

BORDER ENTRY - POINT INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ZIMBABWE



Zimbabwe is a signatory to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and as such welcomes persons seeking safety from persecution or civil war and other serious violations of human rights;

According to the Zimbabwe Refugees Act 1983, read together with relevant immigration legislation, all persons claiming asylum at Zimbabwe's border are to be admitted to Zimbabwean territory by authorized officers, whether or not they are in possession of valid travel documents;

Such asylum seekers are required to proceed to Tongogara Refugee Camp in Chipinge, Manicaland Province where they are to present themselves to the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees; (Department of Social Services) to formally claim asylum and enter the refugee status determination procedure;

Authorized officers at border entry points are requested to issue referral letters bearing an official stamp with a five-day expiry period to such asylum seekers to allow them time to proceed to Tongogara Refugee Camp;

Food and other assistance (shelter, healthcare, counseling) are available to all asylum seekers and refugees at Tongogara Refugee Camp, where the Department of Social Services, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners also have a permanent presence;

Those asylum seekers who are recognized as refugees will be permitted to remain in Zimbabwe together with their dependants and they will receive ongoing humanitarian assistance provided by the Government of Zimbabwe and UNHCR if they reside at Tongogara Refugee Camp;

Zimbabwe maintains an encampment policy according to which all asylum seekers and refugees within the country are required to reside in Tongogara Refugee Camp. Those found outside the camp without the necessary authorization and documentation run the risk of being detained pursuant to immigration powers;

Zimbabwe maintains a favourable protection environment for asylum seekers and refugees, and fully respects the principle of *non-refoulement*. This means that Zimbabwe does not send persons back to countries where their liberty or safety is at threat, provided such persons continue to deserve international protection. As such, all asylum seekers and refugees within Zimbabwe are expected to abide by Zimbabwean laws.