

Information for asylum seekers in the Slovak Republic

Where Am I Going to be Accommodated as an Asylum Seeker in Slovakia?

Asylum seekers are normally placed in **open asylum centres** (first in **Humenné**, later transferred to either **Rohovce** or **Opatovská Nová Ves**). These centres have open regime, which means that after the medical examination and your interview, you can ask for permission to leave the centre.

If you have sufficient financial means to take care of yourself, you can get permission to live anywhere in Slovakia.

However, during asylum procedure you cannot leave the country. If you leave from Slovakia during asylum procedure, upon your return, Slovak police may evaluate it as indication of risk of your repeated departure from Slovakia and may decide to place you into a closed centre.

Can I be Placed in a Closed Centre?

Yes, in **exceptional cases** police may decide to send asylum seekers to one of the **closed centres** in **Sečovce** or **Medveďov** ("detention").

Police may place you as an asylum seeker to a closed centre only for one of these reasons:

- to verify your identity or citizenship;
- to protect security and public order;
- until reasons of your asylum application are established, when police believe that you would not cooperate or you would leave the territory of the Slovak republic if placed in an open asylum centre; or
- to preparation your transfer to another country responsible for your asylum application according to Dublin III Regulation, when police strongly believe you would not cooperate in preparation of transfer or you would leave the territory of Slovak republic in order to avoid transfer if placed in an open asylum centre.

If you submit asylum application in the closed centre it is not automatically a reason for your release to an open asylum centre. However, it is a new situation and police can decide to send you to an open camp. If any of the above reasons apply or police believe that you applied for asylum only with intention to avoid your expulsion/deportation from Slovakia, police issues a decision that your placement in the closed centre will continue.

Is There Any Alternative to the Placement in a Closed Centre?

Police can decide to place an asylum seeker in the closed centre only if it cannot apply less restrictive measures. **Instead of you placement to a closed centre:**

1. police may require that you pay certain amount of money as a bail with the police to safeguard your cooperation or
2. police may require that you report regularly to the police.
3. police may order you to stay in an open facility without the possibility of getting a pass.

Another condition is that you have to show sufficient financial means to cover your expenses in Slovakia. If you believe you can fulfill these requirements, you should inform the police, which may grant these measures instead of your placement in the closed centre.

How Long Do I Have to Stay in the Closed Centre?

You should expect to receive a written decision on your placement to the closed centre. Decision informs about reason and expected duration of your stay in the closed centre. If police believe more time of your stay in the closed centre than initially expected is necessary, the police may prolong duration of your placement in the closed centre with another decision. You can be placed in the closed centre during the asylum procedure for a maximum of 6 months. If your placement in the closed centre is due to security and public order reasons, you may need to stay longer, maximum of 18 months.

What Should I Do if I Disagree with My Placement in the Closed Centre?

If you disagree with your placement in the closed centre, you can challenge this decision by lawsuit. You may also bring the lawsuit to the Court if police decided to prolong duration of your stay in the closed centre. You have to appeal within 7 days from the day this decision was given to you.

Also, anytime you believe that your placement in the closed centre is not reasonable any more, you may request, so that the merits of your stay in the closed facility will be reviewed by the Court. At the same time, you will request the Court for your release from detention or for your placement to the open facility or for replacing detention with less restrictive measures.

Your lawsuits and requests shall be addressed to the police department which ordered your detention or prolonged detention. The police will submit it to the court which will review their lawfulness. All your lawsuits and requests must be submitted in writing, best with assistance of a lawyer. As an asylum seeker, you are entitled to receive free-of-charge legal assistance from the Centre of Legal Aid. Police in the closed centre is obliged to help you to get in touch with the Centre of Legal Aid or non-governmental organizations.

Can children or other persons with special needs be placed in a closed centre?

Children who are in Slovakia without parents/legal guardians cannot be placed in a closed centre.

Families with children and other persons with special needs may be placed to the closed centre only if it is inevitable/unavoidable and for the shortest possible time. In their case duration of placement to the closed centre can be for maximum of 6 months and cannot be prolonged by the police.

If you are a child and police believe you are an adult, especially if you are placed in the closed centre without care of your adult family members, please, seek assistance of a social worker or a lawyer. You may also contact a free-of-charge UNICEF Child Helpline calling 116 111.