



Subject	<b>Guide to Country Of Origin (COI) online sources</b>
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Date	May 2021 [last reviewed]
<b>CONTENTS</b>	
INTRODUCTION .....	2
PORTALS .....	3
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) SOURCES.....	4
NGO sources with international coverage .....	4
NGO sources with regional coverage .....	5
NGO sources addressing specific issues .....	5
COI RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY COUNTRY RESEARCH UNITS OVERSEAS .....	7
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 .....	10
COVID-19 RESOURCES .....	10



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## 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 a number of established, reliable online sources which can be instrumental in meeting COI research needs.

When conducting COI research CRU 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. CRU 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

**The Country Research Unit (CRU)** is a research unit within Immigration New Zealand (INZ) (part of the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment) that provides COI research to INZ decision-makers, particularly in the protection and risk areas. CRU also provides a research service to members of the Immigration and Protection Tribunal (IPT).

**CRU 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)

### [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, and freedom of the press.

#### [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**

##### **[Arabic Network for Human Rights Information \(ANHRI\)](#)**

The site contains information from late 2018 onwards. Previous ANHRI sites have material from [March 2010 to late 2018](#); and from [2004 to March 2010](#) (refer to links at the bottom right-hand corner of the home page).

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

An independent, non-governmental body, founded in 1984 by a group of jurists and human rights activists in Asia.

##### **[\[Pacific\] 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."

#### **[Medecins Sans Frontieres \(MSF\) \(Doctors without Borders\)](#)**

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.

#### **[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).

#### **[Women Living under Muslim Laws \(WLUML\)](#)**

WLUML describes itself as "a transnational feminist solidarity network that promotes human rights and gender justice and equality for women whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by patriarchal and/or authoritarian interpretations of Islam."



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## **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](#)**

Reports in English

### **[Danish Immigration Service](#)**

[Country reports](#) (in English)

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

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.



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## NEWS SOURCES

### News sources with international coverage

[Al Jazeera](#)

[BBC News](#)

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

[Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Inter Press Service](#)

[New York Times](#)

[Reuters](#)

### World Newspapers

Links to numerous individual online newspapers, listed by country.

<http://www.world-newspapers.com/>

### 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.

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

"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](#)

[Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\) : country and annual reports](#)

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

[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 Geospatial Information Section](#)

[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.*

European Asylum Support Office (EASO), April 2015, [Researching the situation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons \(LGB\) in countries of origin](#). EASO Practical Guides Series

"The guide provides background knowledge as well as useful tips, tools and sources for researching the situation of LGB in countries of origin. It should serve the needs of both experienced and inexperienced Country of Origin (COI) researchers, as well as caseworkers conducting COI research."

European Asylum Support Office (EASO), June 2014, [Tools and Tips for Online COI Research](#). EASO Practical Guides Series,

"This document aims to provide a high-level overview of some of the main tools and tips for online research that may be of use to COI researchers [...]

Divided into three main chapters (Searching and Information retrieval; Organising Information; Privacy while searching the Web and Data Protection issues), the document covers a wide variety of tools, such as Social bookmarking, Anonymous search engines, Archived content and RSS Feeds."

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."

European Asylum Support Office (EASO), June 2019, [EASO Country of Origin Information \(COI\) Report Methodology](#)

## 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



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

[WHO Covid-19 Situation Report](#)

[IOM Migration Research COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot](#) covering specific topic areas such as human trafficking, labour mobility, corrupt practices etc.

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

[World Bank data](#) for understanding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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