (your temporary residence permit will also be extended each time for two years). This request must be made during the last 90 days for which the subsidiary protection is granted.

Do not forget that you will have to respect and follow all legal obligations that Slovak citizens also need to comply with, such as paying taxes, getting health insurance and assuming responsibility for any unlawful conduct.



Tips to Stay Safe:

- Always keep money, documents and mobile phone with you or in a safe place.
- Do not give your passport or other documents to anyone other than the police/customs/government agencies. You can also keep them on your phone.
- Ask the person who is offering you help (like transport, housing, work) to show their identity document and give you the exact destination. Always write down their phone number, vehicle registration plate and share them with someone you trust.
- Do not sign any documents you do not understand.
- Trust your instincts, you have the right to refuse support from anyone if you feel uncomfortable about their behaviour.
- If you arrive at a place you do not feel safe, leave as soon as possible. Once safe, ask for help and support from trusted people and organizations.
- All humanitarian assistance is free. If money or any other form of favours, including of a sexual nature, is requested from you, you should report it to the authorities immediately.

Do you have a missing family member, or have you lost contact with a family member?

Whenever people are at risk of being separated or going missing, have been separated or are without news of their loved ones as a result of armed conflicts, disasters or in the context of migration, the global Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can help.

They carry out activities worldwide to prevent disappearances and family separation, to restore and maintain contact between family members, and to search for people who have been reported missing to us by their loved ones, with the goal to clarify their fate and whereabouts.

If you have lost contact with a family member due to an armed conflict or migration, they can help.

If in Slovakia, contact the Slovak Red Cross directly via tracing@redcross.sk or call 0042 19 11 745 956.

If you are not in Slovakia but wish to approach them; visit <https://familylinks.icrc.org/> to find your nearest Red Cross/ Red Crescent office.

Please note that all services are confidential and always free of cost.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS:

Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic

+421 2 4341 4775

Pivonková 6, 812 72 Bratislava

omi.mu@minv.sk

Office of the Border and Aliens Police of the Presidium of the Police Force

+421 9610 50 701

Ružinovská 1/B, 812 72 Bratislava

UNHCR Slovakia

Individual Protection Counselling

Wednesday 8:00 – 12:00

Assistance Centre Bottova 7, 811 09 Bratislava

svkbrprot@unhcr.org

<https://help.unhcr.org/slovakia/>

Toll-Free Line: 0800 22 12 30

(call from Slovak tel. number)

Non-Toll-Free Landline: +421 2 22 11 56 50

(call from non-Slovak tel. number)

Monday – Friday 8:00 – 20:00

Slovak Humanitarian Council in Bratislava

+421 2 5020 0500

Budyšínska 1, 831 03 Bratislava

Slovak Humanitarian Council in Košice

+421 911 711 357

Hlavná 68, 3rd floor, 040 01 Košice

Human Rights League Office in Bratislava

Michalská 372/9, 811 01 Bratislava

Office Hours Monday – Thursday 9:00 – 17:00

(advised to book an appointment in advance)

Legal Department

hrl@hrl.sk

+421 918 366 968

International Organization for Migration in Bratislava

+421 2 5263 1598

Grösslingová 35, 811 09 Bratislava I

International Organization for Migration in Košice

+421 55 625 8662

Floriánska 19, 040 01 Košice

Centre for Legal Aid

+421 650 105 100 (to book an appointment for consultation daily 8:00 – 17:00)

<https://www.centrumpravnejpomoci.sk/rezervacia-termínu> (to book an appointment for consultation)

<https://www.centrumpravnejpomoci.sk/>

Offices

Consultations on Mondays 8:00 – 15:00 and on

Wednesdays 8:00 – 16:00

Bratislava: Námestie Slobody 12, 810 05

Banská Bystrica: Skuteckého 30, 97401

Žiar nad Hronom: SNP 613/124, 96501

Rimavská Sobota: Čerenčianska 20, 97901

Nitra: Štefánikova trieda 26, 94903

Komárno: Župná 14, 94501

Žilina: P. O. Hviezdoslava 6, 01100

Liptovský Mikuláš: Kollárova 2, 03101

Tvrdošín: Medvedzie 132, 02744

Košice: Murgašova 3, 04041

Prešov: Masarykova 10, 08001

Humenné: Lipová 1, 06601

Svidník: Sov. hrdinov 102, 08901

Trnava: Pekárska 11, 91701

National Helpline for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

0800 800 818

Monday – Friday 8:00 – 20:00

Outside of the working hours or on public holidays you can call, the automated system will provide you with the option to record your telephone number for the helpline staff to contact you.

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