



AN OIFIG UM CHOSAINT IDIRNÁISIÚNTA
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OFFICE



PRIORITISATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION ACT 2015

1. Following consultation with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, the Chief International Protection Officer is according priority to certain classes of applications for international protection under the International Protection Act, 2015. The 2015 Act was commenced on 31 December 2016 (“commencement date”).
2. UNHCR, as part of its mandate in relation to international protection, has provided advice in relation to the prioritisation of applications and supports the approach taken by the Chief International Protection Officer. UNHCR has also supported the International Protection Office (IPO) in providing training programmes to its Protection Panel and IPO staff for the new international protection process.
3. The legal basis for the prioritisation of applications is set out in Section 73 of the International Protection Act 2015 which states *inter alia*:

“(1) Subject to the need for fairness and efficiency in dealing with applications for international protection under this Act, the Minister may, where he or she considers it necessary or expedient to do so-

(a) accord priority to any application or,

(b) having consulted with the chairperson of the Tribunal, request the chairperson to accord priority to any appeal.”
4. UNHCR supports the prioritisation of applications for international protection as a means to enable the early identification of, for example, likely well-founded cases and cases involving children or the elderly.
5. Prioritisation under section 73 of the International Protection Act 2015 is subject to the need for fairness and efficiency in dealing with applications for international protection. Accordingly, the scheduling of cases in the International Protection Office will primarily be done on the basis of the date of application (oldest cases first).
6. Prioritisation relates solely to the scheduling of interviews and will not pre-determine any recommendation to be made. Applications which are prioritised will be scheduled for interview at the earliest possible date having regard to available resources. All applications, whether prioritised or not will receive the same full and individual assessment under the procedure.



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7. The scheduling of interviews will occur under two processing streams which will run concurrently.
8. Stream one, will comprise of the majority of applications for international protection which will be scheduled mainly on the basis of oldest cases first. These include new applications and cases which were open before the commencement date of the International Protection Act 2015 at the following stages and order of priority:
 - i. pending subsidiary protection recommendation.
 - ii. pending appeal at the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal.
 - iii. pending refugee status recommendation.
9. Stream two will comprise certain categories of cases which were open at the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 as well as some new cases based on the criteria below. Within each of these classes of cases, priority will be mainly accorded on the basis of the oldest cases first.

9.1 The age of applicants.

Under this provision, the following cases will be prioritised:

- Unaccompanied minors in the care of TUSLA
- Applicants who applied as unaccompanied minors, but who have now aged out
- Applicants over 70 years of age, who are not part of a family group.

9.2 The likelihood that applications are well-founded.

Applicants who notify the IPO after the commencement date that a Medico-Legal report, indicating likely well-foundedness, has been submitted will be prioritised.

9.3 The likelihood that applications are well-founded due to the country of origin or habitual residence of applicants.

UNHCR recommends the prioritisation of applications relating to the following countries on the basis of country of origin information, protection determination rates in EU member states and UNHCR position papers indicating the likely well-foundedness of applications from such countries.

- Syria
- Eritrea
- Iraq



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- Afghanistan
- Iran
- Libya
- Somalia

It should be noted that the main countries covered at present by the EU Relocation Programme are included in this list.

Non-inclusion on this list is not in any way to be read as an indication of the security or human rights situation in a country.

9.4 Health Grounds.

Applicants who notify the IPO after the commencement date that evidence has been submitted, certified by a medical consultant, of an ongoing severe/life threatening medical condition will be prioritised.

10. As a general rule, applications from family members will be processed together. This will apply for prioritised and non-prioritised applications.
11. This prioritisation procedure will be kept under ongoing review and will be updated, as required, having regard to, inter alia, the nature of the changing caseload in the International Protection Office.

**International Protection Office
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
27 February 2017**