



## THE ASYLUM INTERVIEW

### WHAT IS THE ASYLUM INTERVIEW?<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this interview is to understand why you are afraid to be returned to your country of origin. It is your best chance to tell all your story. Your application will need 3 interviews:

1. One to fill a basic questionnaire;
2. One for a possible Dublin case;<sup>2</sup>
3. The Asylum Interview. This Fact Sheet talks about this third interview.

During this interview, a caseworker from the **Office of the Refugee Commissioner (RefCom)** will ask you why you left your country of origin and why you feel you cannot be returned there. Anything you say or do during the interview is **strictly confidential**; nobody will be told anything without your consent, including any friends or family members here in Malta with you.

It is important that you understand the questions and that RefCom understands your answers. If you need an interpreter, RefCom will make arrangements to have one present. Your interpreter is also required to keep everything confidential. It is possible for you to ask RefCom to change your interpreter if you are not comfortable with him/her, for example if you would prefer a man or a woman.

### WHAT IF I CANNOT ATTEND MY INTERVIEW?

If you cannot attend the interview because you are ill or for some other reason, notify the Refugee Commissioner as soon as possible before your interview appointment in order to set a new date and time. Attending your interview is extremely important, and only very serious reasons may be used as an excuse to miss it or to postpone it.

Also, remember that RefCom interviews several people, so asking to change your date might keep you waiting for much longer.

<sup>1</sup> See FACTSHEET NO 17: THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE IN PICTURES

([http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet17\\_asylumprocedurepictures.pdf](http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet17_asylumprocedurepictures.pdf), and FACTSHEET NO 12: THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE ([http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet12\\_asylumprocedure.pdf](http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet12_asylumprocedure.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> See FACTSHEET NO 20: THE DUBLIN PROCEDURE

([http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet20\\_dublinprocedure.pdf](http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet20_dublinprocedure.pdf)).





If you need assistance with this, contact a **Supporting Organisation**<sup>3</sup>.

**HOW CAN I  
PREPARE FOR  
MY ASYLUM  
INTERVIEW?**

Your interview will be held at the offices of RefCom:

**35/37/37, Rue D'Argens,  
Msida**

**Be on time!** On the day of your interview you should arrive at least 30 minutes before your interview. This will also help you be more relaxed and comfortable.

You should not worry if you do not have any documents with you, since your case will not be decided on whether you have or don't have any. If you do have documents with you, take them to the interview. If someone may safely send you documents, tell this to RefCom and to a Supporting Organisation that could assist you to receive them.

If you have time, in the days before the interview try to recall important information such as places, dates, people and incidents. It might also help you to write things down, or to make drawings.

Be aware that during the interview you might need to talk about difficult or painful moments you experienced. For example, were you or anyone in your family arrested, imprisoned, beaten, torture or raped? Was anyone close to you killed? Did you do anything that angered or upset your family or local community? Do you feel excluded from your community because of your beliefs or activities? If thinking or talking about these experiences is too difficult, contact a Supporting Organisation.

It is difficult to say what is important to talk about during your interview. Remember that RefCom needs to understand why you are afraid of being returned to your home country, so anything that explains this is useful. If you are not sure what is useful, contact a Supporting Organisation for guidance.

You might have heard stories from other refugees about what you should or should not say. Be careful, since **your story is your own**. The interviewing caseworker is very familiar

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<sup>3</sup> See FACTSHEET NO 21: SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS  
([http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet21\\_supportingorganisations.pdf](http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet21_supportingorganisations.pdf)).



with the situation in your country of origin and will probably realise if you tell them an untrue story. This can lead to them not believing anything you say, even your true statements.

**IMPORTANT: If you change your address during the appeal procedure, do not forget to inform RefCom as it needs your address to send you notifications and decisions.**

**MAY I HAVE A  
LAWYER  
ASSISTING ME?**

Before the interview you may talk to a lawyer or Supporting Organisation on any aspect of your story. Furthermore, you may take a lawyer with you during your interview, but a lawyer will not be provided for free. You will need to hire and pay one or you may contact a Supporting Organisation that offers free legal guidance.

If you are under 18 years of age, your legal guardian may be present during your interview.

**WHAT WILL  
HAPPEN  
DURING THE  
INTERVIEW?**

There will be a RefCom caseworker, you and – if needed – an interpreter. The interview is recorded, and the caseworker will be taking notes on a computer. The caseworker will ask you several questions about your life before you came to Malta: family, city/town/village where you grew up, difficult episodes, education, work, etc. All questions and answers will be typed by the caseworker on the computer, and you will be given a copy of this document when you receive your decision.

Interviews may last up to some hours, depending on your own story. If you'll need a break or some water, inform the RefCom caseworker. The length of the interview will not affect its outcome.

If at any point you become uncomfortable with the interpreter (for example he/she is not translating properly, he/she is suggesting answers, you would prefer a male/female interpreter) tell the caseworker at once.

**WHAT WILL  
THEY ASK ME  
DURING THE  
INTERVIEW?**

There will be several questions about your personal background, in order for RefCom to understand where you are from. Then you will be asked questions about why you are asking for Malta's protection, and why you are afraid to be returned back to your country of origin.



**HOW SHOULD I  
ACT DURING  
THE  
INTERVIEW?**

This is not a test or an exam, but an interview to understand your story. Do not feel scared or intimidated, it is your opportunity to explain your application! We advise you to:

- Always say the **truth**. Lying could affect the way the caseworker interprets your story. It could also make your story inconsistent or improbable.
- Be **consistent** and try to keep the same version of your story. If you change something or remember new things, it will help the caseworker if you explain why you provided different information earlier.
- If you cannot answer a question, for example because you cannot remember or because you just don't know the answer, be honest and say so. It is OK to say "I do not know" or "I cannot remember".
- This is your interview, so take your time to think and to answer the questions. If you do not understand the question, feel free to ask the caseworker to repeat it.
- Intimate questions about your private life are not permitted, and you can choose not to answer them!

**WHAT ABOUT  
MY FAMILY  
MEMBERS  
WHO ARE ALSO  
HERE IN MALTA  
WITH ME,  
ASKING FOR  
PROTECTION?**

You will be interviewed alone. Your family members will have their own separate interview if they are old enough. Remember that the interview is entirely confidential, including from your family. Sometimes, refugees feel that their own story might not be as important as that of their husbands, wives or parents. Your interview is about you!

Note that no childcare will be provided while you will be interviewed. If you do not feel comfortable to give your full story in front your children, it would be useful for you to find someone who can take care of them during the Interview.

**WHEN AND  
HOW WILL I  
RECEIVE THE  
DECISION?**

You will not receive a decision on the same day of your asylum interview. RefCom's decision may take some months, usually between 6 and 8 months, but it can also take longer depending on the number of applications received by RefCom.

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**Need more info? Contact aditus on +356 2010 6295 | [www.aditus.org.mt](http://www.aditus.org.mt) | [info@aditus.org.mt](mailto:info@aditus.org.mt)**



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund  
Project is part-financed by the European Union  
Co-financing rate: 75% EU Funds; 25% Beneficiary Funds  
Sustainable Management of Migration Flows

