



Subject	Guide to Country of Origin (COI) online sources
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CONTENTS	
INTRODUCTION.....	2
PORTALS.....	3
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) SOURCES	4
NGO sources with international coverage	4
NGO sources with regional coverage	4
NGO sources addressing specific issues.....	5
COI RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY COUNTRY RESEARCH UNITS OVERSEAS	6
NEWS SOURCES	8
News sources with international coverage	8
News sources with a specific focus e.g. regional coverage or humanitarian focus	8
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES.....	9
MAPS.....	9
COI RESEARCH PRACTICE.....	9
COVID-19 RESOURCES	10



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of some useful websites for Country of Origin Information (COI) research. COI is used by decision-makers and legal advisers to aid in answering questions about the political, social, cultural, economic and human rights situations in countries of origin.

Please note that the websites included here represent a selection only, as web sources are constantly in flux and will vary depending on case-specific COI needs. Provided below are some established, reliable online sources which can be instrumental in meeting COI research needs.

When conducting COI research CR favours sources with established credentials that are recognised internationally as reputable sources of information. Often the reliability or accuracy of a single source is difficult to assess. CR recommends checking for corroborative information from a range of sources e.g. web portals, government reports, NGO reports and media reports. The websites recommended in this document are grouped according to these 'source types'.

About Us

Country Research (CR) is a research unit within the Digital, Data and Insights group (part of the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment) that provides COI research to Immigration NZ decision-makers, particularly in the protection and risk areas. CRU also provides a research service to members of the Immigration and Protection Tribunal (IPT).

CR is not resourced to provide direct research or other services to third parties. However, we may be able to assist by recommending online sources relating to particular research topics, in addition to those listed in this guide.

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PORTALS

The following portals act as gateways to information found on other trusted websites. They compile diverse sources in a uniform way and are considered a “first port of call” for COI research.

[European Country of Origin Information Network \(ECOI\)](#)

A portal managed by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin Information and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD). As of 1 January 2019, ECOI became the leading global COI portal, and has been [endorsed](#) by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

[RefWorld](#)

A UNHCR portal and leading source of information specifically tailored to supporting quality refugee status determination. The site includes country information [up to Dec 2018], legal information, and policy and reference documents.

****From 1 January 2019, [ECOI](#) serves as the global go-to COI database. Refworld has a focus on law and policy documents.**

[ReliefWeb](#)

A portal on humanitarian crises around the world. Administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Includes reports, articles, and an extensive [map/infographic](#) section.

[US Department of Justice - Country Conditions Research](#)

“The Country Pages are compiled and updated by the [United States Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review] EOIR Law Library and Immigration Research Center (LLIRC). All content is compiled from publicly available documents that report on aspects of country conditions that have relevance in removal hearings before Immigration Judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals.”



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) SOURCES

NGO sources with international coverage

[Amnesty International](#)

The site includes reports, media releases and urgent action notices. Can search site as well as browsing by region/country, topic, resource type and content type.

[Asylum Research Centre \(ARC Foundation\)](#)

An organisation whose aim is “to raise standards in the production and use of COI and the refugee status determination process as a whole, to improve the realisation of asylum seekers’ and refugees’ rights and entitlements and to ensure that those in need of protection are recognised as such.”

The site includes general online [publications](#), and information on a service whereby [case-specific country reports](#) can be requested, for a fee.

[Freedom House](#)

Includes annual reports on freedom in the world - a “comparative assessment of global political rights and civil liberties” which includes a profile per country - and on topics such as freedom on the net, freedom of the press, and transnational repression.

[Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#)

Based in the US, this is one of the largest human rights NGOs in the world, with reporting from almost every country internationally.

[International Crisis Group \(ICG\)](#)

The site contains detailed reports and analysis and a monthly bulletin, Crisis Watch, which gives an overview of current and potential conflicts around the world.

Information from the CrisisWatch bulletins is available in a [database](#), which can be browsed by country and time period.

[International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\)](#)

The site contains reports and media releases. It is searchable and can be browsed by region and issue. Issues covered: human rights defenders; women’s rights; migrants’ rights; LGBTI rights; international justice; globalisation and human rights; death penalty; terrorism, surveillance and human rights.

[World Organization against Torture \(OMCT\)](#)

The site focuses on information about "torture, summary executions, enforced disappearances and all other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

Search filters can be applied to limit search results by country, year, information type (e.g. reports and publications, events) and activities (e.g. monitoring protection mechanisms, urgent campaigns).

NGO sources with regional coverage

[Asian Human Rights Commission \(AHRC\)](#)

An independent, non-governmental body, founded in 1984 by a group of jurists and



human rights activists in Asia.

[MENA Rights Group](#)

MENA Rights Group is a “Geneva-based legal advocacy NGO defending and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Adopting a holistic approach, [they] work at both the individual and structural level.”

[\[Pacific\] Regional Rights Resource Team \(RRRT\)](#)

RRRT is the Human Rights Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC).

NGO sources addressing specific issues

[ARTICLE 19](#)

An NGO with a focus on freedom of expression and freedom of information, which is supported by a wide range of government and non-government donors.

[Christian Solidarity Worldwide \(CSW\)](#)

CSW operates in more than 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, with a focus on defending, upholding and promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief.

[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

An independent, non-profit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide.

[European Roma Rights Centre](#)

Data on the human rights situation of Roma in the form of reports, submissions, and articles to inform international bodies and committees, as well as ERRC’s own litigation work.

[Forum 18](#)

An NGO with a focus on freedom of religion or belief. Places covered are Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Russia and Belarus, as well as Turkey and China.

[International Freedom of Expression Exchange \(IFEX\)](#)

A network of organisations “connected by a shared commitment to defend and promote freedom of expression as a fundamental human right. [...] IFEX advocates for the free expression rights of all, including media workers, citizen journalists, activists, artists, scholars.”

[International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#)

A “worldwide federation of more than 1,600 organisations from over 150 countries and territories campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex human rights.”

[Médecins Sans Frontières \(MSF\) \(Doctors without Borders\)](#)

MSF is an international, independent medical humanitarian organisation. Publications include evaluations, critical reviews and guidelines detailing MSF activities and research.

[Minority Rights Group International \(MRGI\)](#)

Focuses on disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples. The site contains in-depth reports as well as a [directory](#) that provides profiles of minorities and indigenous peoples.

[Musawah](#)

Musawah is a Malaysia-based organisation which describes itself as “a global movement



for equality and justice in the Muslim family.”

[OutRight Action International](#)

Formerly known as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

[Physicians for Human Rights \(PHR\)](#)

PHR’s research and investigations are informed by science, medicine, forensics, and public health.

[Reporters Without Borders \(RSF\)](#)

RSF is an independent NGO, based in Paris, with consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).

[Transparency International](#)

A global coalition against corruption. The site contains country profiles and conducts annual reports such as the corruption perceptions index.

[War Resisters' International \(WRI\)](#)

WRI describes itself as "a global pacifist and antimilitarist network". The site contains information on conscription and conscientious objection (first published in 1998, not all updated).

COI RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY COUNTRY RESEARCH UNITS OVERSEAS

[Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(DFAT\): Country Information Reports](#)

“Country Information Reports are prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for protection status determination purposes only. They provide DFAT's best judgment and assessment at time of writing and are distinct from Australian Government policy with respect to the countries in question. The reports provide a general, rather than an exhaustive country overview.”

[Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board \(IRB\)](#)

Published research from Canada's Country of Origin Information unit. Includes National Documentation Packages (by subject area), Recent Research, and Responses to Information Requests.

[Finnish Immigration Service \(MIGRI\), Country Information Service - Reports](#)

Published reports by the Country Information Service on different countries and themes.
“The reports are general views on the situation of asylum seekers in their country of origin. They are not judicial assessments and do not assess whether a person coming from a certain country can be granted international protection in Finland based on his or her home region.”

[Danish Immigration Service](#)



“The Immigration Service’s Country of Origin Information Division collect and analyse background information on conditions in the applicants’ countries of origin.” The majority of [reports](#) are written in Danish, some select products are written in English.

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Country reports

Available on the [Netherlands government website](#); some reports have been translated into English. Use the [search function](#) to find reports by country and topic.

[Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre \(Landinfo\)](#)

“The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre – Landinfo – is responsible for collecting, analysing and presenting country of origin information to the Norwegian Immigration Authorities.” Landinfo’s reports and query responses are originally written in Norwegian. Selected products are translated into English and made available on these webpages.

[United Kingdom Home Office \(UKHO\) - Country policy and information notes](#)

These publications provide country of origin information (COI) as well as analysis of COI and policy guidance intended for UK Home Office decision-makers.



NEWS SOURCES

News sources with international coverage

[Al Jazeera](#)

[BBC News](#)

[DW \[Deutsche Welle\]](#)

[The Economist](#)

[Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Inter Press Service](#)

[Reuters](#)

[World Newspapers](#)

Links to numerous individual online newspapers, listed by country.

News sources with a specific focus e.g. regional coverage or humanitarian focus

[The Diplomat](#)

A magazine that focuses on the Asia Pacific region in relation to: geo-political trends; defence and intelligence environment, human security and development; arts, social trends and popular culture.

The site permits 5 free articles per month without a subscription.

[Institute for War & Peace Reporting \(IWPR\)](#)

"IWPR gives voice to people at the frontlines of conflict, crisis and change." Coverage is of selected countries within the Middle East, Eurasia, Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

[The New Humanitarian \(formerly IRIN News\)](#)

The website notes that the name change in 2019 was to "signal our move from UN project to independent newsroom and our role chronicling the changing nature of – and response to – humanitarian crises."

[Pacific Islands News Association \(PINA\)](#)

PINA represents the interests of media professionals in the Pacific region.

[Radio Free Asia](#)

"RFA is a private, nonprofit corporation that broadcasts news and information to listeners in Asian countries where full, accurate, and timely news reports are unavailable."

[Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)

"RFE/RL journalists report the news in 21 countries where a free press is banned by the government or not fully established."

Covers Russia, Central Asia, Caucasus, Balkans, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

[Radio New Zealand International](#)

Coverage of the Pacific region.



UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES

A selection of international organisations that report on matters relevant to COI

[European Commission against Racism and Intolerance \(ECRI\): country monitoring page](#)

“ECRI examines the situation concerning manifestations of racism and intolerance in each of the Council of Europe member states.”

[International Labour Organization](#)

ILO publishes reports with a focus on setting labour standards, developing policies and devising programmes which promote decent work for all women and men.

[UN Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)

Publications mostly include research reports and analysis about the situation of children in various parts of the world.

[UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\): country reports](#)

Select a state from the drop-down list to see its reports.

[UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\): information on treaties by country](#)

This page provides country specific information on: The ratification of international Human Rights treaties; reporting cycles. All the documents related to a reporting cycle [i.e. State reports, concluding observations etc.]

MAPS

Maps are often useful for putting information in “physical context”.

[Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection \(University of Texas\)](#)

[National Geographic Map Maker interactive](#)

Can turn on and off markers such as rivers, grid lines, border country names, large cities, small cities etc. and add layers for data on population, economy etc.

[United Nations Maps & Geospatial Services](#)

[UNHCR Map Portal](#)

COI RESEARCH PRACTICE

The following documents provide some background on COI Research, research practice and some of the pitfalls to be aware of when undertaking research.

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), 2013, [Researching Country of Origin Information: A Training Manual](#), 2013 edition

See Appendix B of this manual for additional COI sources. From the manual:



“This Appendix provides short descriptions of sources widely used in COI research. They are helpful for gaining an overview on a certain country or topic and they can act as a starting point for research. There are a number of sources that are widely used in COI research and which are considered to be generally reliable. While some of them have narrow thematic mandates, others cover a wide range of human rights issues relevant for COI research, or provide current background information on the situation in countries of origin.”

Note that ACCORD are developing a new manual in 2022.

European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) [formerly the European Asylum Support Office, EASO], June 2019, [EASO Country of Origin Information \(COI\) Report Methodology](#)

“The EASO COI report methodology builds on the Common EU Guidelines for processing COI (April 2008), the EU common guidelines on (Joint) Fact Finding Missions (November 2010) (for oral sources), and the ACCORD Training Manual: Researching Country of Origin Information (2013 Edition). This methodology is a public document and was developed for the purpose of producing and publishing different types of EASO COI reports.”

European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) [formerly the European Asylum Support Office, EASO], November 2021, [COI Research Guide on LGBTIQ](#)

Annex 2 of the report contains a detailed list of online sources.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

[IATA COVID-19 Travel Regulations map](#)

This interactive map provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 travel restrictions.

[Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre](#) – data on COVID-19 updated daily

[Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Dashboard](#) – interactive world map with country data

[World Health Organisation \(WHO\) Covid Dashboard](#)

[WHO Covid-19 Situation Report](#)

[IOM Migration Research COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot](#)

This resource covers specific topic areas such as human trafficking, labour mobility, corrupt practices etc.

[Our World in Data – Coronavirus Pandemic \(COVID-19\)](#)

This portal contains data interactives on all aspects of the COVID pandemic such as vaccination rates, mortality rates, and policy responses across the world.

[World Bank data](#)

Real-time data, statistical indicators, and other types of data that are relevant to the COVID pandemic (from the World Bank’s data catalogue and other authoritative sources).