

# RSD Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is RSD?

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is an individual process carried out for each person seeking international refugee protection. The purpose is to examine why a person fears returning to their country of origin. During the RSD interview, the asylum-seeker is asked questions about their personal history and circumstances, with particular focus on reasons for leaving the country of origin and not wishing to return. Based on the evidence provided during the interview, as well as information about the situation in the country of origin, the RSD Unit assesses the individual case and determines whether the person is a refugee.

2. Who does the RSD interview, UNHCR or RRS?

In Ethiopia, according to Proclamation No. 1110/2019, Refugees Proclamation, the RSD interview is conducted by the state authorities to assess the validity of asylum claims and determine whether individuals meet the criteria for refugee status under national and international law. During the interview, applicants have the chance to provide detailed information about their reasons for seeking asylum, including experiences of persecution, violence, or other forms of harm in their country of origin. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) acts as an observer in the process, ensuring that the interview is conducted fairly and in accordance with established standards and principles. By involving both state authorities and UNHCR, Ethiopia reinforces its commitment to upholding fair and transparent asylum procedures while providing protection to those in need.

3. How can I get an appointment for an RSD interview? I was registered years ago and I still have not been scheduled for an RSD interview.

Due to the high volume of applications from asylum-seekers, the RRS RSD Unit is prioritizing asylum-seekers who have vulnerabilities, specific needs and their date of registration. When you are scheduled for an RSD appointment, RSD Unit will contact you by phone, text message (SMS) or email to inform you of the date and time of the interview. Please make sure your contact details are always updated so we can contact you. Please do not come to the RRS Reception Centre if you do not have an appointment.

4. Is there anything I should do to prepare for my scheduled RSD interview?

There is nothing in particular you need to prepare for your RSD interview. The RSD interviewer will explain the process and guide you through the interview. Please come to the RRS Reception Centre at least 30 minutes before your scheduled RSD interview appointment. If you arrive late, RRS may not be able to interview you on that day. If you have a legal representative, please inform them of your RSD interview appointment. You need to bring all family members who are registered and included in your file, for example your spouse and children. You should also bring with you any documents (including your Proof of Registration (POR) or other evidence and papers that you think might be relevant for your case. When you arrive at the RRS Reception

Centre, it might take a while before you are called to start your interview, so you might also wish to bring some food and water with you, but please dispose of your rubbish in bins. Please make sure that you are feeling well before you come to the RRS Reception Centre. If you are feeling unwell or have a fever, please do not come to the RRS Reception Centre. You can call or send a message to the RSD staff who contacted you for your RSD interview appointment and tell them you are unable to come and would like to reschedule your appointment to another date.

5. What will I be asked during the RSD interview?

You will be asked many different types of questions, including about your identity, personal and family history, and the reasons why you left your country and are seeking asylum in Ethiopia. The interview process can take several hours to collect all the necessary information to reach a decision on your case, but you will be able to request breaks. If you do not understand any question, the interviewer will clarify.

6. My community members told me that if I say certain things, I have a better chance of being recognised. I am worried that my case is weak.

It is important that you tell the truth about your own profile and experiences, and cooperate during the interview. If it is discovered later that you misled RRS, this may negatively affect your RSD case.

7. I am worried about sharing all the details of my case. What if the authorities of my country or people I know in my country find out?

Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential and cannot be shared with any third parties outside RRS unless you agree to it. Details of your case will never be shared with the authorities of your country of origin. If RRS needs to share your information with a third party, we must obtain your consent first. All information and documentation will be stored securely in the systems.

8. Will other family members in my file be interviewed?

All individuals registered in your file, both adult and children, need to be present on the day of your RSD interview. Other family members registered in your file may need to be interviewed individually. They also have a right to seek asylum and to be heard.

9. What if I feel the need to change my interviewer or interpreter?

It is your right to request an RSD interviewer or interpreter of another sex, if you would feel more comfortable. Doing so will not affect your case in any way. All staff abide by the principle of neutrality, and their profile will not influence their ability to perform their duty. If there are specific reasons why you do not wish to be interviewed by a particular RSD interviewer, please inform the RSD interviewer you do not wish to proceed with the interview and that you would like them to bring this to the attention of their manager. The RRS RSD manager will consider the matter, but there is no guarantee your request will be accepted if there are no exceptional reasons for changing your interviewer.

10. I have had my RSD interview. How long do I need to wait for the decision?

That depends on the details of your case. Each case is considered individually. The RSD Unit tries its best to finalise RSD decisions within 3 months of the RSD interview, but this is not always possible. You might even be called for another interview if more information is needed to reach a decision on your case. We appreciate your understanding and patience. It is important you keep UNHCR informed of any changes to your phone number, email, address or other contact information. [Click here to update your personal information.](#)

11. How do I receive my RSD decision?

Following the interview, your case will be reviewed by the Office, a decision will be made, and you will be contacted by telephone to arrange to notify you of the decision. If your application is successful, you will be recognized as a refugee. If your application is unsuccessful, you will have the right to appeal this decision.

12. What happens if I get a negative RSD decision at the first instance stage?

Please note that the Appeal Hearing Council is still not operational. As for now all appeal cases are suspended. If your application is unsuccessful, the reasons for the decision will be explained to you, and you will also receive a letter explaining the decision. You have the right to appeal this decision within 60 days of being notified of your negative decision, and the RSD staff will explain the appeal process. If you do not submit an appeal application within the specified period and you do not have exceptional reasons for failing to submit an appeal before the deadline, your file will be closed.

13. What can I expect after I submit an appeal application?

This will depend on the circumstances of your case and the reasons you included in your appeal application. Not everyone who submits an appeal application will be called for another interview. A decision might be made based on the available information in your file and appeal application. If you have new issues or evidence you want to raise in your appeal application, you may do so. At the appeal stage, your case will be processed and reviewed by the Appeal Hearing Council. After your case is reviewed at the appeal stage, you may receive either a positive or negative decision. If you are rejected at the appeal stage, your file will be closed. You cannot further appeal this RSD decision, which is considered final. You will no longer be issued any documentation by the Government of Ethiopia.

14. I was recognised as a refugee by UNHCR in another country. What is my status here in Ethiopia?

Under the Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 1110/2019, Refugees Proclamation, individuals seeking refugee status are required to undergo their own individual Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interview. This process ensures that each applicant has the opportunity to present their case and provide relevant information to support their claim for refugee status.

15. If I pay money, can I have my RSD interview with UNHCR or RRS?

No, you cannot. Please note that all services provided by RRS, UNHCR and its partners are free of charge. Do not trust anyone or any organization that asks for money to be paid for UNHCR or its

partners' services. They are lying to you. You will lose your money, and you will not get an interview appointment. People who tell you such lies are seeking to take advantage of your situation. Avoid them at all costs. They may show you information to persuade you that they are connected to RRS or UNHCR. Do not believe them.

If you have been approached by someone claiming they can help your case with RRS or UNHCR, please inform RRS and UNHCR immediately.