



Legal Procedures for the Regularization of Refugees in the Country

The process of regularizing migrants who are refugees or have temporary protection status in Portugal involves several stages designed to guarantee the protection of their human rights, while maintaining national security and adhering to European and international standards. The procedure involves several government bodies, including **AIMA - Agency for Migration Integration and Asylum** which plays a central role in processing applications for asylum, temporary protection or other forms of international protection.

1. Request for International or Temporary Protection

When a migrant arrives in Portugal and wishes to apply for asylum (international protection) or benefit from temporary protection, they should go to **AIMA** or a border post on arrival in the airport. The granting of asylum is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention, which provides the right to protection for people persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions.

Temporary protection, on the other hand, may be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as the refugee crisis from Ukraine in 2022. This special provision can be utilised in the case of groups fleeing conflict, widespread persecution or serious human rights violations.

2. Opening the file and registering the application

The application is registered by **AIMA** after collecting personal data, fingerprints and other information necessary to identify the applicant. AIMA then registers the case and issues a provisional document confirming the applicant's status as a candidate for protection. This document allows them to remain legally in Portugal while their application is processed.

3. Interview

The applicant is called for an interview, during which they have to explain the reasons for their request for international or temporary protection. It is important that the applicant provides all relevant information about their situation, including documentary evidence or testimonies in support of their case. The interview is conducted by an AIMA officer specializing in asylum and protection issues. In the case of minors or individuals with special needs, special protection measures are adopted.

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4. Analysis

Examining the application involves verifying the facts presented by the applicant, and assessing the situation in their country of origin. The authorities may use various sources of information, including international reports, to verify the authenticity of the reasons provided. Processing times can vary, depending on the type of protection requested. In general, **AIMA** has up to six months to make a decision on asylum applications. However, the deadline can be extended, especially if there are a large number of applications or complex issues associated with a particular case.

5. Decision: Approve or Reject

If the application is approved, the applicant is granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, depending on the severity and nature of their circumstances. This status guarantees the right to live and work in Portugal, as well as to benefit from health, education and social integration services. In the case of temporary protection, the status is granted for a specific period, but can be renewed depending on the evolution of the situation in the country of origin.

If the application is refused, the applicant may lodge a judicial appeal against the decision within the legally established time limit. If the appeal is denied, the applicant will be notified to leave national territory voluntarily. Failure to comply with this order may lead to repatriation proceedings.

6. Integration and Support

Once granted refugee status, refugees or individuals with temporary protection have access to social integration programmes. These include support in learning the Portuguese language, integration into the job market and access to housing. The Portuguese government, collaborates with various non-governmental and international organizations, such as the Portuguese Council for Refugees, the **CPR**, to provide social and legal assistance throughout the process.

In addition, special programmes guarantee the education of minors and access to health care, facilitating their harmonious integration into Portuguese society.

