

ANNEX A

RFQ/HCR/RCSEE/2026/001

PROVISION OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES FOR UNHCR NATIONAL OFFICE IN SERBIA

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Background

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supports the Government of the Republic of Serbia in ensuring access to asylum and international protection in accordance with international and national legal standards.

The Republic of Serbia is a State Party to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Serbia has also ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and is a signatory to numerous international human rights instruments adopted within the frameworks of the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia guarantees the right to asylum to any foreign national who has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, sex, language, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. The national asylum system is regulated by the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection, which defines the rights and obligations of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, as well as the procedures for granting and terminating asylum and temporary protection.

The asylum procedure in Serbia is conducted primarily by the Asylum Office within the Ministry of Interior. It includes several procedural steps such as registration of asylum seekers, submission of asylum applications, personal interviews, and other procedural actions that may take place in asylum centres, police facilities, reception centres for foreigners, or other relevant locations.

In order to ensure a fair and effective asylum procedure, it is essential that asylum seekers are able to communicate with competent authorities in a language they understand. Interpretation and translation services therefore play a crucial role in ensuring that asylum seekers can present their claims, understand the procedures affecting them, and exercise their rights in accordance with applicable legal safeguards.

For this purpose, UNHCR National Office in Serbia seeks to engage a qualified service provider to deliver professional interpretation and translation services in support of asylum procedures and other protection-related activities.

Services required

UNHCR NO Serbia requires the timely provision of accurate, impartial, and confidential interpretation and translation services to support asylum procedures carried out by the Asylum Office with the support of UNHCR.

Type of Services

The services include both verbal interpretation and written translation in relation to asylum procedures. These services aim to facilitate effective communication between asylum seekers and officers employed in the Asylum Office in Serbia.

A) Interpretation services for the Asylum Office in Serbia

The service provider shall ensure the availability of qualified interpreters to provide consecutive interpretation during activities such as:

- Registration of asylum seekers
- Submission of asylum applications
- Asylum interviews conducted by the Asylum Office as well as additional interviews

Interpretation may take place in various locations across Serbia, including asylum centres, police premises, reception facilities, and other locations where asylum seekers are accommodated or where asylum procedures are conducted. Interpretation services may be provided in person or remotely when possible.

The service provider must ensure that interpreters are available within reasonable timeframes, including on short notice when necessary.

B) Translation services

The service provider shall also provide written translation of documents related to asylum procedures and other protection-related matters. Such documents may include:

- Asylum applications
- Written statements of asylum seekers
- Official correspondence
- Legal documents
- Medical reports
- Procedural documents and reports
- Other documents relevant to the asylum procedure
- Employment contracts
- Other documents relevant for integration.

Translation services shall be delivered within agreed timelines depending on the length and complexity of the document.

C) Interpretation services for integration

The service provider shall ensure the availability of qualified interpreters to provide consecutive interpretation during activities such as:

- Integration interviews conducted by UNHCR staff
- Interviews at the National Employment Service
- Interpretation for refugees and asylum seekers during workshops and trainings

Guidance for submission of proposal

Required expertise:

All UNHCR translations and interpretation require special vocabulary and expertise related to the asylum field (refugees, asylum seekers, statelessness, migration etc.). Demonstrated experience in this field is an important asset for assessing your offer. Please outline your experience offering services in this and other relevant fields of work. The submission should include links or copies of previous work in the languages for which the submission is made.

The service provider must demonstrate the capacity to provide qualified interpreters and translators with appropriate professional and linguistic competencies. The interested agency should provide UNHCR with information on qualification and expertise of the interpreters that may be assigned for provision of services for the Asylum Office.

Interpreters and translators engaged under this assignment should:

- possess excellent knowledge of the relevant languages
- have previous experience in interpretation and/or translation, preferably in legal, asylum, migration, or humanitarian contexts
- demonstrate the ability to provide accurate and impartial interpretation
- be familiar with terminology related to asylum procedure
- respect confidentiality and professional ethics
- willing to participate in mandatory regular annual training for interpreters aimed at ensuring the quality of interpretation, which is of crucial importance for the quality of the asylum procedure*

*The training delivered by UNHCR will include modules designed to familiarize interpreters with international standards, the national asylum system, and the terminology used in asylum procedures, in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 on the European Union Agency for Asylum.

Languages

Interpretation and translation services may be required in a wide range of languages commonly used by asylum seekers in Serbia.

Languages required may include, but are not limited to:

Arabic, Farsi (Persian), Pashto, Kurdish, Turkish, Russian, Ukrainian, English, Spanish, French, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Armenian, Kirundi and other languages depending on the country of origin of asylum seekers and operational needs.

Due to the dynamic nature of migration flows, the service provider must have the capacity to mobilize interpreters for additional languages when necessary.

Ethical Standards and Confidentiality

All interpreters and translators must strictly adhere to principles of confidentiality, impartiality, and professional conduct. The interpreters will be requested to sign the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Undertaking and to pass Ethical Test.

Information obtained during interpretation or translation assignments must not be disclosed to any third party or used for personal purposes.

Interpreters must provide services in a neutral and professional manner, without influencing or advising asylum seekers and without engaging in any activity that could compromise the integrity of the asylum procedure.

Coordination and Service Requests

Requests for interpretation or translation services will be communicated by Asylum Office to the service provider in advance whenever possible.

Requests for interpretation services will normally include the date, location, language required, and duration of the assignment. Requests for written translation will include the documents to be translated and the required deadline.

The service provider shall designate a focal point responsible for coordination with the Asylum Office and UNHCR and for ensuring the timely delivery of services.

Fees

The interested agency is asked to specify a fee for interpretation and translation services. The proposed fees should be inclusive of all costs.

Interpretation services

The fee for interpretation services is paid per hour of interpretation.

Every initiated hour will be paid. Engagements lasting up to 30 minutes will be calculated as 30 minutes, while engagements longer than 30 minutes and up to one hour will be calculated as a full hour.

Waiting time will be calculated only 30 minutes after the scheduled start time of the assignment and will be compensated at 50% of the interpretation hourly rate.

In the event that an assignment is cancelled without prior notice, the interpreter will be paid the minimum fee of one hour of interpretation, plus applicable travel time.

Travel time

If interpretation services require travel outside of Belgrade travel time will be compensated at the established rate of per hour of travel.

The number of travel hours will be calculated based on established travel time guidelines. The travel time fee compensates for the time spent travelling to and from the location where interpretation services are provided and does not include reimbursement of transportation costs such as bus tickets or fuel.

Transportation is generally not provided by the engaging agency and is subject to agreement.

Assignments requiring overnight stay

Please note that UNHCR will be not arranging transfer and accommodation of interpreters to and/or from different locations, so the agency will be responsible to arrange arrival of interpreters to the venue on the requested time. The Asylum Office will notify the agency 7 days before the planned site-visit via e-mail if an interpreter is required outside Belgrade.

If interpretation services are required in locations that involve overnight stays, and upon request by the Asylum Office, the following costs may be covered:

- interpretation services at the standard hourly rate per hour.
- travel time calculated as described above.
- accommodation costs upon submission of an invoice, with a maximum reimbursable amount per night.

Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will not be provided.

Written translation services

Written translation of asylum applications and other documents relevant to asylum procedures will be compensated based on the number of characters translated.

One page is defined as 1,800 characters including spaces.

If multiple documents are translated by the same translator, the total number of characters will be summed and divided by the number of characters per page. Pages up to 0.5 will be rounded to 0.5 page, while pages above 0.5 will be rounded up to a full page.

The minimum payable unit is one page, even if the translated text contains fewer than 1,800 characters.

Fees for written translation are determined according to language categories as follows:

- **Category I:**
English, German, Russian, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Romanian, Hungarian, Albanian, Ukrainian, Slovenian, Macedonian.
- **Category II:**
Turkish, Greek, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Armenian, Flemish.
- **Category III:**
Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Farsi (Persian), Urdu, Pashto, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi.

Services

The company may submit an application for all two services, interpretation and translation.

Application process (detailed description available in RFQ document)

Interested applicants should submit the following documents to hunbusupplyunit@unhcr.org by **17 April 2026 by 17:00 Hrs CET** :

- Capacity statement of the organization including experience in the sector.
- Range of services (languages and type of services) to be provided.
- Fee schedule – Annex B
- Home base of the company/interpreter (location for which travel fees are not required)
- Sample of previous assignment, if possible, in the same or similar fields
- 03 CVs / Resume of engaged translators and interpreters.

Additional Technical Specification to consider.

- All communication between UNHCR and the translation agency should be in writing, translations should be submitted in electronic format.
- The translation agency shall respect the confidentiality of information during translation and interpretation services, especially in case of official documents and individual cases.
- The cooperation between the selected agency and UNHCR will be based on framework agreement.
- UNHCR reserves the right to select multiple companies or commission work outside the framework agreement. The selected company will not receive an exclusive contract.