



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Notes**

## **Purpose, methodology and use**

**Version 1.0**

**June 2026**

# Contents

1. Purpose of this note.....	3
2. Country Policy and Information Notes .....	3
2.1 About CPINs.....	3
2.2 Coverage.....	3
2.3 Updates and archiving .....	3
2.4 Purpose of CPINs .....	4
2.5 End-to-end drafting process .....	4
3. Country [of origin] information (COI).....	4
4. COI research methodology .....	5
4.1 Determining what COI to include and exclude.....	5
4.2 Evaluating and weighting of sources and the information they provide ....	5
4.3 Timeframe and the ‘cut-off date’ .....	6
4.4 Disclaimers.....	6
5. Assessment .....	7
5.1 Purpose of the Assessment.....	7
5.2 Method.....	8
6. ‘Country Policy’ in CPINs versus ‘Country Guidance’ caselaw.....	9
7. Feedback and oversight.....	10
7.1 Country Policy and Information Team .....	10
8. Version control.....	10

## 1. Purpose of this note

- 1.1.1 This document provides an overview of Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs). The intended audience is Home Office staff plus external stakeholders with an interest in country-specific information and policy relating to international protection.
- 1.1.2 This document explains the:
  - purpose of CPINs
  - research, drafting, and analytical processes and methods
  - quality assurance and feedback.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 2. Country Policy and Information Notes

### 2.1 About CPINs

- 2.1.1 CPINs are reports drafted by the Country Policy and Information Team (CPIT), which is part of the Home Office.
- 2.1.2 The main users of CPINs are Home Office staff – decision makers and presenting officers – who make or defend decisions on applications for international protection, including asylum and human rights cases. However, any Home Office official who needs to assess country conditions as part of an immigration decision may use a CPIN.
- 2.1.3 CPINs are published on [GOV.UK](#) and are therefore also available to external stakeholders, including immigration judges and asylum and human rights applicants and their legal representatives.

[Back to Contents](#)

### 2.2 Coverage

- 2.2.1 CPINs are not produced for all countries or topics. The selection is based upon a range of factors. These were outlined in the ICIBI's February 2023 '[Inspection report on Home Office country of origin information: Thematic report on the coverage of statelessness](#)' (p12) and continue to be relevant.
- 2.2.2 CPINs primarily cover countries with a high asylum intake and typical 'claim types', in other words, commonly raised grounds for claiming international protection. For more information on asylum intake see [Immigration system statistics data tables](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

### 2.3 Updates and archiving

- 2.3.1 The standard schedule for updating CPINs is approximately every 2 years, although some CPINs are updated more or less frequently depending upon whether there is a significant change in country circumstances or publication of new caselaw. When an updated version is published, the older version is archived. If business needs change (for example, if there is a drop in asylum claims), then a CPIN is archived and not replaced. Archived CPINs are available on the Home Office's intranet and externally on the website of the European Country of Origin Information Network ([ecoi.net](#)).

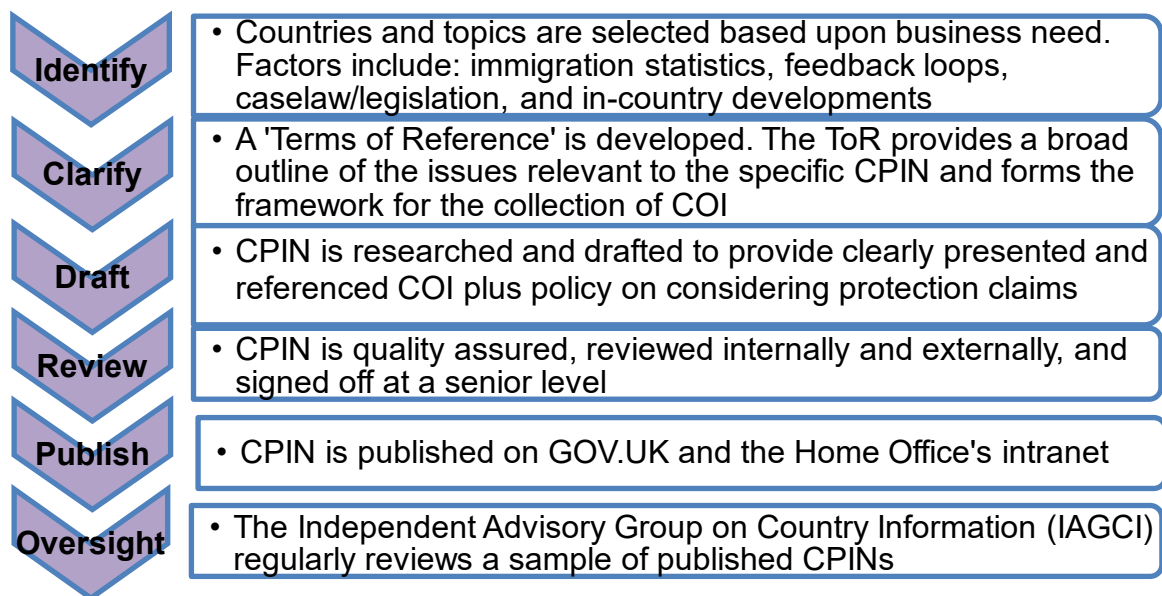
[Back to Contents](#)

## 2.4 Purpose of CPINs

- 2.4.1 CPINs fulfil a legal duty in [Immigration Rule 339JA](#) requiring the Secretary of State for the Home Department to provide caseworkers with reliable country information to assist them examining international protection claims.
- 2.4.2 CPINs support timely, accurate and consistent decision making by providing:
- [Country \[of origin\] information \(COI\)](#) – carefully researched and selected COI that caseworkers can use to evidence individual decisions.
  - Country policy – known as an '[Assessment](#)' – which indicates whether a particular group is generally at risk or not.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 2.5 End-to-end drafting process



[Back to Contents](#)

## 3. Country [of origin] information (COI)

- 3.1.1 COI is about events, facts or matters that are relevant to assessing applications for international protection and other immigration cases.
- 3.1.2 COI has 2 purposes, it provides:
- the **specific** evidential basis for individual decisions
  - the evidence base for **general** policy guidance (included in the '[Assessment](#)' section of a CPIN) which assists decision making.
- 3.1.3 CPINs include a wide range of COI reflecting the complexity of the country situation, the variety of issues a person might raise in their international protection claim and the [different elements required to decide such a claim](#).
- 3.1.4 The COI section of a CPIN may include information about the socio-economic, legal, political, human rights, healthcare, and security and humanitarian situations in any given country. COI typically relates to the countries of origin of asylum seekers or refugees but may also include information about situations in third countries or in the UK.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 4. COI research methodology

### 4.1 Determining what COI to include and exclude

- 4.1.1 All CPINs include a Terms of Reference (ToR), which provides a framework for COI collection by listing all the topics relevant to answering the research question. CPIT uses standard ToR for commonly occurring claim types. However, ToR are not fixed. They are adapted as necessary to the specific country and/or amended throughout the research process to reflect newly identified issues or to eliminate irrelevant ones.
- 4.1.2 COI is carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#) (April 2008), the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) [COI Report Methodology](#) (February 2023) and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country of Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024.
- 4.1.3 COI is publicly accessible (also known as 'open source') or can be made publicly available, for example, by annexing the information to a CPIN or providing it on request. Most COI is gathered through internet research. It can also include: books, newspapers, journals, TV and radio broadcasts, podcasts, newswires, mapping, imagery, photographs, statistics, commercial subscription databases and grey literature (conference proceedings and institute reports). COI is also collected through direct communication with sources and through fact-finding missions.
- 4.1.4 COI is drawn from a wide range of external sources. Primary and secondary sources are used, with the primary source referenced wherever possible. Sources include: international and intergovernmental organisations; governments; NGOs/CSOs; media and academia; and other professionals.
- 4.1.5 There is no 'hierarchy' of sources, each may have value depending on context and reliability. All sources have a particular purpose, approach, perspective or agenda and have limits on the information they can gather. Some sources may be more useful for information on the general human rights situation, whereas other sources may be more valuable for information on particular events or topics. Sources found to provide inaccurate or unreliable information on one subject may be accurate and reliable on another (or vice versa).

[Back to Contents](#)

### 4.2 Evaluating and weighting of sources and the information they provide

- 4.2.1 All sources and the information they provide are critically assessed. Information is examined for its relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.
- 4.2.2 Factors relevant to assessing the reliability and relevance of sources include:
- **who** the source is – their qualifications, knowledge, expertise, experience, location and affiliations.
  - **what** (type of) information they have provided – including specific versus general, local versus national, quantitative versus qualitative.
  - **why** the information has been made available – the source's motivation

and purpose in presenting the information, and their target audience.

- **when** the information was gathered and when was it published.
- **how** the information was obtained and the specific methodology/ies used – including whether it is first-hand reporting; a secondary report analysing first hand-reporting or other data; an academic research paper; a newspaper editorial; or statistics based on surveys.

4.2.3 Wherever possible multiple sources are used to provide a balance of views and to corroborate the accuracy and reliability of the information. Single sources may be used but these are carefully assessed, taking into account limits in the wider reporting environment.

4.2.4 When corroborating COI, care is taken to avoid:

- round-tripping – secondary sources citing each other
- false corroboration – several sources citing the same (primary) source
- misinformation – sources spreading incorrect or misleading information without harmful intent
- disinformation – sources deliberately spreading false information

4.2.5 Commentary may be provided on sources and information to help readers understand the meaning and limitations of the COI.

4.2.6 For transparency, all COI is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted when compiling a CPIN are also listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

[Back to Contents](#)

### 4.3 Timeframe and the 'cut-off date'

4.3.1 Wherever possible, the COI selected for inclusion is dated within 2 years of the time of drafting the CPIN. However, older material may be included if it is still accurate or provides relevant historical context or illustrates a trend over time. This will depend on the subject and the availability of information.

4.3.2 All CPINs specify the time period covered by the COI – CPINs may refer to this as the 'cut-off date'. Any event taking place or report published after the specified date will not be included.

[Back to Contents](#)

### 4.4 Disclaimers

4.4.1 The inclusion of a source is not an endorsement of it or any views expressed.

4.4.2 The use of any maps is not intended to reflect the UK Government's views of any boundaries.

4.4.3 The COI section is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

4.4.4 In cases where the original COI was in a language other than English, the CPIN will state how the material has been translated, including if an online translation tool was used.

- 4.4.5 CPINs may have been developed using Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is done in line with the [Artificial Intelligence Playbook for the UK Government](#) and with reference to ACCORD's January 2026 [Paper on Ethical considerations for the use of Artificial Intelligence in COI](#). Where AI has been used, it has always been reviewed by a human editor.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 5. Assessment

### 5.1 Purpose of the Assessment

- 5.1.1 The assessment section considers all the evidence relevant to a specific CPIN – that is the COI, refugee/ human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and, depending on the scope of the CPIN, provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- A group or particular profile of person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm
- the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as in [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- the humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as in [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#)/Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is likely or not to be certified as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

- 5.1.2 The term 'in general' should be given its literal meaning of 'mostly', 'usually' or 'typically'. This means that the conclusion reached in the assessment will apply to **most cases** with the same or similar features. However, the assessment is not prescriptive. It cannot consider every possible scenario or every possible individual circumstance. Therefore, decision makers must consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts. Caseworkers can and may decide that the specific facts of their case merit a decision that is different to the CPIN's assessment.

- 5.1.3 'Real risk' or 'reasonable degree of likelihood' on return is the legal standard that applies to international protection claims. 'Real risk' is a measure of the likelihood that an event – such as a human rights violation – will happen. The threshold is low.

- 5.1.4 The severity of treatment that amounts to persecution is a high threshold. It may include serious human rights violations, such as extra-judicial killings, sexual violence or torture. However, many minor violations – such as denial of access to education, accommodation, employment, healthcare and justice – may also, when taken cumulatively, amount to persecution.

- 5.1.5 The assessment brings together the 3 concepts – ‘in general’, ‘real risk’ and persecution/serious harm. To illustrate this, a CPIN may conclude that:
- **In general, [X] are likely/unlikely to face a real risk of treatment which by its nature and/or repetition amounts to persecution/serious harm.**
- 5.1.6 This conclusion does not mean that there is **no** risk of persecution/serious harm. However, these cases will be the exceptions to the general situation and often linked to specific reasons or characteristics, or due to chance.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 5.2 Method

- 5.2.1 CPIT’s approach to formulating country assessments is largely the same as the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA’s) [Country Guidance: Explained](#) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR’s) [Position on Returns, and Guidance Notes on international protection needs](#).
- 5.2.2 The ‘in general’ conclusion reached in the assessment is underpinned by an analysis of the COI within the context of the international protection framework, domestic legislation and any relevant caselaw. For transparency, the assessment contains links to the specific sections of COI which have been considered in reaching the conclusion.
- 5.2.3 The approach has multiple elements including:
- **Summarising** the relevant COI, identifying patterns and relationships, and gaps or limits in information.
  - **Comparing and contrasting** COI. COI is drawn from a wide range of sources, which may provide corroborative or contradictory information. Multiple factors are considered to apply weight to different pieces of evidence, including the agenda and expertise of the source, and the level of detail, currency and collection methods of the information provided.
  - **Contextualising the COI to analyse**
    - The **nature and severity** of reported events, and the extent to which they meet the high threshold of persecutory treatment.
    - The **scale** of reported events. Quantitative data is one component of a holistic risk assessment and can be useful to contextualise risk. Consider, for example, a protest where the security services intervened and made 5 arrests. A different picture emerges if the protest was attended by 500,000 people compared with 10 people.
    - The **frequency** of reported events. Sources tend to focus on events that are considered newsworthy, and the nature of human rights reporting and the motivation of human rights organisations means that most COI concentrates on abuses and problems. As a result, the pattern of reported events may not be indicative of the **likelihood** that an event will occur. For example, isolated or infrequent suicide bombings will receive extensive media coverage but may not be indicative of a general risk of being the victim of such an attack.
  - **Producing detailed insights** by breaking down the COI. The COI is analysed to understand **where** events happened, in **what** circumstances, and **who** was impacted. This allows us to identify any clustering of

events, depending on specific profiles, such as geographic location, age, sex, occupation, religion or sexual orientation. It may be the case, for example, that reported incidents of violence targeted at the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) community relate specifically to violence against transwomen sex workers rather than to the LGBTI community generally. Similarly, reports of violence targeting a minority ethnic group might be linked to specific ‘flashpoint’ areas or events rather than representing the situation across the country as a whole.

- Considering any relevant **country guidance** or other **caselaw**. See [‘Country Policy’ in CPINs versus ‘Country Guidance’ caselaw](#)
- Considering the evidence **as a whole** to reach a conclusion regarding whether or not there is a general risk of persecution or serious harm.

5.2.4 Based on the approach set out above, a CPIN may contain COI indicating multiple incidents of human rights violations which reach the threshold of persecution but still conclude that there is no ‘general’ risk. This is because the frequency and/or scale and/or circumstances of the violations are such that, in most cases, the members of a specific group have a very low likelihood of being subjected to persecution/serious harm.

5.2.5 In cases where a CPIN provides evidence of human rights violations but concludes that there is no general risk, this conclusion does not in any way diminish the devastating impact that violence or abuse has on victims.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 6. ‘Country Policy’ in CPINs versus ‘Country Guidance’ caselaw

6.1.1 The [Upper Tribunal \(UT\) of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber \(UTIAC\)](#) produces ‘country guidance’ (CG) determinations.

6.1.2 These provide an ‘authoritative finding on the country guidance issue identified in the decision, based upon the evidence before the members of the Tribunal who decided the appeal’. They therefore provide guidance to immigration judges on how asylum appeals from a particular country are to be approached where that appeal

- ‘(a) relates to the country guidance issue in question; and
- (b) depends upon the same or similar evidence.’

6.1.3 Similar to the ‘country policy’ (or ‘assessment’) section of a CPIN, CG determinations provide generic guidance regarding risk on return for broad categories of asylum or human rights appellants.

6.1.4 CG determinations must be followed by decision makers and immigration judges unless:

- it has been expressly superseded or replaced by any later “CG” decision,
- is inconsistent with other authority that is binding on the Tribunal, or
- there are ‘very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence’ for not doing so.

6.1.5 CPIT will consider any extant CG determination(s) relevant to the core issue of the CPIN alongside the most up-to-date COI. In doing so, they will set out the Home Office’s position on whether any of the above criteria for departing from a CG case are met.

- 6.1.6 Put simply, whatever the scenario, Home Office decision makers **must** apply the ‘country policy’ (assessment) set out in the CPIN when considering their case’s specific facts. This is because:

**Scenario 1: ‘Country Policy’ is consistent with ‘Country Guidance’**

Where the COI in the CPIN is consistent with the findings of an extant CG case then the CPIN assessment will say so. In other words, the ‘country policy’ in the CPIN will mirror the ‘country guidance’ in the CG determination.

**Scenario 2: ‘Country Policy’ differs from ‘Country Guidance’**

Where the COI in the CPIN provides evidence of a significant and durable change in the country situation that is not consistent with the findings of the CG determination then the CPIN will provide a clear explanation of why and to what extent the ‘country policy’ in the assessment is departing from the ‘country guidance’ in the CG determination.

In some instances the departure may only apply to certain aspects of the determination. Any difference between ‘country policy’ and ‘country guidance’ will be supported by reference to the relevant COI.

**Scenario 3: There is no relevant, extant ‘Country Guidance’**

Not all countries or topics have been looked at by the Tribunal so there is not always a CG determination to take into consideration when drafting a CPIN.

[Back to Contents](#)

## 7. Feedback and oversight

### 7.1 Country Policy and Information Team

- 7.1.1 We welcome feedback on our products. If you would like to comment on this document, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

## 8. Version control

- version **1.0**
- valid from **1 June 2026**
- changes from last version of this note: **n/a – first version**

[Back to Contents](#)