

IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate Home Office country information products

[Section 48\(2\)\(j\) of the UK Borders Act 2007](#) provides that the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) shall:

consider and make recommendations about ... the content of information about conditions in countries outside the United Kingdom which the Secretary of State compiles and makes available, for purposes connected with immigration and asylum, to immigration officers and other officials.

To assist the Independent Chief Inspector in fulfilling this statutory role, a body of experts sitting as the [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information \(IAGCI\)](#) regularly reviews the country of origin information (COI) products that are issued by the Home Office. These reviews assess whether the content of COI is accurate, balanced, objective, and up-to-date, and they serve as the basis for an ICIBI inspection report.

Country of origin information

The Home Office refers to COI products in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. COI is also used in policy formulation. COI is contained in:

- Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs)
- Country of Origin Information Request (COIR) responses

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis, generally focusing on countries from which asylum claims are most commonly received. These reports may provide general background information on a country, address aspects of conditions in a country that are relevant to common types of asylum claims, and/or describe the current humanitarian or security situation in a country. CPINs are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (such as news reports, academic literature, independent research reports, and fact-finding reports from UK government or from other governments). CPINs also contain Home Office policy on the recommended position to be taken with respect to various types of claims, based on the available and accepted country information.

COIR responses are prepared to address specific queries from caseworkers or other Home Office officials. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs.

Tender details

The IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate and report upon the information contained in Home Office COI products. The IAGCI requires an expert to review the following COI products (4 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

Tender 1: Myanmar (Burma)

Tender 2: Albania

Tender 3: the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tender 4: Iraq

Description of work

Reviewers are asked to evaluate the extent to which the material under review provides an accurate, balanced, and up-to-date summary of the key available sources regarding conditions in the country covered and to identify any areas where the COI can be improved. Specifically, the review should entail:

- assessing the extent to which information from source documents has been appropriately and accurately reflected in the CPIN reports
- identifying additional sources detailing relevant aspects of current conditions in the country
- noting and correcting any specific errors or omissions of fact
- making recommendations for general improvements regarding, for example, the structure of the report, its coverage, or its overall approach
- ensuring no reference is made to an individual source which could expose them to risk

Reviewers should follow these specific guidelines:

- the review should focus exclusively on the COI contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- COI products should be reviewed in the context of their purpose as set out above. It should consider the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information
- when suggesting amendments, rather than 'tracking changes' on the original CPIN, a list of suggested changes should be provided as part of a stand-alone review paper, and each report should be reviewed separately. A reporting template will be provided to reviewers
- any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document (preferably open source) for the Home Office to be able to use it. The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available in an English-language source

Previous reviews of COI products can be consulted on the [ICIBI website](#).

The selected reviewer will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at which the review will be discussed. (It is likely that this will be a virtual meeting, and in any case, alternative arrangements may be made if attendance at an in-person meeting is not possible.) Representatives from the Home Office will also attend the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by the IAGCI will be published and may be used as source documents for future CPINs or other Home Office COI products.

How to apply

Researchers interested in conducting one of these reviews should submit:

- a one-page letter outlining relevant experience and expertise, including knowledge of human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the country covered by the COI under review
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk by close of Monday, 31 October. Unfortunately, we are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

Successful bidders will be notified by Friday 4 November. Final reviews for all tenders will be due by the close of Tuesday, 3 January 2023, and will be discussed at an IAGCI meeting planned for early in the new year.

[UKHO provides bathymetric surveys for the Seabed 2030 project](#)

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has started supplying bathymetric survey data for non-UK waters to the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO), after signing the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030) earlier this year.

The MOU was signed with the goal of advancing the industry's understanding of ocean bathymetry and supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The UKHO has agreed to provide bathymetric data gridded map products and advise on data management methods and best practice, to support the ambitious goal of completely mapping the world's oceans by 2030 (Seabed 2030).

The UKHO has started supplying data that covers the South Atlantic and the waters around Antarctica to GEBCO via the Seabed 2030 Southern Ocean Regional Centre – located at the Alfred Wegener Institute. This data is an important

contribution to the International Bathymetric Chart of the Southern Ocean (IBCSO), GEBCO and Seabed 2030. The supplied data has contributed 3,753,614 new data points to IBCSO and GEBCO, covering a combined 13,500 nm², including South Georgia (1,500 nm² with 55,539 data points) and Antarctica (12,000 nm² with 2,931,105 data points).

This marks the first time, outside of the UK, that the UKHO has supplied data directly to GEBCO for inclusion in its products. It follows the success of a 2021 trial that saw the UKHO collaborate closely with the Alfred Wegener Institute on an initial trial data set covering South Georgia, to ensure it met supply requirements and contained all the data and metadata required. The trial data set – which contained a deconflicted 100m resolution bathymetric surface covering 1,500 nm² – was supplied to the Alfred Wegener Institute in November 2021 and was successfully integrated into the IBCSO data pipeline.

This announcement supports the UKHO's presence at the GEBCO 'Map the Gaps' Symposium. The event, hosted by NOC (the UK's National Oceanography Centre) in association with the UKHO, takes place at the end of October 2022. Rhett Hatcher, UK National Hydrographer and Director of Data Acquisition & Defence, UKHO, will deliver an opening speech.

Commenting on this milestone, Rear Admiral Rhett Hatcher, UK National Hydrographer and Director of Data Acquisition at the UKHO, said:

It is fantastic to announce that we have started supplying bathymetric data surveys to GEBCO for inclusion in its products. This also marks an important milestone in our partnership with Seabed 2030, which is part of the UKHO's wider commitment to the full mapping of the world's oceans to support safe, secure, and thriving oceans.

Next, we plan to submit data into the Caribbean region, and look forward to further opportunities to continue to engage with the wider geospatial community and support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

Boris Dorschel, Head of Southern Ocean Regional Centre, Alfred Wegener Institute, added:

High-quality marine geospatial data plays an instrumental role in Seabed 2030 and is essential to fulfil our task of mapping the world's oceans. We are very grateful to the UKHO for its data contributions and expertise on ocean mapping solutions to realise this goal, and to progressing the Seabed 2030 efforts to produce the complete map of the ocean floor by 2030.

Seabed 2030 – a flagship programme of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development – is a collaborative project between The Nippon Foundation and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) to map the

world's oceans completely by 2030, and to compile all bathymetric data into the freely available GEBCO Ocean Map. GEBCO is a joint programme of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and is the only organisation with a mandate to map the entire ocean floor.

[UN Human Rights Council 51: UK Statement for the Interactive dialogue on the report of the OHCHR on Myanmar](#)

Thank you, Mr President.

Thank you Acting High Commissioner for your report.

The United Kingdom supported the council's Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar and its' important work to shine a light on the military's economic interests. We call on all States to engage with its recommendations, which remain all the more important amid today's calamitous situation in the country.

We are committed to working with partners to target the regime's access to finance and arms, which facilitate the most egregious human rights violations. These violations must stop.

The UK has a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar and we are clear that no Member State should sell arms to Myanmar; doing so exasperates conflict and instability and directly contributes to violations in the country.

Since the coup, we have announced targeted sanctions on the military leadership, and its access to revenue, arms and military equipment.

While responsible businesses have a role to play in Myanmar in job creation, poverty alleviation and standard setting, we must ensure that their work does not inadvertently support the military regime. For this reason, the UK has also strengthened its advice to UK business, encouraging enhanced due diligence to avoid inadvertent support for the military.

Madam Acting High Commissioner,

What more can the international community do to pressure those who sell arms to the military?

Thank you.

[UN Human Rights Council 51: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

World news story

The UK delivered a statement on the on-going human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



UK Government

Thank you, Madam Vice President,

The United Kingdom thanks the speakers for their presentations and we welcome the reports of the high commissioner, and the team of experts.

The UK remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in the DRC. Recent violence by armed groups, especially the Allied Democratic Forces and M23, has led to human rights abuses, which jeopardises efforts to pursue peace and prosperity, and exacerbates the already severe humanitarian situation. All of this raises dire concerns about the protection of civilians in the conflict-affected regions.

We urge all actors to address the humanitarian impacts of the violence, ensuring the affected people, including the 5.9 million internally displaced civilians, receive the assistance they need. We welcome ongoing diplomatic efforts to pursue dialogue and de-escalation, and we reiterate our call on all armed groups to immediately cease violence and participate unconditionally in the political process.

We are deeply concerned about the recent violent protests against the UN peacekeeping mission, which resulted in the deaths of civilians and peacekeepers. We continue to offer our full support for MONUSCO's vital work, and call on the government of DRC to help ensure the safety of MONUSCO's personnel and hold all perpetrators of violations and abuses to account.

We will continue to support regional engagement to find a diplomatic solution to conflict in the east, and DRC's efforts to launch a community-based Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration programme.

Madam Vice President,

Our question to the panel is how will the UN work with the East African Community to ensure the protection of civilians remains a priority, with any deployment of a regional force?

Thank you.

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[UN Human Rights Council 51: Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the OHCHR on technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan](#)

World news story

The UK delivered a statement on for the Interactive Dialogue with the OHCHR regarding the providing of technical assistance amid ongoing human rights issues in the country.



UK Government

Thank you Madam Vice President,

The United Kingdom thanks the Director for his presentation and the continued work of the Office of the High Commissioner in South Sudan.

The UK is deeply concerned by the continuing and dire human rights situation in South Sudan. This year, hundreds of civilians have been killed or been victims of Conflict Related Sexual Violence at the hands of government and opposition forces. Horrific attacks in southern Unity State and ongoing violence in Upper Nile State are prime examples of this. There needs to be urgent action by the South Sudanese Government to protect civilians and hold perpetrators to account.

The UK commends the OHCHR and UNMISS for their continuing technical assistance, but it is clear that technical assistance alone will not lead to sustainable peace and justice without clear mechanisms for scrutiny and accountability. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan therefore plays a vital role in helping to hold those responsible for human rights violations and abuses to account, including through their monitoring and reporting.

The UK acknowledges the Government of South Sudan's extension of the 2018 peace agreement and accompanying Roadmap. We call on the South Sudanese Government to implement the peace agreement, including all of Chapter V, in full and to the timelines set by their new Roadmap.

Mr Director,

What prospects do you see for the establishment as soon as possible of the

truth and justice mechanisms under Chapter V, including the Hybrid Court? How can this be most effectively supported?

Thank you.

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