

SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS NAVIGATION GUIDES

ANNEX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI).....	4
COUNCIL OF EUROPE (CoE).....	6
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (HRW).....	10
INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTRE (FORMERLY GLOBAL IDP PROJECT).....	12
INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP (ICG).....	14
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (FIDH).....	15
INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FEDERATION (IHF).....	17
WORLD ORGANISATION AGAINST TORTURE (OMCT).....	19
ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE).....	20
UNITED NATIONS (UN).....	22
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR).....	22
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (UNHCHR).....	25
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL.....	29
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (UN OCHA) / RELIEFWEB.....	30
INTEGRATED REGIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK (IRIN).....	32
U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES (USCR).....	34
US DEPARTMENT OF STATE (USDOS).....	35
EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTER (ERRC).....	37

SOURCES SPECIALISED IN COI

ACCORD.....	39
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GERMANY.....	39
DANISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE (UDLÆNDINGESTYRELSEN).....	40
FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE, GERMANY (AUSWÄRTIGES AMT).....	40
FEDERAL OFFICE FOR REFUGEES, SWITZERLAND (BUNDESAMT FÜR FLÜCHTLINGE/ OFFICE FEDERAL DES REFUGIES/UFFICIO FEDERALE DEI RIFUGIATI).....	41
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD, CANADA.....	41
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NETHERLANDS (MINISTERIE VAN BUITENLANDSE ZAKEN).....	42
SWISS REFUGEE COUNCIL (SCHWEIZERISCHE FLÜCHTLINGSHILFE/ORGANISATION SUISSE D'AIDE AUX RÉFUGIÉS).....	42
UK HOME OFFICE.....	43
US BUREAU OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES RESOURCE INFORMATION CENTER.....	44

NAVIGATION GUIDES

ECOI.NET – NAVIGATION GUIDE.....	45
SEARCH OPERATORS.....	49

SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI)

<http://www.amnesty.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>The mission of Amnesty International is to “undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights”. (AI website)</p> <p>AI was founded in 1961 by a British lawyer, who heard the story of two Portuguese students sentenced to seven years in prison for raising a toast to freedom. He launched a newspaper campaign to bombard authorities around the world with protests about the “forgotten prisoners”. From this individual initiative grew a worldwide movement.</p>
Target group/audience:	<p>In its human rights reporting, AI addresses governments and non-state actors found responsible for human rights violations, international policy makers, intergovernmental organizations, companies, and civil society.</p> <p>AI does respond to requests by lawyers and RSD authorities for expert opinion in individual asylum cases.</p>
Objective:	<p>AI is an advocacy organization. Its main objective is to free all prisoners of conscience. It seeks to influence policies towards, and by, governments and international organizations to end human rights abuses by mobilizing public opinion as well as by making recommendations for further action.</p> <p>In individual cases, the AI Urgent Action network aims to rouse broad public support by appealing to responsible actors (e.g. government authorities) to free a prisoner of conscience, or to ensure prisoners are not subject to torture or the death penalty.</p>
Funding:	<p>According to the AI website, Amnesty International’s funding depends on the contributions of its worldwide membership and fundraising activities. AI does not seek or accept money from governments or political parties.</p> <p>http://web.amnesty.org/pages/aboutai-faq-eng#6</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> AI covers most countries of origin. The annual report (AI Report) documents the situation of human rights abuses in more than 150 countries and territories.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> The release of prisoners of conscience, torture, violence against women, arms control, the death penalty, refugee rights, economic globalization and human rights, child soldiers, and human rights education. AI has recently expanded its scope of reporting to include economic, cultural and social rights.</p>
In-country presence:	<p>AI has sections and local groups in almost every country worldwide. Researchers in the International Secretariat carry out reporting: local groups do not work on their own country, in order to maintain impartiality and protect AI staff and volunteers in the countries concerned. One exception to the “no-work-on-your-own-country-rule” is support and advice for refugees and asylum-seekers.</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>AI bases most of its reports on fact-finding missions: its experts talk with victims or eyewitnesses of abuse. AI experts reporting from a country observe trials and interview local human rights activists and government officials. It complements fact-finding with reports from the media and other organizations. If access to a country is denied, “the organization also relies on other sources of information: testimonies from refugees or victims who have fled a country; information, such as letters, smuggled out of a country; a government itself; the more than 1,100 newspapers, journals,</p>

government bulletins and transcripts of radio broadcasts which Amnesty International receives; reports from lawyers and other humanitarian organizations and letters from prisoners and their families.” (Poe 2001, p. 656 quoting from AI website as of March 1998)

Publication cycle: The annual report (AI Report) is published in April/May for the previous year. Ad hoc reports, briefings and news releases are published on an almost daily basis. AI also publishes ad hoc thematic reports and Urgent Actions.

Language: The AI Report is published in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish. Press releases, thematic reports and news are also available in Albanian, Bosnian, Chinese, Kurdish, Russian, and Turkish.

Navigation of website: Information about COI can be found under:

- Home: contains the latest information
- Library: contains information arranged by country and region. This is the most comprehensive archive – not all reports published will be displayed on the homepage
- News: contains the latest news by region in reverse chronological order

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (CoE)<http://www.coe.int>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>The Council of Europe was founded in 1949. It groups together 45 countries, including 21 countries from Central and Eastern Europe. The Council was set up to:</p> <p>“defend human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law; develop continent-wide agreements to standardise member countries’ social and legal practices; promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values and cutting across different cultures.</p> <p>Since 1989, its main job has become: acting as a political anchor and human rights watchdog for Europe’s post-communist democracies; assisting the countries of central and eastern Europe in carrying out and consolidating political, legal and constitutional reform in parallel with economic reform; providing know-how in areas such as human rights, local democracy, education, culture and the environment.” (Council of Europe website).</p>
Target group/audience:	Council of Europe member states, accession countries, policy makers, and civil society.
Objective:	Report on appliance and promotion of rights protected in the ECHR.
Funding:	The CoE is financed by the governments of member states, whose contributions to the organization’s budget are calculated in relation to their population and wealth. In 2004 the ordinary budget of the CoE amounts to € 180.5 million.
Language:	The main languages of the website are English, French, German, Russian, and Italian. The website and specific documents are also partly available in the other languages of the Council of Europe member countries.

The Secretary General<http://www.coe.int/t/e/mandates/mandat.asp>

Mandate:	<p>The Secretary General “is entrusted with the responsibility of meeting the aim for which the Council of Europe was set up in London on 5 May 1949, namely to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress. The Secretary General has the overall responsibility for the strategic management of the Council of Europe’s work programme and budget and oversees the day-to-day running of the Organisation and Secretariat.” (Council of Europe website)</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> every member state of the Council of Europe (Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom).</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> Rights contained in the ECHR</p>
Reporting methodology:	The Secretary General reports are based on fact-finding missions and interviews with NGO representatives, government officials or other political actors. These testimonies are supplemented by media reports and reports by other human rights monitoring organizations.

Publication cycle: Reports on compliance of post-accession countries with obligations and commitments under the Convention are published quarterly and on an ad hoc basis. Field office reports are published on a monthly basis. Other reports of the Secretary General are not published on a regular basis.

Navigation of website: COI can be found under:
Secretary General > Documents > Field Office Reports > Compliance with Obligations and Commitments *or* Other Reports

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

<http://assembly.coe.int/>

Mandate: “The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which held its first session on 10 August 1949, can be considered the oldest international parliamentary Assembly with a pluralistic composition of democratically elected members of parliament established on the basis of an intergovernmental treaty. The Assembly is one of the two statutory organs of the Council of Europe, which is composed of a Committee of Ministers (the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, meeting usually at the level of their deputies) and an Assembly representing the political forces in its member states.” (PACE website: Framework) “The Assembly can adopt three different types of texts: recommendations, resolutions and opinions.

- Recommendations contain proposals addressed to the Committee of Ministers, the implementation of which is within the competence of governments.
- Resolutions embody decisions by the Assembly on questions, which it is empowered to put into effect or expressions of view for, which it alone is responsible.
- The Assembly mostly expresses opinions on questions put to it by the Committee of Ministers, such as the admission of new member states to the Council of Europe, but also on draft conventions, the budget, the implementation of the Social Charter.” (PACE website: Procedure)

Scope of Reporting: Countries included: every member of the Council of Europe, accession countries.

Thematic priorities: rights protected under the ECHR. (e.g. rule of law, minority rights, prevention of torture, gender equality, migration, Roma, social security, media rights)

Reporting methodology: A rapporteur, appointed by one of the Parliamentary Assembly Committees, draws up reports. Rapporteurs engage in fact-finding missions followed by a concluding report that should serve as a basis for recommendations or resolutions. They are normally divided into two parts: the draft resolution, recommendation or opinion, and the explanatory memorandum.

Publication cycle: The reports of the Parliamentary Assembly are published on an irregular basis, depending on the issues discussed by the Assembly.

Navigation of website: Adopted texts, working documents and records can be found under:
Institutions > Parliamentary Assembly > Documents
Enter the name of the country you are researching into the search field, “Words that appear in the title”, to get a list of PACE documents on that country.

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)<http://www.cpt.coe.int/en/>

Mandate:	<p>“The Committee shall, by means of visits, examine the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty with a view to strengthening, if necessary, the protection of such persons from torture and from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” (Article 1 of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment)</p> <p>CPT members are independent and impartial experts, appointed for a period of 4 years (once renewable; one member/Contracting state) by the Committee of Ministers. (Art 4 and 5 ECPT)</p>
Scope of Reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> every signatory country of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture (i.e. every member state of the Council of Europe).</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The CPT visits places of detention (prisons and juvenile detention centers, police stations, holding centers for immigration detainees and psychiatric hospitals).</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>Periodic “[v]isits are carried out by delegations, usually of two or more CPT members, accompanied by members of the Committee’s Secretariat and, if necessary, by experts and interpreters. The member selected in respect of the country being visited does not join the delegation [...]”</p> <p>The Committee must notify the State concerned but need not specify the period between notification and the actual visit. Governments’ objections to the time or place of a visit can only be justified [on grounds of urgency].” Under the Convention, CPT delegations have unlimited access to places of detention and the right to move inside such places without restriction. They interview persons deprived of their liberty in private and communicate freely with anyone who can provide information.” (CPT website)</p> <p>The recommendations, which the CPT may formulate on the basis of facts found during the visit, are included in a [confidential] report which is sent to the State concerned and used as basis for a dialogue about the findings.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>The CPT delegations visit contracting states periodically (every 3/4 years), but may organise additional “ad hoc” visits if necessary. States generally consent to the publication of the initially confidential reports that sometimes leads to a delay of several years after the visit before a report is published.</p>
Navigation of website:	<p>COI can be found under:</p> <p>Documents: contains a list of reports arranged by date or by country</p>

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)http://www.coe.int/t/E/human_rights/ecri/

Mandate:	<p>“ECRI was established by the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, held in Vienna in October 1993.” (ECRI website)</p> <p>On 13 June 2002, the Committee of Ministers adopted a new Statute for ECRI, thereby consolidating its role as an independent human rights monitoring body on issues related to racism and racial discrimination.</p>
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According to the 2002 Statute "ECRI shall ... pursue the following objectives:

- to review member states' legislation, policies and other measures to combat racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, and their effectiveness;
- to propose further action at local, national and European level;
- to formulate general policy recommendations to member states;
- to study international legal instruments applicable in the matter with a view to their reinforcement where appropriate." (Art 1 ECRI Statute 2002)

Scope of Reporting:

Countries included: Council of Europe member states.

Thematic priorities: racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance.

Reporting methodology:

ECRI visits CoE member states periodically. During the 4-day visits ECRI members meet government officials, NGOs, minority groups, scholars and experts and other pertinent individuals. ECRI does not have any contact with the media. Following the visit a draft report is written by the ECRI Secretariat and then filed with the state concerned. A final written report is given to the state via the Council of Ministers. Publication often follows, unless a state expresses its reservation.

Publication cycle:

Reports are published and updated in 4-5 year cycles.

Navigation of website:

COI reports can be found under:

Human Rights > Combating Racism > ECRI > Country-by-Country Approach

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (HRW)<http://www.hrw.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>"We stand with victims and activists to prevent discrimination, to uphold political freedom, to protect people from inhumane conduct in wartime, and to bring offenders to justice.</p> <p>We investigate and expose human rights violations and hold abusers accountable.</p> <p>We challenge governments and those who hold power to end abusive practices and respect international human rights law.</p> <p>We enlist the public and the international community to support the cause of human rights for all." (HRW website)</p> <p>Human Rights Watch was founded as "Helsinki Watch" in 1978 to support the citizens' groups that formed, first in Moscow, then throughout the Eastern bloc, to monitor their governments' compliance with the 1975 Helsinki Accords. In the early 1980's, reporting was extended to the Americas (America Watch). Since 1988, Human Rights Watch covers all regions.</p>
Target group/audience:	Policy makers in the US government, the UN, and the EU; state and non-state actors held responsible for human rights violations; civil society; local and international media.
Objective:	<p>HRW is an advocacy organization. It seeks to influence policies towards, and by governments and international organizations, to end human rights abuses by informing them about the human rights situation as well as by making recommendations for further action to end abuses.</p> <p>"Human Rights Watch's principal advocacy strategy is to shame offenders by generating press attention and to exert diplomatic and economic pressure on them by enlisting influential governments and institutions." (HRW website)</p>
Funding:	<p>According to the 2003 financial overview available on the HRW website, the majority of funding comes from private individuals and foundations worldwide, supplemented by endowments, publication sales and investment income. HRW states that it accepts no government funds, neither directly nor indirectly.</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/donations/finance.htm</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> most countries of origin.</p> <p>"Human Rights Watch tries to strike a balance in its work between countries with the worst human rights problems and countries where there is a moment of special opportunity for us to propel change. Human Rights Watch considers the severity of abuses, the number of people affected, and the possibility for impact. In making this assessment, we take into account the ability of our researchers to obtain current and accurate information." (HRW website)</p> <p>Africa and the CIS are best represented in terms of in-country presence and funding allocated for regional programmes in 2003.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> While HRW reports on emergencies as they arise and will typically report on major human rights issues and abuses in conflicts worldwide, in recent years campaigns and thematic priorities have included women's rights, children's rights, child soldiers, refugees, prisons, racism, caste discrimination, sexual orientation, academic freedom, religious freedom, human rights defenders and HIV/AIDS.</p>
In-country presence:	HRW is based in New York with offices in Brussels, Bujumbura, Freetown, Kigali, Geneva, London, Los Angeles, Moscow, San Francisco, Santiago de

	<p>Chile, Tashkent, Tbilisi, and Washington. Temporary offices may be set up where in-depth investigations are taking place.</p> <p>According to HRW, most reporting is done on the basis of fact-finding missions. Special emergency researchers are always available for deployment to crisis regions.</p>						
Reporting methodology:	<p>Reports are based either on fact-finding missions and interviews with victims, witnesses, government officials and NGO representatives, or, where a country mission is not possible, by interviewing refugees, exiles and other sources considered reliable by HRW.</p> <p>These testimonies are supplemented by (local) media reports and reports by other human rights monitoring organizations. Information is regularly footnoted. Source confidentiality is respected for witness protection.</p>						
Publication cycle:	<p>The annual World Report is published in late December/early January for the previous year. It covers events roughly up to November of the reporting period.</p> <p>Ad hoc reports, briefings and news releases are published on a regular basis (at least 2-3 times per week).</p>						
Language:	<p>The World Report and longer reports and briefings are published in English, and sometimes French.</p> <p>Press releases are published in: English, French, German, Russian (for CIS region), Spanish (for Spanish-speaking regions), and sometimes Arabic and Chinese.</p>						
Navigation of website:	<p>Information about COI can be found under:</p> <table><tr><td>Home:</td><td>contains the latest information</td></tr><tr><td>Info by Country:</td><td>contains information sorted by country in reverse chronological order</td></tr><tr><td>Global Issues:</td><td>contains information sorted by issues (e.g. arms, children's rights, refugees, etc.)</td></tr></table>	Home:	contains the latest information	Info by Country:	contains information sorted by country in reverse chronological order	Global Issues:	contains information sorted by issues (e.g. arms, children's rights, refugees, etc.)
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INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTRE ¹ (formerly GLOBAL IDP PROJECT)

<http://www.internal-displacement.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>The Geneva-based Global IDP Project was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1996 and was requested by the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 1998 to set up an IDP database. The Project has since evolved into the leading international body monitoring internal displacement in over 50 countries worldwide. In December 2005, the Global IDP Project changed its name into "Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre", its mandate remained unchanged.</p> <p>"The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre is an international non-governmental body working for better protection and assistance of people who have been displaced within their own country by conflict or human rights violations. (IDMC Appeal 2006)</p>
Target group/audience:	International organisations, humanitarian practitioners, local and international media, governments and civil society.
Objective:	<p>The IDMC "aims to help improve the response to the needs, and increase respect for the rights, of millions of the world's most disadvantaged people, and find solutions that ultimately lead to their safe return or resettlement and integration.</p> <p>In pursuit of this goal, the Centre monitors internal displacement worldwide and makes relevant information and analysis available, as mandated by the United Nations, to decision-makers, humanitarian practitioners and the general public. In doing so, the Centre seeks to enable key actors at the international, national and local levels to make timely and informed decisions on responses to the needs and rights of internally displaced people (IDPs), in line with international standards such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement." (IDMC Appeal 2006)</p>
Funding:	The IDMC's funding is composed of contributions by governments and governmental development agencies, NGOs, the UN and the EU, and others (IDMC Appeal 2006).
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> "Each country affected by conflict-induced displacement is covered by an Internal Displacement Profile". Thus, the IDP database features some 50 country profiles, "each providing a brief overview, as well as more in-depth information and analysis on the respective IDP situation and its background." In addition, the country profiles include maps and links to relevant external sources. The database provides access to 14,000 documents. (IDMC website)</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> the situation of IDPs and conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide. Topics are structured along the rights of IDPs as outlined in the <i>Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement</i>.</p>
In-country presence:	IDMC: none. The Norwegian Refugee Council has field presences in a number of countries with a significant IDP population.
Reporting methodology:	<p>The Centre gathers its information through Internet, reference material and contacts in the field. It relies on sources such as the UN, national and international NGOs to corroborate its information.</p> <p>The Centre aims to "present information in an objective, unbiased and fair manner."</p> <p>The summary of each profile is based on analysis by the IDMC's researchers of the sources used to compile the thematic chapters ("Information Envelopes") of the profiles. The thematic chapters consist of</p>

¹ We would like to thank Mr Jens Eschenbacher, Global IDP Project, for presenting the work of the Global IDP project at the COI Network & Training test run, Vienna 25-27 June 2004.

	<p>quotes selected from various sources and summaries of their content in bullet points prepared by the IDMC.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>About 50 country profiles regarding internal displacement are updated every 4-12 months.</p> <p>A global overview of major trends and developments in the field of internal displacement is published annually.</p> <p>IDP News Alerts are published bi-weekly and contain summaries of selected global news on IDPs.</p>
Language:	<p>Country profiles are published in English. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are available in a variety of languages.</p>
Navigation of website:	<p>Information about COI can be found under:</p> <p>The country profiles can be found by clicking on “Countries” in the top navigation bar and selecting a region/country in the left hand side navigation column.</p> <p>Clicking on a country on the interactive map gives you access to a brief country overview.</p> <p>IDP News Alerts can be accessed by clicking on “News” in the top navigation bar.</p> <p>The Centre offers a user’s guide for the IDP database:</p> <p>http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BD0DA/(httpPages)/CB9E599533BB63318025708F0058D21C?OpenDocument</p> <p>For quick navigation, also see the sitemap:</p> <p>http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BC2FE/httpSiteMap?ReadForm</p>

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP (ICG)<http://www.icg.org>

Mission/Mandate:	"The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organization, with over 100 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict." (ICG website)
Target group/audience:	"ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions." (ICG website).
Objective:	ICG works through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to inform and influence policy makers.
Funding:	ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors whose names are published on the website.
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> ICG works in countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict all over the world. Focus regions include Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> in-depth political and conflict analysis; background and interests of political parties and armed groups; assessment of the security situation; the role and impact of international organizations.</p>
In-country presence:	"ICG's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York, London and Moscow. The organization currently has seventeen field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bogotá, Cairo, Dakar, Dushanbe, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kabul, Nairobi, Osh, Pretoria, Pristina, Quito, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tbilisi) with analysts working in over 40 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents." (ICG website)
Reporting methodology:	<p>"ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers." (ICG website)</p> <p>ICG reports contain numerous references to interviews with government representatives, political parties, armed groups, the military, international and local human rights organizations, and local media.</p>
Publication cycle:	Based on internal and external policy interests. "ICG produces regular analytical reports and also publishes Crisis Watch, a 12-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world." (ICG Website)
Language:	The website is available in English, French, Russian, Spanish, Indonesian and Arabic. Certain of the Balkan reports have been translated into Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Macedonian and Albanian. The executive summaries and recommendations of the Afghanistan and Nepal reports have been respectively translated into Dari and Nepali.
Navigation of website:	<p>Information about COI can be found under:</p> <p>Home > Reports: contains information sorted by date, regions and keywords</p> <p>Home > Media and Speeches: contains the latest news</p>

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (FIDH)

<http://www.fidh.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>"FIDH was set up in 1922. It is now a federation of 116 Human Rights organisations in nearly 100 countries. It co-ordinates and supports their activities and provides them with a voice at the international level...The aim of the FIDH is to obtain effective improvements in the protection of victims, the prevention of Human Rights abuse and the prosecution of those responsible.</p> <p>FIDH's mandate is to act effectively and practically to ensure the respect of all the rights laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the civil and political rights, but also the economic, social and cultural rights." (FIDH website)</p>
Target group/audience:	State and non-state actors responsible for human rights violations, international organisations, human rights defenders, local and international media, civil society, and business corporations.
Objective:	<p>Information of the public, denunciation of human rights violations and lobbying of government and international organizations to protect human rights defenders and other victims of human rights violations.</p> <p>"FIDH gives guidance and support to its 116 member organisations in their dealings with the intergovernmental organisations. By alerting international agencies to abuses of Human Rights, and by referring specific cases to them, FIDH helps to increase the protection of victims ... publicity and information are the main means with which FIDH wages its fight against abuse of Human Rights." (FIDH website)</p>
Funding:	The website does not provide information on the funding basis of FIDH. It mentions its independence from political and religious groups as well as from governments and that "experts sent out into the field give their time to FIDH on a voluntary, unpaid basis." (FIDH website)
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> FIDH covers a large number of countries of origin in its reporting.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> rights and protection of human rights defenders as well as violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.</p> <p>Thematic priorities in recent years have included arbitrary arrests and torture and information on the situation of human rights defenders.</p>
In-country presence:	FIDH has an office in Paris, France. It coordinates and supports the activities of 116 human rights organizations in nearly 100 countries.
Reporting methodology:	"With activities ranging from sending a judicial observer to a trial to the organisation of an international mission of enquiry, FIDH has developed strict and impartial procedures. The experts sent out into the field give their time to FIDH on a voluntary, unpaid basis. In response to information provided by its member organisations, FIDH has conducted over a thousand missions in a hundred countries over the last 25 years." (FIDH website) FIDH also publishes information produced by its member organizations on its website.
Publication cycle:	<p>At the beginning of each year, an annual report (covering the entire previous year) is published on the situation of the human rights defenders worldwide. FIDH also publishes a monthly newsletter, <i>The Observatory</i>, which contains brief information on urgent appeals, interventions, open letters, released reports on the situation of human rights defenders in specific countries, threats, etc.</p> <p>Furthermore, FIDH infrequently publishes alternative reports on countries for the UN Human Rights Committee, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, etc. FIDH also sends experts on observation missions who monitor the situation before, during and after elections.</p>

Language: The website is available in French, Spanish, and English. Information is also partly available in Arabic.

Navigation of website: Information about COI can be found under:

Home:	contains information under different world regions, international organisations and non-governmental organizations
Press Releases:	sorted in reverse chronological order
Urgent Appeals:	sorted in reverse chronological order
Reports:	sorted in reverse chronological order

The website is currently undergoing a relaunch.

INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FEDERATION (IHF)

<http://www.ihf-hr.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>"In 1975..the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)..concluded with the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act..which..attempted to link peace and security with the respect for human rights." (IHF website)</p> <p>As a result Helsinki committees were formed in the Soviet Union and then all over Europe with the aim of monitoring the protection of human rights..In 1982 representatives of different Helsinki committees held an International Citizens Helsinki Watch Conference. This led to the founding of the IHF in order "to provide a structure through which independent Helsinki committees could support one another and strengthen the human rights movement by giving their efforts an international dimension." (IHF website)</p> <p>"Article II..</p> <p>2.1 The purposes of the Federation are:</p> <p>(a) to support and publicize the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe signed in Helsinki, Finland, in August 1975 (the "Helsinki Accords") ;</p> <p>(b) to strengthen, assist and coordinate the efforts of its members to monitor compliance by the Participating States with the principles of the Helsinki Accords and the follow-up documents in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns;</p> <p>(c) to support the development of democratic institutions, the promotion of the rule of law, human rights and human rights education;</p> <p>2.2 ..the Federation shall:</p> <p>(b) gather and disseminate to the public information concerning the provisions and principles of the Helsinki Accords, the Participating States' compliance with those provisions, and human rights conditions in the Participating States;</p> <p>(c) promote the formation in the Participating States of non-governmental organizations to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords, and support, assist and coordinate the work of such organizations;</p> <p>(d) assist victims of violations of human rights in the Participating States, whether individuals or groups; ..."</p> <p>(Statutes of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights)</p>
Target group/audience:	Governments of the OSCE participating states, OSCE institutions, civil society, local and international media.
Objective:	"In addition to gathering and analyzing information on human rights conditions in OSCE participating States, the IHF acts as a clearing house for this information, disseminating it to governments, inter-governmental organizations, the press and the public at large." (See also Art 2.2 of the IHF Statutes)
Funding:	"The IHF is a non-profit human rights organization and relies on financial contributions from donors to carry out its work. All persons making a contribution to the IHF are recognized in the Annual Report." (IHF website) The Annual Report of 1999 listed contributions from the Council of Europe, the European Commission and a number of Ministries for Foreign Affairs as well as foundations.
Scope of reporting:	<u>Countries included:</u> The IHF focuses on the 35 European and North American signatory states of the CSCE and on other OSCE participating states.

	<p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> While the IHF reports on emergencies as they arise, and will typically report on major human rights issues such as freedom of expression and assembly, freedom of the media, right to a fair trial, religious rights, police conduct, and protection of minorities in areas of conflict in OSCE member countries, campaigns and thematic priorities in recent years have included the issue of democracy, NGOs, refugees, violation of political rights, prisoners' rights, etc.</p>
In-country presence:	<p>The IHF's secretariat is based in Vienna. There are 42 Helsinki committees in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe and Central Asia.</p> <p>For the full list of IHF members and links to their websites see:</p> <p>http://www.ihf-hr.org/members/?sec_id=2</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>Gathering of information is mostly done by the Federation's national member committees.</p> <p>The IHF website states that:</p> <p>"The IHF is even-handed in its criticism of human rights violations with respect to the political systems of states in which these abuses occur." (IHF website)</p> <p>Information is gathered through interviews and meetings with witnesses and victims, representatives of international organizations and diplomatic missions as well as local NGOs. It also meets with representatives of the participating states (ministers, diplomats). Local enquiry missions are regularly undertaken by a group of IHF staff members. The IHF also refers to information provided by other COI sources (such as AI and HRW) to confirm its researched information and its documents/reports are regularly footnoted.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>The IHF publishes an annual report entitled Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Europe, Central Asia and North America. This report is published between May and June for the previous year.</p> <p>The IHF also produces additional reports submitted to OSCE assemblies (e.g. OSCE Supplementary Human Rights Meeting).</p> <p>Press releases, statements and open letters are published on a regular basis (almost every day).</p> <p>Publication cycle by national committees varies: some national committees publish quarterly and monthly, as well as annual reports; some publish quite infrequently.</p>
Language:	<p>The IHF website is in English. Publications and reports are also partly available in Russian and German. Publications by the 42 IHF member committees are more and more available in English, as well as in their national language.</p>
Navigation of website:	<p>Information about COI can be found under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Documents and Publications: contains information sorted by country and by issues in reverse chronological order > Chechnya: information in reverse chronological order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Reports Projects > Member committees: leads to the list of national Helsinki Committees. Click on the name of the Committee to access their website

WORLD ORGANISATION AGAINST TORTURE (OMCT)

<http://www.omct.org>

Mission/Mandate:	“The World Organisation Against Torture’s structure and activities in favour of the victims of human rights violations stem from its working relations with independent grass-roots human rights organisations in the field. Its role has been to support the members of the network with practical and conceptual tools and services that enable them to pursue their work in favour of the prohibition of torture, in fighting against the impunity of perpetrators of grave violations, in providing assistance to actual or potential victims of torture and the rehabilitation of the latter.” (OMCT Report 2003)
Target group/audience:	OMCT addresses policy makers, intergovernmental organizations and other non-state actors.
Objective:	Human rights advocacy and general dissemination of information to policy makers and civil society. Alternative reports, drafted together with regional or national NGOs, are submitted to the different UN treaty-monitoring bodies in order to offer an alternative to the official reports and attempt to outline a more accurate description of the situation.
Funding:	The annual report publishes a list of donors, including governments and non-governmental organizations, the European Commission, United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Swiss communes and private donors. http://www.omct.org/pdf/omct/omct_rapport_eng03.pdf
Scope of reporting:	<u>Countries included:</u> the annual report documents the situation of human rights abuses in more than 150 countries and territories all over the world. <u>Thematic priorities:</u> OMCT focuses particularly on torture, detention, summary executions, forced disappearances, violations of children’s and women’s rights, and the improvement of socio-economic and cultural rights. Reports are written under different OMCT programmes e.g. observatory, special procedures, prevention of torture, children’s rights...
In-country presence:	OMCT itself is not present in the countries of origin, but acts through a worldwide network of expert human rights organizations.
Reporting methodology:	Mission reports are drafted by delegations that visit a country and contact representatives of local NGOs. Such delegations may be joint delegations, resulting in joint reports.
Publication cycle:	Alternative Reports are published on a regular basis when state parties to international covenants (ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, CAT) submit a report concerning the enforcement of their obligations. News is published on an almost daily basis. Not all publications are available online. A list of publications, which are available upon request, is available from the OMCT website.
Language:	The website is available in French, English, and Spanish.
Navigation of website:	COI can be found under: > Reports: listed in reverse chronological order

ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

<http://www.osce.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>“The OSCE is the largest regional security organization in the world with fifty-five participating States from Europe, Central Asia and North America.</p> <p>It is active in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.” (OSCE website)</p> <p>To maintain the peace and stability of its member countries. This is ensured through the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as economic and environmental cooperation among the member states.</p> <p>It was established in 1992, transforming the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) into a permanent organisation.</p> <p>Important structures and institutions relevant for COI are the High Commissioner on National Minorities (http://www.osce.org/hcnm), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (http://www.osce.org/odhr), the Representative on Freedom of the Media (http://www.osce.org/fom).</p>
Target group/audience:	Its fifty-five member states, international and national human rights organizations; actors involved in conflict; civil society, local and international media.
Objective:	Gathering of information and monitoring developments for early warning of potential conflict situations in the OSCE area as well as to prevent and resolve conflicts.
Funding:	<p>The OSCE 2004 budget amounts to approximately € 185.7 million. Over 80% of the OSCE budget goes towards missions and field activities.</p> <p>“Regular OSCE activities and institutions are financed by contributions made by OSCE participating States, according to a scale of distribution. [...] The scale-determined funding does not include contributions made on a voluntary basis.”</p> <p>http://www.osce.org/general/budget/index.php3</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> the 55 OSCE member states.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> the OSCE deals with a wide range of security-related issues. With regard to human rights, recent priorities have included national minorities (including Roma), the rule of law and judiciary, death penalty, national laws, women’s rights, human trafficking, democratization, election monitoring, and economic and environmental security.</p>
In-country presence:	<p>The headquarters are in Vienna, Austria. The OSCE also has offices and institutions in Copenhagen, Geneva, The Hague, Prague and Warsaw.</p> <p>Field Missions and offices are situated in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (http://www.osce.org/field_activities).</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>Missions, or field activities, are the OSCE’s principal instrument for long-term conflict prevention and resolution. Field staff meet with parliamentarians, government representatives, judges, journalists, local and international NGOs. Information is regularly footnoted.</p> <p>Field-based democratization and human rights officers are responsible for monitoring human rights in their respective areas of responsibility. For reporting methodology on individual complaints and allegations of torture see OSCE Individual Human Rights Complaints: A Handbook for OSCE Field Personnel, 2003.</p> <p>http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2003/10/1839_en.pdf</p>

ODIHR also engages in election monitoring, often assisting in organising and supervising elections, and publishes observations on the fairness of the election campaign and voting process.

The High Commissioner on National Minorities may “collect and receive information regarding the situation of national minorities and the role of parties involved therein from any source, including the media and non-governmental organizations” with the exception of persons or organizations practicing or publicly condoning terrorism or violence. (See Helsinki Document 1992, Art 23-25) The High Commissioner has chosen to produce reports on the basis of government responses to surveys, on the basis of visits to countries and national minorities concerned, and written material on national minorities. (See High Commissioner’s reports)

Moscow Mechanism: At the request of OSCE participating states, especially appointed rapporteurs can conduct fact-finding missions to participating states. Those reports will be published after discussion with the state concerned, but may be kept confidential upon request by the state visited.

Publication cycle:

Most important for COI research are reports produced by the human rights monitoring institutions such as ODIHR and reports produced by the OSCE field offices. Publication frequency depends on the mandate and the character of the individual field missions. Check the websites of the field missions for regular updates.

The Moscow Mechanism so far has been invoked 5 times.

News releases, briefings and updated factsheets on OSCE missions are published on a regular basis (around 2-3 times per week). The OSCE Magazine is published bimonthly and carries feature stories and interviews addressing the human, politico-military and economic/environmental aspects of security. It is published in English and Russian.).

<http://www.osce.org/publications/features>

Language:

The main language is English. Information is also partly available in other languages (Russian, Georgian, Croatian etc.)

Navigation of website:

Information about COI can be found under:

Institutions: contains information about the activities and projects of the different institutions

Institutions > High Commissioner on National Minorities > News, Speeches, Statements, Bibliography, Recommendations, Reports

Institutions > Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights > Democratisation *or* Human Rights *or* Roma and Sinti > Publications

Institutions > Representative on Freedom of the Media > Projects *or* Documents

Field Activity: contains information sorted by field presence in the various member states

Documents: information is available by date, by OSCE institution or by document (reports, news releases, declarations)

ODIHR offers national jurisprudence and laws sorted by issues on its website at: <http://www.legislationline.org>

UNITED NATIONS (UN)<http://www.un.org>

The following UN bodies and institutions regularly publish reports/recommendations relevant for COI and selected for in-depth analysis.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)
- United Nations Secretary General
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN):

Other UN agencies offering relevant COI information are the:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – <http://www.undp.org>
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) – <http://www.unifem.org>
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – <http://www.unicef.org>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – <http://www.unesco.org>

For a detailed description of the UN documentation and reference system see the United Nations Documentation Research Guide at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/>

Information on the UN human rights bodies: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/spechr.htm>

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES<http://www.unhcr.org>**Mission/Mandate:**

“The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.” (UNHCR website; see also Statute of the UNHCR - UN General Assembly resolution 428, 14 December 1950)

In recent years, UNHCR has also been mandated to provide assistance to groups that do not qualify for refugee status under the Convention, but whose circumstances are very similar to Convention refugees: these groups include IDPs and persons granted humanitarian protection. (“People of concern to UNHCR”)

According to Art. 6 UNHCR Statute, the competence of the High Commissioner extends to refugees under the Geneva Refugee Convention (with no reservation as to date of events and region of origin). UNHCR eligibility officers examine whether a person meets the criteria of Art 1.A Geneva Refugee Convention and, in countries that have not signed the Convention, may recognize them as refugees. (“mandate refugees”)

Target group/audience:

Refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, State parties to the Geneva Refugee Convention, policy makers and RSD authorities in host countries of refugees, legal advisers of refugees, civil society, local and international media, and the humanitarian community.

Objective:

UNHCR works to monitor and inform on the situation of asylum seekers & refugees worldwide and to advocate for their rights with governments and civil society. It seeks to inform refugee status determining authorities about

	<p>the situation in countries of origin, and ensure the application of the Geneva Refugee Convention.</p>
Funding:	<p>Donors and partners of UNHCR "range from governments to non-governmental organisations, the private sector, civil society and refugee communities. UNHCR raises funds through governments, foundations and private donors [...]" (UNHCR website)</p> <p>90% of the budget is used for refugee support programmes; the remainder is used for headquarters, fundraising, raising awareness and advocacy.</p> <p>http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/partners</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> UNHCR covers all host countries of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.</p> <p>It is important to understand that UNHCR's primary mandate lies in monitoring and reporting on the protection of refugees in their host countries, not in reporting on human rights violations in countries of origin.</p> <p>However, the provision of country of origin information to UNHCR and government eligibility officers deciding on claims for refugee status is part of UNHCR's mission to ensure that bona fide refugees are recognized as such.</p> <p>Reports on countries of origin are thus produced in accordance with information needs of major host countries and UNHCR eligibility officers.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> refugee law and protection. Policy priorities: women, children, the elderly. Human rights issues relevant to determining refugee status. Issues frequently encountered in claims of asylum-seekers.</p>
In-country presence:	<p>The headquarters are in Geneva. Country offices are located worldwide.</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>UNHCR country reports are based on publicly available and referenced information. Reports undergo a strict clearing procedure with multiple readings by staff with diverse areas of expertise. Diplomatic considerations and concern for the security of UNHCR staff may play a role in selection of countries publicly reported on.</p> <p>UNHCR also publishes position papers on major countries of origin. Where necessary, it responds to individual queries from governments and lawyers as to the need for protection of particular groups. These papers are based on information made available by UNHCR field offices. Eligibility guidelines are produced for use by UNHCR eligibility officers. They are mostly internal documents.</p> <p>Writenet: UNHCR commissions country reports to the Writenet network of country experts. Reports cover political analysis, the human rights situation and conflict assessment and are referenced with publicly available information.</p> <p>Further reports that sometimes are of interest for COI are produced by the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) and under the New Issues in Refugee Research Series.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>UNHCR reports and positions papers as well as Writenet reports are published on an ad hoc basis. Position papers on major countries of origin are updated regularly, depending on changes in the situation or needs expressed by host countries. If you are not sure whether a position paper on a specific country is still valid, ask the UNHCR representation in your country for an update.</p>
Language:	<p>Country reports are mostly in English and occasionally translated into regional languages (French, Spanish, Russian, German: go to respective UNHCR country sites). Navigation support is available in the UN languages.</p>

Navigation of website:

COI can be found under:

Research/Evaluation:

1) > Country of Origin and Legal information: Scroll down to select country via the index at the bottom of the page or select:

> Country of origin information (allows you to access reports by source), or

> Legal information (contains UNHCR country guidelines, national and international legislation)

2) > Evaluation and Policy Analysis > New Issues in Refugee Research

News: gives an overview of the latest events worldwide

Protecting refugees > Global Operations (links to special pages on Afghanistan, the Balkans, Chad and Iraq)

Statistics: covers the latest developments as well as changes over time in more than 150 countries among millions of refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR, including asylum-seekers, refugees returning home and IDPs

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (UNHCHR)

<http://www.ohchr.org>

Mission/Mandate:

“The mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is to protect and promote all human rights for all. OHCHR is guided in its work by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights instruments, and the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The promotion of universal ratification and implementation of human rights treaties is at the forefront of OHCHR activities. OHCHR aims to ensure the practical implementation of universally recognized human rights norms. It is committed to strengthening the United Nations human rights programme and providing the United Nations treaty monitoring bodies and special mechanisms established by the Commission on Human Rights with the highest quality support.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the official with principal responsibility for United Nations human rights activities. OHCHR is committed to working with other parts of the United Nations to integrate human rights standards throughout the work of the Organization.” (UNHCHR website)

“When researching human rights issues, a distinction has to be made between Charter-based and treaty-based human rights bodies. The former derive their establishment from provisions contained in the Charter of the United Nations, hold broad human rights mandates, address an unlimited audience and take action based on majority voting. The latter derive their existence from provisions contained in a specific legal instrument (i.e., the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), hold more narrow mandates (i.e., the set of issues codified in the legal instrument involved), address a limited audience (i.e., only those countries that have ratified the legal instrument in question) and base their decision-making on consensus. Reflecting this distinction, the human rights documentation posted on the website of the High Commissioner is organized into two databases.” (UN Documentation Research Guide)

The following UN bodies publish their reports on the website of the UNHCHR:

UN Treaty monitoring bodies

All treaty monitoring committees are composed of independent experts monitoring the implementation of the respective treaty by state parties. Some can receive inter-state or individual complaints. They examine reports submitted by state parties and publish their recommendations and concerns in “Concluding observations”.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm

State party reports should be submitted to the Human Rights Committee one year after accession and subsequently every four years.

The Human Rights Committee meets in Geneva or New York and normally holds three sessions per year.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

Initial state party reports are submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights one year after ratification of the treaty, subsequent reports should be submitted every five years. The Committee meets in Geneva and normally holds two sessions per year, consisting of a three-week plenary and a one-week pre-session working group.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm

The CERD is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. States must submit the first report one year after accession and then every two years. The Committee meets in Geneva and normally holds two [sessions](#) per year consisting of three weeks each.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm>

CEDAW is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It meets twice a year.

State party reports: The initial report is due one year after accession, then every four years.

Shadow reports are published on a number of websites run by women's rights organizations.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Full text: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) monitors implementation of the CRC by its State parties. It meets in Geneva and normally holds three [sessions](#) per year.

State party reports: The initial report is due two years after acceding to the Convention and then every five years.

Additional reports must be submitted by States who have acceded to the two Optional Protocols to the Convention, on involvement of children in armed conflict and on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Shadow reports: CRIN – Child Rights Information Network publishes shadow reports by NGOs on the status of implementation of the CRC.

International Convention against Torture (CAT)

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/index.htm>

The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee against Torture. The Committee consists of 10 experts, meeting twice a year for a two/three weeks session. The Committee examines reports which the State Parties have to submit on a four year basis. (First report has to be submitted one year after accession to the treaty). Furthermore the Committee can undertake investigations *ex officio*. The views of the Committee against Torture expressed in the individual complaints procedure under Art. 22 CAT contain statements of facts regarding the existence of torture in countries of origin concerned. (see also Optional Module: Complementary Protection).

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/index.htm>

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) held its first session in March 2004. It meets once a year.

State parties are obliged to report one year after accession to the treaty and then every five years.

Charter-based monitoring bodies

In addition to the UN treaty-monitoring bodies, the UN Economic and Security Council has set up so-called “Charter-based bodies” (derived from the competence of ECOSOC under Art 68 UN Charter).

The UN Commission on Human Rights has set up *special procedures* to monitor human rights violations. Special rapporteurs, independent experts and independent working groups can be mandated to examine, monitor and publicly report on country situations or human rights issues. The UN Commission on Human Rights is composed of government delegates, and adoption of conclusions as well as of appointment of rapporteurs is not free of political considerations.

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is the main subsidiary body of the Commission on Human Rights (established in 1947 as “Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities” renamed in 1999). It consists of regional working groups on issues such as minorities, contemporary forms of slavery, indigenous communities and administration of justice, undertaking studies and making recommendations to the Commission on Human Rights.

Target group/audience:	Members of the United Nations, State parties to the UN human rights treaties, perpetrators and victims of human rights violations, NGOs and experts working in the field of human rights, policy-makers, and international media.
Objective:	UNHCHR is mandated to ensure, promote and monitor the implementation of human rights norms enshrined in the UN human rights treaties and the Charter of the United Nations.
Funding:	<p>The office of the HCHR is funded from the UN regular budget (approximately 33%) and from voluntary contributions (approximately 67%). The Annual Report and the Annual Appeal provide detailed information.</p> <p>http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/annualrep03.pdf http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/appeal2004.pdf</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> UN member states (resp. State parties to the UN treaties). OHCHR has established an increasing number of field presences where staff focus on monitoring human rights practices and investigating human rights abuses. The representatives have close working relationships with governmental bodies, UN country teams, international and regional organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>Country and thematic mandates are based on a resolution by the UN Commission on Human Rights.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> Human rights enshrined in UN treaties. Priorities are set by Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly, and the High Commissioner on Human Rights. In recent years, a number of thematic mandates on economic and social rights have been established by the Commission on Human Rights.</p>
In-country presence:	<p>The UNHCHR headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. It maintains six main field presences (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Serbia and Montenegro); twelve human rights components of mission; eight regional offices and sixteen technical cooperation units.</p> <p>http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/5/field.htm</p>

Reporting methodology:	<p>Reports from the High Commissioner, his/her representatives, rapporteurs, human rights advisers or field presences are based either on fact-finding missions and interviews with victims, witnesses, government and organization officials and NGO representatives, or, where a field mission is not possible, on interviews with refugees, exiles and other reliable sources.</p> <p>Treaty committees regularly draft and publish guidelines on the structure and content of state party reports. State parties should provide background information on the country as well as details on the implementation of the respective UN treaty provisions.</p> <p>Local and international NGOs produce shadow reports, based on their own monitoring work, to complement or contest information provided by state parties.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>Charter-based bodies: Country/thematic rapporteurs submit bi-annual reports to the annual Commission on Human Rights (spring) and General Assembly (autumn). Reports are entered into the database upon release. Press statements are released by officials holding a mandate, usually on the basis of country visits. Rapporteurs also publish reports on ad hoc missions.</p> <p>Treaty-based bodies: States parties' reports to UN treaty monitoring bodies are due every 4 years; usually submission, in particular by countries of origin, is delayed by up to several years.</p> <p>OHCHR field offices submit quarterly reports.</p> <p>Conclusions by the Commission on Human Rights and the Treaty Committees are published during their sessions, after consideration of reports or testimonies.</p>
Languages:	Documents are mostly available in English, French, and Spanish and occasionally in Arabic, German, Chinese, and Russian.
Navigation of website:	<p>Highlights: contains information on the latest reports and meetings</p> <p>Field activities > Field Presences: contains comprehensive information on these, their work and publications (sorted by region and country – some of them have their own website!)</p> <p>Issues: provides a comprehensive overview of the numerous issues covered by the UNHCHR (in alphabetical order)</p> <p>Documents: links to treaty and charter-based bodies' databases. Navigate by body, year or country</p> <p>The UNHCHR's website is under construction as of August 2004. Please refer to its sitemap for up-to-date navigation guidance.</p>

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

<http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sg/index.shtml>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>The Charter describes the Secretary-General as “chief administrative officer” of the Organization, who “shall act in that capacity and perform such other functions as are entrusted to him or her by the Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs.” The Charter also empowers the Secretary-General to “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security”.</p> <p>“The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Security Council. The Secretary-General’s selection is therefore subject to the veto of any of the five permanent members of the Security Council.” (UN website)</p>
Target group/audience:	UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, other UN agencies, Member States of the UN, policy-makers, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and international media.
Objective:	The Secretary-General publishes a variety of reports and statements to the press on the work of the UN. He/she regularly informs the UN Security Council about UN peacekeeping missions and the situation in countries of concern to the Security Council. Most important for COI research are the reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly.
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> the Secretary-General reports on issues of pressing concern (trouble spots) to the international community. He/she reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly on the status of UN missions and peacekeeping efforts based on resolutions by these bodies.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> political developments, peace negotiations, human rights and humanitarian situations, post-conflict reconstruction, security, disarmament, police and judiciary, women and children, refugees, IDPs.</p>
In-country presence:	The Secretary-General is based in the UN headquarters in New York.
Reporting methodology:	The reports of the Secretary-General are based on information provided by UN field missions, UN agencies, representatives of the Secretary-General as well as human rights organizations.
Publication cycle:	<p>Reports on the status of UN peacekeeping missions are made on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions. The resolution also sets a timeframe for reporting periods (usually 3 months, sometimes 1 report /year).</p> <p>Ad hoc reports, briefings and news released are published on a regular basis (at least 2-3 times per week).</p>
Language:	English
Navigation of website:	<p>www.un.org > Main Bodies > Security Council > Reports of the Secretary-General (sorted by year)</p> <p>COI can also be found among the Secretary-General’s statements on issues of concern (Home > Statements).</p>

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (UN OCHA)

<http://ochaonline.un.org> <http://www.reliefweb.int>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>OCHA emerged in 1998, after a reorganization of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) which had been established in 1991, in response to the UN system's inability to effectively respond to the Kurdish crisis and other disasters at that time.</p> <p>"The Mission of OCHA is to mobilise and to coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to alleviate human suffering and disasters in emergencies, advocate for the rights of people in need, promote preparedness and prevention, and facilitate sustainable solutions." (OCHA website)</p>
Target group/audience:	Humanitarian actors, UN agencies, donors, policy-makers, local and international media, national and international human rights institutions.
Objective:	<p>OCHA plays a role in identifying, monitoring and providing technical and policy support both before and after a crisis: to alleviate human suffering and disasters in emergencies; to advocate for the rights of people in need; to promote preparedness and prevention; to facilitate sustainable solutions. OCHA coordinates the so-called annual consolidated appeal by UN agencies to donors and reports to donors on progress made. It also coordinates information needs by humanitarian actors in major emergency situations (often in cooperation with UNDP, e.g. the Afghanistan Information Management Service AIMS; and the Humanitarian Information Centre for Iraq HIC)</p>
Funding:	<p>OCHA's budget comes from the regular UN budget and the remainder from extra-budgetary resources donated by member states and donor organizations..</p> <p>"The budget for 2004 is US\$84,793,626, of which ~11 percent or US \$10,118,354, come from the regular UN budget and US\$74 million from extra-budgetary resources donated by member states and donor organizations." (OCHA website)</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> Focus on humanitarian crisis regions, e.g. Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the former Yugoslavia.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> Crisis situations, natural disasters, as well as complex emergencies (human insecurity). Humanitarian assistance, early-warning, field security, situation of vulnerable populations (women, children, elderly, minorities, IDPs, refugees)</p>
In-country presence:	<p>OCHA, which is a department of the UN Secretariat, has two headquarters: one in New York and one in Geneva.</p> <p>Furthermore it has regional offices in Abidjan, Johannesburg and Nairobi, as well as Regional Disaster Response Advisers in Asia, South Asia, Central and Eastern Africa, West Africa, the Pacific, the Caribbean and Latin America. It further operates through 24 field offices that support UN humanitarian coordinators and country teams. (OCHA > Geographic)</p>
Reporting methodology:	OCHA reports are based on information provided by its regional offices, its regional disaster advisers, its field offices, country teams, etc.
Publication cycle:	<p>The various field and country offices regularly publish newsletters and up-to date reports, information bulletins, etc. (every 2-3 days).</p> <p>OCHA publishes the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, by country or region, each November for the following year; mid-year updates are also available at: http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/index.html</p>

- Language:** Information is available mostly in English, sometimes French.
- Navigation of website:** OCHA Online <http://ochaonline.un.org/>
- News: contains information on the latest events and meetings
- > Geographic: contains information sorted by country presence (apart from OCHA reports, it publishes information from other sources such as regional/national NGOs and media).
- Coordination:
- > > Coordination: The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) "is a mechanism used by aid organizations to plan, implement and monitor their activities. Working together in the world's crisis regions, they produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan and an appeal, which they present to the international community and donors." (OCHA website)
 - > > CAP 2004 leads to appeals by country.
 - > > Inter Agency Internal Displacement Division: "Pursuant to a decision of the Secretary General, the Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division was established in July 2004 and is housed within the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)."
- <http://www.reliefweb.int/idp>
- Reports on country missions by the former Internal Displacement Unit, however, go back to March 2002 and can be accessed at >Document Library > Mission/training reports
- Reliefweb <http://www.reliefweb.int/>
- ReliefWeb: "plays a key role in OCHA's advocacy efforts by helping raise awareness about countries in crisis. With teams in New York, Geneva and Kobe, Japan, ReliefWeb provides 24-hour coverage of relief, preparedness and prevention activities for both complex emergencies and natural disasters worldwide, and acts as a gateway to documents and other sources of information related to humanitarian relief and assistance." (ReliefWeb website)
- ReliefWeb collects information from a wide range of sources – UN agencies and field presences, human rights, humanitarian and development organizations, policy groups, and media and makes them available in a searchable database. Documentation on major countries of origin can be accessed from the ReliefWeb homepage via > Complex emergencies
- Individual country pages > Background

INTEGRATED REGIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK (IRIN)<http://www.irinnews.org>

Mission/Mandate:	“When crisis or disaster hits a country, communications are often one of the first casualties. Reliable sources dry up, government agencies collapse, media images do not give the full picture. Without constantly updated and accurate information on washed-out roads, bombed airfields, landmines, disease-infested water, epidemics, or civil unrest and outbreaks of violence, it is impossible to respond effectively. People die and money and supplies are wasted. Today, in sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia the need for an accurate picture of events on the ground is being met by the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). IRIN, which was born out of the 1994 crisis in the Great Lakes region of central Africa, pioneered the use of e-mail and web technology to deliver and receive information to and from some of the most remote and underdeveloped places in Africa, cheaply and efficiently.” (IRIN website)
Target group/audience:	Humanitarian actors, governments, civil society, disaster specialists, and the public.
Objective:	“To strengthen universal access to timely, strategic and non-partisan information; to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to understand, respond to and avert emergencies; to support efforts at conflict resolution and reconciliation by countering misinformation and propaganda.” (IRIN website)
Funding:	“In 2004 IRIN requires some US \$4 million to meet core service needs. The Global [Funding] Document covers financial requirements for IRIN's core services as well the outreach services: PlusNews, IRIN Radio and the French language service. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provides IRIN with considerable institutional support; however, the whole of the IRIN budget must be found from extra-budgetary sources. In this regard, funds need to be clearly earmarked for the IRIN account.” (IRIN website)
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> IRIN is active in countries affected by crisis or disasters, e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq. Regional priority is given to East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, and most recently Central Asia.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> “IRIN takes an increasingly broad view of what comprises ‘humanitarianism’ and seeks to cover the full range of humanitarian issues from the abuse of human rights to the environment. IRIN regularly publishes reports on a wide range of political, economic and social issues affecting humanitarian efforts.” (IRIN website)</p>
Reporting methodology:	<p>IRIN increasingly works with information officers who directly post the information gathered on the Web. “IRIN information officers are further assisted by a string of specially selected freelance journalists.</p> <p>Governments, aid workers, civil societies, disaster specialists and, members of the public all receive and contribute to regular reports on a wide array of political, economic and social issues affecting humanitarian efforts. Moreover, local communities are a key component in the information exchange process, enriching IRIN reports with grassroots material and creating a platform for debate between humanitarian decision-makers and affected communities.” (IRIN website)</p>
Publication cycle:	IRIN reports are published on a daily and weekly basis. Ad-hoc focus on special issues.
Language:	Information is available in English and French (Africa only).

Navigation of website:

IRIN Africa: contains information sorted by the different African regions, by up-to-date information and weekly information bulletins

IRIN Asia: contains information on Central Asia (including Afghanistan), the Iraq crisis and the latest news

Search: archive of reports published since 1998

U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES (USCR)<http://www.refugees.org>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>USCR was founded in 1958 to coordinate the United States' participation in the United Nations' International Refugee Year (1959). In the forty years since, USCR has worked for refugee protection and assistance in all regions of the world." (U.S. Committee for Refugees website)</p> <p>USCR is a public information and advocacy programme of the Immigration and Refugee Services of America. IRSA develops and manages education and assistance programs that help refugees resettle in the U.S.</p> <p>"USCR defends the rights of all uprooted people regardless of their nationality, race, religion, ideology, or social group. We base our work on the belief that once the consciences of men and women are aroused, great deeds can be accomplished, and we are guided by the following principles:</p> <p>Refugees have basic human rights. Most fundamentally, no persons with a well-founded fear of persecution should be forcibly returned to his or her homeland.</p> <p>Asylum seekers have the right to a fair and impartial hearing to determine their refugee status.</p> <p>All uprooted victims of human conflict, regardless of whether they cross a border, have the right to humane treatment, as well as adequate protection and assistance."</p>
Target group/audience:	Policy makers, governments, UNHCR, international organizations, humanitarian actors, the media, and civil society. USCR also testifies before the US Congress.
Objective:	Advocacy for the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as returnees.
Funding:	<p>USCR is a non-profit organization under U.S. law. It depends on the contributions of individuals and the support of private foundations. Its financial report is published at:</p> <p>http://www.refugees.org/news/fact_sheets/faq_uscr.htm</p> <p>IRSA is funded through a combination of federal government funds, private foundation grants, and individual contributions.</p>
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> USCR World Refugee Survey covers all countries.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> USCR deals with every aspect of refugee protection, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons. It pays particular attention to detention situations, health and mental care, reception conditions and conditions of return, landmines, refugees in the media, asylum law, peacekeeping, religious persecution, women and children, etc.</p>
In-country presence:	USCR is based in Washington. It conducts fact-finding missions to assess the situation of refugees worldwide.
Reporting methodology:	The annual World Refugee Survey provides insight into and expert analysis of issues facing refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. Often the information included in reports contains documentation gathered during country visits.
Publication cycle:	While the World Refugee Survey is published annually in May/June, the Refugee Report Bulletin is published every two months. Occasionally thematic reports or press releases are published on the website.
Language:	English
Navigaton of website:	<p>COI can be found under:</p> <p>Worldwide Refugee Information: contains information sorted by countries</p> <p>News and Resources: contains press releases and news on hot spots</p>

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE (USDOS)

<http://www.state.gov>

Mission/Mandate:	<p>"The principal aims of the Department of State ... are anchored in the President's National Security Strategy and its three underlying and interdependent components – diplomacy, development, and defense." (State Department website)</p> <p>The mission of the State Department is to advance U.S. objectives and interests in the world; provide services to U.S. citizens and to foreigners seeking to visit or immigrate to the U.S.</p>
Target group/audience:	U.S. citizens and generally every person who is interested in U.S. policies.
Objective:	<p>The US State Department aims to give information on U.S. foreign policies, to protect and assist U.S. citizens living or travelling abroad and to assist U.S. businesses in the international marketplace.</p> <p>The human rights reports were introduced in 1976 as a means for Congress to monitor recipients of US aid. Both the number of countries and the scope of reporting have expanded since then, and the country reports aim to provide a basis for promoting human rights issues in U.S. foreign policy as well as to justify U.S. policy with regard to certain countries. (see Poe Human Rights Quarterly 2001. p. 654)</p>
Funding:	The State Department's budget is part of the US foreign affairs budget.
Scope of reporting:	<p><u>Countries included:</u> all countries worldwide.</p> <p><u>Thematic priorities:</u> include civil and political rights, prison conditions and right to a fair trial, religious freedom, women, trafficking, and terrorism.</p>
In-country presence:	The State Department acts through the U.S. embassies.
Reporting methodology:	<p>Reports are based on information from US representations, regional bureaus, and presences worldwide, as well as international and local human rights organizations. Embassies prepare initial draft reports, which are then reviewed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, using sources including reports provided by U.S. and other human rights groups, foreign government officials, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and institutions and academic and media experts. Embassies' sources include government officials, jurists, the military, journalists, human rights monitors, academics and labour activists. (Steven C. Poe, et al. 'How are These Pictures Different? A Quantitative Comparison of the US State Department and Amnesty International Human Rights Reports, 1976–1995,' <i>Human Rights Quarterly</i>, 23 (2001), 650–677).</p> <p>The information provided is rarely sourced.</p> <p>Occasional critiques are published by Human Rights Watch and, up until several years ago, the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>Human Rights Practices: released each February/March for previous year.</p> <p>International Religious Freedom Report: released every autumn for the current year.</p> <p>Trafficking in Persons Report: released every spring for the previous year.</p> <p>Background Notes: "contain information on all the countries with which the US has relations. They include facts on the country's land, people, history, government, political conditions, economy, and its relations with other countries and the United States." (State Department website)</p> <p>Irregular updates once or twice a year.</p> <p>Ad hoc reports on topics of concern to the US government.</p> <p>Regular browsing of website advisable.</p>

Language:

English.

Navigation of website:

Information on COI can be found under:

Press and Public Affairs > Major State Department Publications:

> Human Rights Practices

> Religious Freedom Report

> Background Notes

International Issues > Trafficking in Persons > Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (includes report which can be accessed at Undersecretary for Global Affairs)

Countries and Regions: offers information sorted by country.

International Topics and Issues: alphabetical list of issues (e.g. human rights, trafficking, women's issues, etc.)

EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTER (ERRC)

<http://www.errc.org>

Example for a specialized source

Mission/Mandate:	The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation monitoring the situation of Roma in Europe, and engaging in a range of activities aimed at combatting anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma, in particular strategic litigation, international advocacy, research and policy development, and training of Romani activists. The ERRC is a cooperating member of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and has consultative status with the Council of Europe, as well as with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. (ERRC website)
Target group/audience:	Roma, policy makers, and civil society.
Objective:	ERRC activities include “monitoring the human rights situation of Roma in Europe publishing information on human rights abuse of Roma and news about the Romani civil rights movement; providing and supporting legal services, including litigation, to Romani victims of human rights violations; building strategies, based on analyses of existing law and legal services to empower Roma through law and strengthen the network of legal advocates working on behalf of Roma.” (ERRC website)
Funding:	The ERRC is dependent on individual donors. Major sponsors are: the British embassy in Budapest; the Allavida Foundation; the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; the European Commission; the Ford Foundation; the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office; the J.M. Kaplan Fund; the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Open Society Institute; the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and The Sigrid Rausing Trust.
Scope of reporting:	<u>Countries included:</u> European countries with Roma populations. Reports have been issued on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Austria. <u>Thematic priorities:</u> Roma rights.
In-country presence:	The ERRC’s office is in Budapest.
Reporting methodology:	The basis for all ERRC activities, whether reporting, advocacy, litigation or training, is first-hand research. ERRC methodologies vary depending on the issue being documented and range from missions to interviews, continuous monitoring in the field and research of secondary sources. Particular emphasis is placed on data and other information gathered first-hand. Data and information used for research work are first cross-checked and reviewed. As regards confidentiality, ERRC’s first priorities involve balancing the wishes of the victim/witness, the legal interests of the victim and the safety of the victim/witness. In some cases ERRC has refused to provide names of interlocutors, even where governments complained that this refusal hampered government efforts to investigate alleged human rights violations. Decisions on these matters are taken on a case-by-case basis, evaluating in particular what respondents have specified about the use of their information, as well as other relevant guidelines. (This information was kindly provided upon request by the ERRC.)
Publication cycle:	ERRC publications include: The Roma Rights Quarterly which “aims to provide news on developments pertaining to Roma Rights around Europe, as well as discussions on particular themes and information about ERRC activities...”

	<p>Human rights reports, especially country reports, on the situation of Roma ... aim[ing] at providing a comprehensive picture of the situation of Roma in any one country;</p> <p>Thematic reports deal[ing] with a specific Roma rights issue and based on research in multiple countries;</p> <p>ERRC press releases (ERRC website)</p> <p>ERRC prepares shadow reports for the Council of Europe and the UN.</p>
Language:	<p>The website is under construction as of August 2004. Reports are only available in English. Romani and Russian shall be included at a later stage. Country reports are summarized in Romani and usually published in the language of the country concerned.</p>
Navigation of website:	<p>Information about COI can be found under:</p> <p>Publications > Country Reports</p>

Governmental and non-governmental COI units/products

The following institutions produce information specifically designed for the needs of legal advisers and decision-makers. They focus on issues that arise in the national context of asylum jurisprudence. They vary in institutional context and research methodology.

ACCORD

(Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation)

ACCORD was established in March 1999 in a joint effort by UNHCR and the Austrian Foundation for Development Research. Since January 2002, ACCORD is part of the Headquarters of the Austrian Red Cross. It is co-funded by the European Refugee Fund, UNHCR, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, Austrian refugee organizations, Informationsverbund Asyl and the Austrian Red Cross.

Products and thematic scope: ACCORD provides information on countries of origin of asylum seekers as well as information on the conditions in countries of reception, using only public domain and publicly citable materials. It contributes to www.ecoi.net (daily updated). ACCORD also offers research on individual information queries to asylum lawyers, professional and volunteer refugee counsellors as well as persons deciding on asylum claims and other forms of international protection. Other COI products include country reports based on fact-finding, secondary sources and COI seminars.

Methodology: In response to information requests as well as on [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net) ACCORD does not produce its own statements or expert reports but rather offers a collection of information from publicly available sources.

In the case of fact-finding mission reports ACCORD bases its reports on interviews and consultations with representatives of in-country human rights and humanitarian organisations, as well as government officials and journalists. Interviews are quoted without distortion. The annex of mission reports lists interviewees and their institutional affiliation. (Exception: source protection).

Publication cycle: Responses to individual information requests on demand. Country reports published 2-3 times a year.

Homepage: <http://www.rotekreuz.at/822.html>

Amnesty International Germany

Products and thematic scope Amnesty International Germany replies to individual information requests by German administrative courts and country reports are available on its asylum database ("Datenbank-Asyl") at:

<http://www2.amnesty.de/internet/Gutachte.nsf/WStartLaenderindex?OpenView&Start=1&Count=200&Expand=1#1>

(Home > Berichte > Asyl)

N.B. All documents in German only

Methodology Query replies are based on research and Amnesty International country reports. In some cases news sources are referred to as well.

Publication cycle On demand.

Homepage <http://www.amnesty.de>

Danish Immigration Service (Udlændingestyrelsen)

The Danish Immigration Service examines applications from foreigners who wish to enter or reside in Denmark, e.g. applications for asylum or family reunification, residence permits for study or work purposes and visas for short visits to Denmark.

Products and thematic scope:	<p>Concerning COI, the Danish Immigration Service regularly publishes fact-finding reports, a list of which can be found at:</p> <p>http://www.udlst.dk/english/publications/Default.htm</p> <p>Fact-finding reports cover general human rights situations as well as issues of particular importance to refugee status determination in Denmark and the wider EU.</p>
Methodology:	<p>The Service bases its fact-finding reports on interviews and consultations with in-country representatives of international organisations, diplomatic representations, political parties, local human rights organizations and experts in the country of origin or neighbouring countries. Interviews are quoted or paraphrased, taking care not to distort the original quote. The annex of mission reports lists interviewees. For confidentiality reasons reference may be made to an organisation instead of the name of the interviewee; in exceptional cases the source may remain undisclosed. The Service sometimes conducts fact-finding missions together with the Danish Refugee Council or other EU governments.</p>
Publication cycle:	<p>Variable; reports are first published in Danish (1-3 months after completion of the mission) and later translated into English.</p>
Homepage:	<p>http://www.udlst.dk/english/default.htm</p>

Federal Foreign Office, Germany (Auswärtiges Amt)

Products and thematic scope:	<p>The Federal Foreign Office produces detailed reports with situation analyses on countries of origin for German federal and regional authorities and courts. Apart from the human rights situation the reports include cover issues of interest in the German refugee status determination process as well as conditions for returnees. They may include information on aspects such as document authenticity, exit routes etc. Their main function is to support the Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees and German administrative courts in decisions on refugee status determination. Authorities and courts are also entitled to address the Federal Foreign Office with individual information queries.</p> <p>N.B. Country reports of the Federal Foreign Office are not public and restricted to use only by authorities, courts and the legal counsel of an individual applicant.</p> <p>Less detailed country and travel information on politics, the economy, culture, bilateral relations, travel and health tips for public use (irregularly updated) can be accessed at:</p> <p>http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos/index_html</p>
Methodology:	<p>Federal Foreign Office reports are based on information from German embassies and consulates abroad as well as information from human rights groups and NGOs, local opposition groups, lawyers, embassies of other Western countries and international organisations.</p> <p>German refugee advocacy organizations sometimes produce critiques of the German Foreign Office reports (recently in an official consultation process).</p>

Publication cycle: Reports are updated regularly. In case of sudden and dramatic changes of a country situation, ad hoc reports may be produced.

Homepage: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/index.html>

Federal Office for Refugees, Switzerland (Bundesamt für Flüchtlinge/ Office fédéral des réfugiés/Ufficio federale dei rifugiati)

The Federal Office for Refugees has its own country information service. The Analysis Section consists of the specialized services Country Information and Situation Analysis (CI+AS) and LINGUA.

Products and thematic scope: The main task of CI+AS is to obtain and distribute information on the approximately 120 countries of origin of asylum seekers in Switzerland. CI+AS provides specialized information and regularly produces situation reports and analysis on the current situation in the countries of origin of asylum seekers or on specific subject areas. The majority of these reports are only accessible to the employees of the Federal Office for Refugees, due to the confidentiality of some of their sources. Some reports are accessible to the public.

LINGUA, with the help of external and independent experts, locates the area of socialisation of asylum seekers, but not the nationality. The results of the investigations are written down in an expertise.

Current COI available at: <http://www.asyl.admin.ch/englisch/news4e.htm>

Methodology: CI+AS situation reports and analyses are essentially based on public sources of information.

LINGUA expertises are based on a linguistic analysis and an examination of the cultural and country-specific knowledge of the asylum seeker (for a list of public reports by CI+AS and LINGUA expertises scroll down the homepage).

For a discussion of language tests used in the determination of asylum seekers' country of origin see:

<http://www.fecl.org/circular/5304.htm>

Publication cycle: Variable

Homepage: <http://www.asyl.admin.ch/>

Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada

Products and thematic scope: The Immigration and Refugee Board offers four publicly accessible databases for COI research (Home > Research and Publications > Country of Origin Research).

The Research Database contains a listing of documents published by the Research Directorate since 1989.

http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/origin_e.htm

REFEXTEN holds extended responses to information requests.

REFINFO is a compilation of responses to requests for information submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process.

Methodology:	<p>REFQUEST contains research papers in the Question and Answer Series published by the Research Directorate since 1995.</p> <p>http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/notices/refquest_e.htm</p> <p>The Research Directorate only uses publicly available information. Research is conducted in-house, based on Immigration and Refugee Board responses are often based on oral sources and therefore provide expert information on a range of issues such as cultural, religious or ethnicity. All COI products compare and contrast the information provided and include clear referencing. The Research Directorate's staff refrains from commenting on the information or producing position papers.</p>
Publication cycle:	REFINFO is updated every month. Longer reports are published on an ad hoc basis.
Homepage:	http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/index_e.htm

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken)

Products and thematic scope:	<p>The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs produces COI in report form, so-called "Ambtsberichten" that are prepared on request for the Minister of Immigration and Integration as support in decisions on refugee status determination. They are published online as soon as the Minister of Foreign Affairs sends them to the Second Chamber of Parliament.</p> <p>"Ambtsberichten" cover issues of interest in the Dutch refugee status determination process and provide a general overview of the political and human rights situation.</p> <p>N.B. "Ambtsberichten" are available in Dutch only at: http://www.minbuza.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=MBZ257248 (on Dutch version of homepage at "actueel" > "Ambtsberichten")</p>
Methodology:	"Ambtsberichten" are based on public sources such as UN organisations, NGOs, scientific literature and media coverage. They may also include information from confidential reports by Dutch embassies abroad.
Publication cycle:	Produced upon request by Minister of Immigration and Integration.
Homepage:	http://www.minbuza.nl

Swiss Refugee Council (Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe/Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés)

Products and thematic scope:	<p>All documents published by the Swiss Refugee Council are publicly available. COI is available mainly in German, sometimes in French.</p> <p>Situation analyses, expert opinions, and Swiss Refugee Council positions in PDF format are accessible at:</p> <p>http://www.osar.ch/</p> <p>Home > Asyl > Publikationen or home > asile > publications</p> <p>They can be ordered in print from:</p> <p>http://www.osar.ch/2005/07/12/liste-publication</p> <p>Home > shop > Publikationen or home > shop > publications</p> <p>The documents mainly focus on the political and human rights situation and issues of interest in the Swiss refugee status determination process, including humanitarian situation and situation of returnees.</p>
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Methodology:	Situation analyses are based on Internet research, news sources and reports and expert interviews. They may include results from self-conducted fact-finding missions including interviews with representatives from local NGOs and INGOs active in the country. Expert opinions are replies to individual information requests based on similar sources as situation analyses. Positions of the legal department on the need for protection of particular groups of asylum seekers are informed by the findings of the research staff.
Publication cycle:	Variable: between 2-5 reports every 4 months.
Homepage (also in French):	http://www.osar.ch

UK Home Office

Products and thematic scope:	The Country of Origin Information Service of the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate produces country reports on the 20 countries that generate the largest number of asylum applications in the UK. The reports concentrate on the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. Country reports can be downloaded in MS Word (doc) format at:
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http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

Methodology:	Country reports are compiled by research staff from mostly publicly available reports. Quotations can be traced by a number in square brackets. A key to the numbers is provided at the end of each report. Most cited source material is publicly available; copies of undisclosed documents (e.g. UK embassy reports) may be provided upon request.
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Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs) "are produced by Asylum and Appeals Policy Directorate [in consultation with Senior Caseworkers, Appeals Group, Legal Advisors Branch and Foreign and Commonwealth Office]. They provide a brief summary of the general, political and human rights situation in the country and details of common types of claims. They aim to provide clear guidance on whether the main types of claim are likely to justify the grant of asylum, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave. Country information included in OGNs is sourced to the most recent Country Assessments for the country concerned and to other publicly available documents." (UK Home Office website)

Before mid-2005 the UK Home Office country reports were produced by the Asylum and Appeals Policy Directorate's Country Information & Policy Unit (CIPU).

For an analysis of CIPU methodology, refer to a content and user evaluation on country reports by the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors271.pdf>

and to the Immigration Advisory Service's (IAS) critique of Home Office country reports at:

<http://www.iasuk.org/C2B/PressOffice/display.asp?ID=194&Type=2&Search=true>

Additionally, the reports are periodically reviewed by an independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (<http://www.apci.org.uk>).

Publication cycle:	Country reports are revised twice a year: in April and October. Bulletins aim to update the information between publication of country reports, or to focus on particularly important issues. Operational Guidance Notes are updated infrequently.
Homepage:	http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/

US Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Information Center (RIC)

The Resource Information Centre was established to meet the information needs of the US Asylum Officer and Immigration Officer Corps by providing COI. The RIC obtains information from reputable human rights monitors, other government agencies, IGOs, NGOs, academia and the media.

Products and thematic scope:	RIC 'query responses' and other sources providing background information that may be useful in evaluating asylum claims (e.g. US and foreign government sources) are accessible at: http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/asylum/ric/REGIONLISTJS.htm
Methodology:	RIC query responses include the query itself, the reply (often including background information) and references. Referenced information may also include oral sources.
Publication cycle:	Variable
Homepage:	http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm

ecoi.net – Navigation guide

Note: as of the publishing of this updated version of the manual, ecoi.net is undergoing a relaunch. Navigation on the website will therefore change.

ecoi.net is a joint initiative of the Austrian Red Cross/ACCORD (Austria), GEA 2000 (Slovenia) and Informationsverbund Asyl (Germany). Its mission is to provide easily retrievable and up to date information on countries of origin relevant for European host countries in refugee status determination processes. Access to ecoi.net is free of charge.

ecoi.net is funded by the European Refugee Fund, UNHCR, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, the Dutch Refugee Council and the Austrian Red Cross.

The ecoi.net website is divided into three frames (left, central, right), offering links to all relevant search features offered on the website. Use the left frame to select specific countries, types of resources and to define search criteria. The central frame by default lists "what's new" for all countries or a specific country in order of publication date (see below). When a search is conducted, this frame shows the search results in the order of relevance or publication date (see below). The right frame of the first page of documents by country features a selection of important documents.

<u>What's new and Topics and Issues</u>	In the left frame, from top to bottom, you can define your navigation criteria by selecting one of the features available on ecoi.net. While "what's new" allows you to retrieve the latest news from all or selected countries, "Topics & Issues" files contain detailed information on currently ten focus countries in thematic and chronological order (see below)
<u>Country resources</u>	Staying in the "what's new" search allows selecting the "Country resources" to limit the search to:
<u>Periodical reports</u>	Periodical, i.e. annual, monthly, etc. reports from UN, and governmental and non-governmental organisations in alphabetical and reverse chronological order
<u>Special reports</u>	Ad hoc reports from UN, and governmental and non-governmental organisations in alphabetical and reverse chronological order
<u>Appeals/News releases</u>	NGO and UN organisations' appeals and news releases, e.g. Amnesty International Urgent Actions, UNHCR, Human Rights Watch
<u>Media reports</u>	Links to media and news agencies' reports, e.g. AFP, BBC, Guardian, IRIN, IWPR
<u>Expert opinions/Positions</u>	Positions of expert individuals and organisations
<u>National Laws</u>	Selected national laws
<u>ACCORD responses</u>	Selected responses to individual information requests provided by ACCORD
<u>Search ecoi.net</u>	The search tool allows for simple and advanced search within ecoi.net documents (see below for a detailed description)
<u>Resources on other sites</u>	Links to a sorted and commented list of COI related resources and maps on other Internet sites
<u>Language</u>	ecoi.net offers a choice of several languages to surf the website. Most original documents, however, are in English or German; ecoi.net headlines are published in English and translated into German. Choose a language by clicking on English (en), German (de), French (fr), Slovenian (sl), Russian (ru), or Bulgarian (bg) in the left section under the header "languages"

What's new	Latest entries in the ecoi.net database
What's new for all countries	ecoi.net by default first displays "what's new for all countries" sorted in reverse chronological order by date of publication.
What's new for a specific country	Select the country of interest from the drop down menu in the upper left corner. As a result the latest entries will be limited to the country selected.
Printer friendly version	A printer friendly version of every page can be displayed by clicking on the corresponding button in the centre frame of each page

ecoi.net search

All words must be found (AND)	do not use punctuation
One of these words must be found (OR)	especially important when searching for different spellings (Arabic, Slavic) e.g. <i>Hizb-</i> or <i>Hezb-</i>
This phrase must be found ("...")	"military service"
These words must be excluded (NOT)	Restriction of search. Search results will not contain the word excluded.
Truncation (*)	Chech* searches for <i>Chechnya, Chechen, Chechens</i>

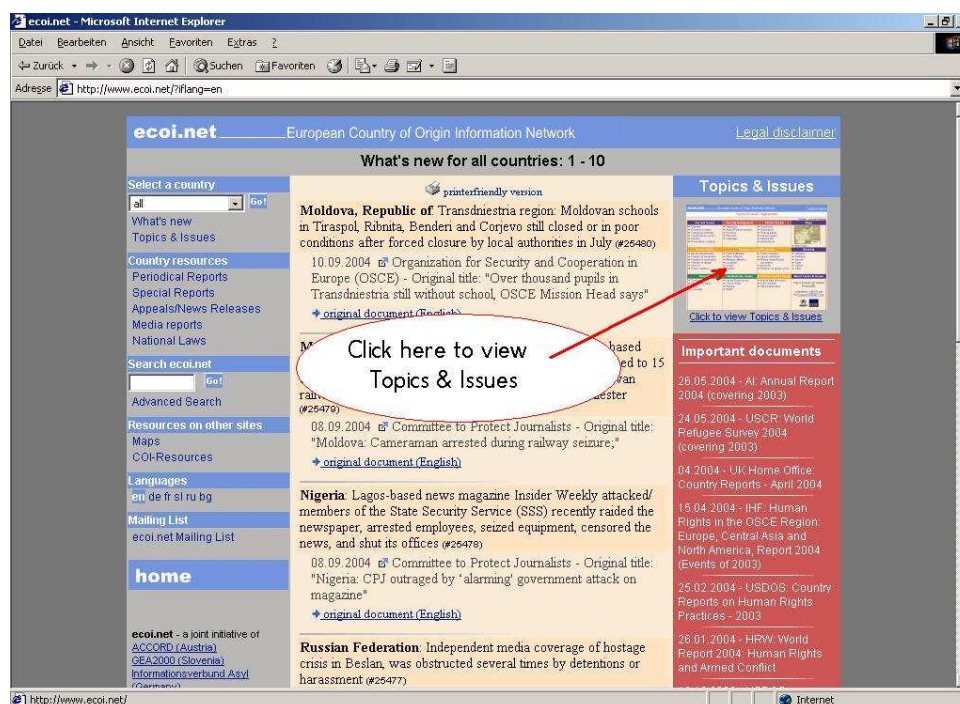
Search results can be listed either by:

1) relevance (automatic ranking depending on the number of times the search term is found taking into account whether the word is found in the headline, in the original title as well as the length of the text); or	
2) date of publication (reverse chronological order)	
Reading search results	Results include the source, a headline, the original title and publication date, an ecoi.net document number (e.g. #21345), a link to the original document and a link to the publishing organisation's homepage if available
Highlighted search terms	To provide a quick overview of the documents found, the first 20 results appear with the search term(s) highlighted This allows to see whether two search terms appear in the same context. This allows for better assessment of relevance of search results
Reading documents in full text	Click "original version" to read a selected document in its full text

Topics and Issues

For a list of 10 focus countries, ecoi.net Topics & Issues files offer more content than usually available on ecoi.net. The structure of the files aims at a balance between a standardized table of contents - allowing for easy browsing - and sufficient flexibility to accommodate issues that arise only in one country or are of particular significance with regard to claims from individuals coming from one particular country of origin.

“Topics & Issues” files can be selected by clicking here



Languages:

Choosing between “English” or “German” affects the language in which headlines are formulated.

Front page

Topics & Issues files are structured in chapters leading from general concepts to specific topics. The front page in all cases is divided into eleven sections reflecting the main chapters: Current Issues, Country Background, Politics & Law, Maps, Human Rights, Situation of Specific Groups, a country specific chapter (e.g. Chechnya in Russia), Security, Humanitarian issues, Protection related issues.

N.B. Since documents might adequately fit in more than just one chapter, you may find (parts of) the same documents cited in different areas of a Topics and Issues file.

Colour code

Blue: country background

Yellow: protection-related issues

Red: allows for accommodation of issues that arise only in one country of particular significance with regard to claims from individuals coming from one particular country of origin (e.g. Russian Federation – Chechnya)

Full index

Click on “Full index” in the top right corner of any Topics and Issues front page to retrieve a complete site index of the file.

What’s new

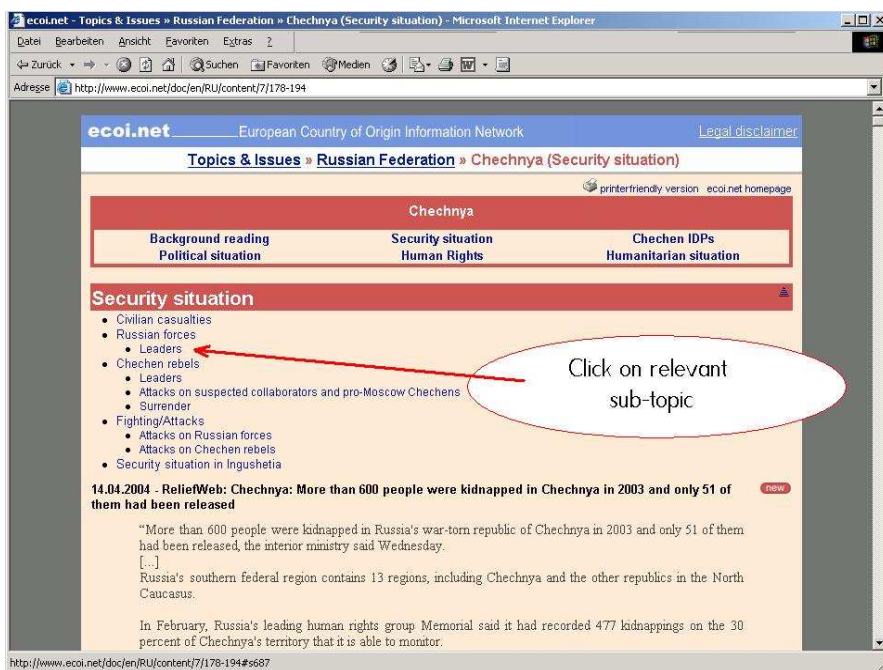
Click on “what’s new” in the top right corner of any “Topics & Issues” front page to get the latest entries into the files in reverse chronological order. Document lists are not sorted by chapter, but by date of entry in the Topics and Issues file.

Chapters

Each of the 10 main chapters consists of several sub-chapters, varying to a certain extent from country to country, e.g. Government, Constitution, Political Parties, etc. in Politics & Law. Click on these headers to find further sub-chapters.

Navigating within chapters

Listed at the beginning of every sub-chapter there is a list of links to all further sub-topics. Use these to navigate within a chapter. Security > Situation by region > Kabul retrieves a collection of documents on the security situation in Kabul in the Afghanistan Topics & Issue file.



Additionally there is a return-to-top arrow to the right of each sub-chapter's heading.

Maps

Find links to maps of different scale accessible via Internet.

Excerpts:

Results may appear with extensive quotes of the part of the document most relevant to the particular chapter. This should allow a quick overview of information on specific issues.

Search operators

Command	How	Supported By
Must Include Term	+	All
Must Exclude Term	-	All
Must Include Phrase	" "	All
Match All Terms	Automatic at	All
Match Any Terms	Via Advanced Search	AllTheWeb, AltaVista, Google, Lycos, MSN Search, Teoma, Yahoo <i>(HotBot offers but failed to work when tested)</i>
	OR	AltaVista, AOL Search, Ask Jeeves, Google, HotBot, MSN Search, Teoma, Yahoo <i>(must be done in ALL CAPS)</i> AllTheWeb, Lycos <i>(only works for two words)</i>

NOTE: By default, all the major search engines named above will match ALL of the terms you enter into a search box. This means that it is not necessary to use the "+" symbol in front of a particular word, although it is harmless if you do.

Command	How	Supported By
Title Search	title:	AltaVista, AllTheWeb, Inktomi
	intitle:	Google Teoma
	allintitle:	Google
Site Search	host:	AltaVista
	site:	Excite, Google (Netscape, Yahoo)
	url.host:	AllTheWeb, Lycos (for AllTheWeb results only)
	domain:	Inktomi (HotBot, iWon, LookSmart)
	none	AOL, Direct Hit, HotBot, LookSmart, Lycos, MSN, Netscape, Northern Light, Open Directory, Yahoo
URL Search	url:	AltaVista, Excite, Northern Light
	url.all:	AllTheWeb, Lycos (for AllTheWeb results only)
	allinurl: inurl:	Google
	originurl:	Inktomi (AOL, GoTo, HotBot)
	u:	Yahoo

	none	AOL, Direct Hit, HotBot, LookSmart, MSN Not yet updated, but may be still correct: Open Directory
Link Search	link:	AltaVista, Google, Northern Light
	linkdomain:	Inktomi (AOL, HotBot, iWon, MSN) (NOTE: measures links to entire domains)
	link.all:	AllTheWeb, Lycos (for AllTheWeb results only)
	none	AOL, Direct Hit, Excite, HotBot, LookSmart, Northern Light Not yet updated, but may be still correct: Netscape, Yahoo (n/a)
Wildcard	*	AltaVista, Inktomi (iWon), Northern Light Not yet updated, but may be still correct: Yahoo
	?	AOL Search, Inktomi (iWon)
	%	Northern Light
	none	AllTheWeb, Direct Hit, Excite, Google, HotBot, LookSmart, Lycos, MSN (MSN's help says it offers wildcard, but it failed to during testing)
Anchor Search	anchor:	AltaVista
	None	AllTheWeb, AOL Search, Direct Hit, Excite, Google, Inktomi, HotBot, Lycos

NOTE: The commands above are primarily useful when dealing with crawler-based search engines. "None" indicates any crawler-based or human-powered search engine that creates its own listings but which does not provide a particular command for searching within those listings.