



# The Research Directorate

Presentation for the Regional Webinar  
on Country of Origin Information (COI)

Organized by UNHCR, 6-7 April 2021



# Overview

- Who we are
- Introduction to COI research and methodology
- National Documentation Packages (NDP)
- Responses to Information Requests (RIRs)
- Quick Responses (QRs)



## Who We Are

- **Mandate of Tribunal Services Research Directorate (RD):**

To meet the evolving information needs of the IRB decision-makers (members) in rendering fair, efficient, and timely decisions on refugee protection cases in Canada.



# What is Country of Origin Information (COI)

## COI Research Is ...

- Current, reliable, and publicly available country information
- Aims to accurately and objectively report on country conditions in the countries from which refugee claimants originate
- Used by decision-makers to render determinations about refugee protection

## COI Research provides ...

- Context, not guidance, and when taken into consideration, it may corroborate or contrast the allegations of a claimant or appellant



## Best Practices

- Training and reference manuals
- Consultation of public sources, as well as conducting interviews with subject-matter specialists
- Consultation of temporally relevant sources
- When possible, develop country specialization
- Standard timelines, but also adaptability to evolving priorities



## Best Practices

- Prioritize research for high-intake countries
  - 2021-22: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sri Lanka, India, Haiti, Kenya, Colombia, Burundi, Mexico, Rwanda, China, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Venezuela, Iran, Somalia
    - Note: This sequence does not reflect the volume of claims received, but rather the year's update cycle.



# The Research Directorate products

- The RD has a range of COI products that can meet member needs, such as:
  - National Documentation Packages (NDP)
  - Responses to Information Requests (RIRs)
  - Quick Responses (QRs)
  - Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) reports



## How do we determine what product will meet member needs?

- When a request is made, we analyze the nature of the request and determine which product is best suited to meet the need, by answering the following questions:
  - Does this research request require an oral source?
  - Can we yield results in a short amount of time?
  - How many claims and appeals will the results of this research impact?
  - What is our resource capacity?





## National Documentation Packages (NDP)

- The NDP is a list of documents containing country-of-origin information
- The NDP has 16 sections covering general information, general human rights coverage, citizenship and identification information, and information related to protected groups, country conditions, and state protection
- There is an annual update cycle, including scheduled and ad hoc updates
- The drafting process lasts approximately three months

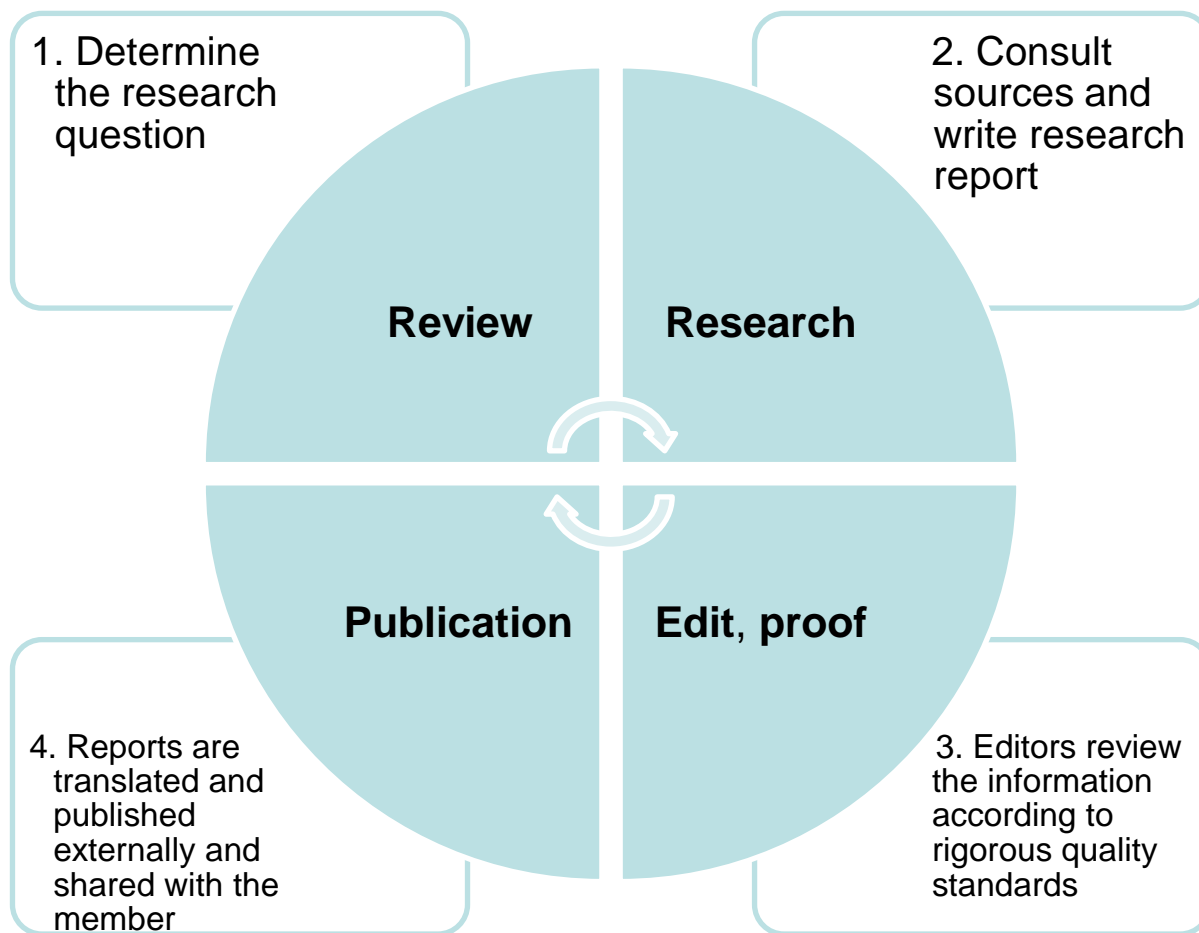


## Responses to Information Requests (RIRs)

- RIRs respond to specific questions either posed by members or developed internally in response to identified gaps in the NDPs
- RIRs do not provide guidance or give an opinion on the topic
- Research is “equivocal” – multiple view points will often result in contrasting or contradictory information, and it is up to the decision-maker to draw conclusions



# The RIR Process and Methodology





## Quick Responses (QRs)

- QRs include external sources, including media and other sources
- QRs must be disclosed to claimants as they contain information that is not in the NDP
- QRs are not published externally, but disclosed on a case-by-case basis



# What are some considerations to achieving all aspects of the RD's methodology?

- Time!
- Languages
- Oral source willingness and/or availability
- Absence of a range of sources
- Single sources
- Saving-face responses from oral sources
- Country conditions
  - Civil war
  - Hurricanes, earthquakes and floods
  - COVID-19
  - Freedom of the press and monitoring bodies
- Nature of the question
  - Security-related questions
  - State and military apparatus
  - Rarely covered issues
  - Credibility questions
  - SOGIE questions



## How to Find Us

- [The Research Directorate](#)
- [National Documentation Packages \(NDP\)](#)
- [Responses to Information Requests \(RIRs\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Country Bulletins and Issue Papers](#)



# ANY QUESTIONS?



The Research Directorate can be contacted by email:

- [IRB.CountryResearch-Recherchessurlepays.CISR@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:IRB.CountryResearch-Recherchessurlepays.CISR@irb-cisr.gc.ca)