



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	5
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.....	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 of COI needs. That said, there are many established, reliable online sources which can be instrumental in satisfying COI research needs. These sources are provided here.

When conducting COI research CRB 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. CRB 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 Branch (CRB) 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. CRB also provides a research service to members of the Immigration and Protection Tribunal (IPT).

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

We can be contacted at: countryresearchrequest@mbie.govt.nz



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.

RefWorld

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

<http://www.refworld.org/>

European Country of Origin Information (ECOI)

A portal managed by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin Information and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD).

<http://www.ecoi.net/>

ReliefWeb

A portal on humanitarian crises around the world. Administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://reliefweb.int/>

Country Conditions Research

A portal compiled by the United States Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

"The Country Pages are compiled and updated by the 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."

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/country/country-index>



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) SOURCES

NGO sources with international coverage

Amnesty International

The site includes reports, media releases and urgent action notices.

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Searching is available at the link below, as well as browsing by region/country, topic, resource type and content type.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/search/>

Human Rights Watch

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

<http://www.hrw.org/>

International Crisis Group

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

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/>

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

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-database.aspx>

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.

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

Also contains a five-yearly report on Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa.

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/womens-rights-middle-east-and-north-africa>



International Federation for Human Rights

The site contains reports and media releases. It is searchable and can be browsed by region and issue.

<http://www.fidh.org/en/>

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).

<http://www.omct.org/>

NGO sources with regional coverage

Asian Human Rights Commission <http://www.humanrights.asia/>

Asian Centre for Human Rights <http://www.achrweb.org/index.htm>

Arabic Network for Human Rights Information <http://anhri.net/?lang=en>

NGO sources addressing specific issues

Reporters without Borders <http://en.rsf.org/>

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."

<http://www.ifex.org/>

Minority Rights Group International <http://www.minorityrights.org/>

MRGI focuses on disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples. The site contains in-depth reports as well as a directory of minorities and indigenous peoples.

<http://www.minorityrights.org/directory>

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association <http://ilga.org/>



IGLHRC: International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission <http://iglhrc.org/>

European Roma Rights Centre <http://www.errc.org/>

European Network against Racism (ENAR)

<http://enar-eu.org/>

See in particular the ENAR shadow reports, located under the 'publications' tab on the home page. These include information on minorities, anti-Semitism and anti-Roma prejudice, as well as links to reports on racist violence. Updated bi-annually.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) <http://www.msf.org/>

Physicians for Human Rights <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/>

Child Rights International Network (CRIN) <http://crin.org/>

Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML) <http://www.wluml.org/>

Christian Solidarity Worldwide <http://www.csw.org.uk/home.htm>

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 publishing analyses on Turkey and China.

<http://www.forum18.org/>

War Resisters' International (WRI)

WRI describes itself as "a global pacifist and antimilitarist network". The site contains information on conscription and conscientious objection.

<http://www.wri-irg.org/>

Child Soldiers International <http://www.child-soldiers.org/>

Transparency International

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

<http://www.transparency.org/>

COI RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY COUNTRY RESEARCH UNITS OVERSEAS

Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board

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



Requests.

<http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/Pages/index.aspx>

Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo)

<http://www.landinfo.no/id/2224.0>

Danish Immigration Service

<http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/publications/SearchPublications.htm?searchType=publications>

Finnish Immigration Service (Migri), Country Information Service

http://www.migri.fi/about_us/country_information_service/reports



NEWS SOURCES

News sources with international coverage

BBC News <http://www.bbc.com/news>

Reuters <http://www.reuters.com/>

Al Jazeera <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

The Guardian (UK) <http://www.theguardian.com>

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Inter Press Service <http://www.ipsnews.net/>

DW [Deutsche Welle] <http://www.dw.com/>

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

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.

<http://www.rferl.org/>

Radio Free Asia <http://www.rfa.org/english/>

Integrated Regional Information Networks News (IRIN)

IRIN states that its "core editorial objective is to highlight neglected crises and analyse humanitarian action" and "deliver in-depth reporting on crises often forgotten by the mainstream media."

<http://www.irinnews.org/>

Reuters AlertNet (humanitarian)

<http://www.trust.org/?show=alertnethumanitarian>



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.

<http://iwpr.net/>

Radio New Zealand International Coverage of the Pacific region.

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/international>

ABC News (Australia) - Pacific Beat

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/programs/pacific-beat/>

Pacific Islands Report

<http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/>

UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES

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

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): country reports <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: 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.]

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): country monitoring page

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/countrybycountry_en.asp

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: country reports

<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/country.asp>

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) <http://www.unicef.org/>

MAPS

Maps are often useful for putting information in "physical context"

United Nations Geospatial Information Section

<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm>

Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection (University of Texas)

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>



National Geographic Map Maker interactive Can turn on and off markers such as rivers, grid lines, border country names, large cities, small cities etc.

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/interactive-map/?ar_a=1

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, <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Researching-the-situation-of-LGB-in-countries-of-origin-FINAL-080515.pdf>

"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, <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Tools-and-tips-for-online-research-on-COI1.pdf>

"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* <http://www.coi-training.net/handbook/Researching-Country-of-Origin-Information-2013-edition-ACCORD-COI-Training-manual.pdf>

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, July 2012, *EASO Country of Origin Information Report Methodology*, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/european-asylum-support-office/coireportmethodologyfinallayout_en.pdf

Natasha Tsangarides, January 2010, *The Refugee Roulette: The Role of Country Information*



in Refugee Status Determination, Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4b62a6182.html>

European Union, April 2008, *Common EU Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information (COI)*, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/48493f7f2.html>

International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ), November 2006, *Judicial Criteria for Assessing Country of Origin Information (COI): A Checklist*, <http://ijrl.oxfordjournals.org/content/21/1/149.full.pdf+html>