REFUGEES ACT  
NO. 130 OF 1998  

[View Regulation]  

[ASSENTED TO 20 NOVEMBER, 1998]  
[DATE OF COMMENCEMENT: 1 APRIL, 2000]  

(English text signed by the President)  

This Act has been updated to Government Gazette 39234 dated 25 September, 2015.  

amended by  
Refugees Amendment Act, No. 10 of 2015  

proposed amendments by  
Refugees Amendment Act, No. 33 of 2008  
(provisions not yet proclaimed)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed amendments by</th>
<th>Sections to be amended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. 1 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 1 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 2 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 4 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 3 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 8 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 4 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 8C of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 5 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 8E of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 6 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 21B of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 7 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 24 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 8 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 24A of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 9 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 24B of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 10 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 27 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 11 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 36 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 12 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>S. 38 of Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. 13 of Act No. 12 of 2011</td>
<td>Substitutes certain words in Act No. 130 of 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT  

To give effect within the Republic of South Africa to the relevant international legal instruments, principles and standards relating to refugees; to provide for the reception into South Africa of asylum seekers; to regulate applications for and recognition of refugee status; to provide for the rights and obligations flowing from such status; and to provide for matters connected therewith.  

Preamble.-WHEREAS the Republic of South Africa has acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa as well as other human rights instruments, and has in so doing, assumed certain obligations to receive and treat in its territory refugees in accordance with the standards and principles established in international law.  

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS  

CHAPTER 1  
INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF ACT
CHAPTER 1
Definitions

1A. General prohibition of refusal of entry, expulsion, extradition or return to other country in certain circumstances

2. Refugee status

3. Exclusion from refugee status

4. Cessation of refugee status

5. Interpretation, application and administration of Act

6. Delegation of powers and duties

CHAPTER 2
REFUGEE RECEPTION OFFICES, STANDING COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS AND REFUGEE APPEAL BOARD

8. Refugee Reception Office

8A. . . . .

8B. . . . .

8C. . . . .

8D. . . . .

8E. . . . .

8F. . . . .

8G. . . . .

8H. . . . .

8I. . . . .

8J. . . . .

9. Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs

10. Composition of Standing Committee

11. Powers and duties of Standing Committee

12. Establishment of Refugee Appeal Board

13. Composition of Appeal Board

14. Powers and duties of Appeal Board

15. Meetings of Standing Committee and Appeal Board

16. Periods of office of members of Standing Committee and Appeal Board

17. Removal from office of member of Standing Committee or Appeal Board

18. Filling of vacancies in Standing Committee or Appeal Board

19. Remuneration of members of Standing Committee and Appeal Board

20. Administrative staff of Standing Committee and Appeal Board

CHAPTER 3
APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM

21. Application for asylum

21A. . . . .

21B. . . . .

22. Asylum seeker permit

23. Detention of asylum seeker

24. Decision regarding application for asylum

24A. . . . .

24B. . . . .

CHAPTER 4
REVIEWS AND APPEALS

25. Review by Standing Committee

26. Appeals to Appeal Board

CHAPTER 5
RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF REFUGEES

27. Protection and general rights of refugees

27A. . . . .

28. Rights of refugees in respect of removal from Republic

29. Restriction of detention

30. Identity document to refugee

31. Travel document to refugee

32. Unaccompanied child and mentally disabled person

33. Dependents of refugee

34. Obligations of refugees

34A. . . . .
CHAPTER 1
INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF ACT

1. **Definitions.**—In this Act, unless the context shows that another meaning is intended—

   **“abusive application for asylum”** means an application for asylum made—
   
   (a) with the purpose of defeating or evading criminal or civil proceedings or the consequences thereof; or
   
   (b) after the refusal of one or more prior applications without any substantial change having occurred in the applicant’s personal circumstances or in the situation in his or her country of origin;

   **“Aliens Control Act, 1991”,** means the Aliens Control Act, 1991 (Act No. 96 of 1991);

   **“Appeal Board”** means the Refugee Appeal Board, established by section 12;

   **“asylum”** means refugee status recognised in terms of this Act;

   **“asylum seeker”** means a person who is seeking recognition as a refugee in the Republic;

   **“asylum seeker permit”** means a permit contemplated in section 22;

   **“child”** means any person under the age of 18 years;

   **“Department”** means the Department of Home Affairs;

   **“dependant”,** in relation to an asylum seeker or a refugee, includes the spouse, any unmarried dependant child or any destitute, aged or infirm member of the family of such asylum seeker or refugee;

   **“Director-General”** means the Director-General of the Department;

   **“fraudulent application for asylum”** means an application for asylum based without reasonable cause on facts, information, documents or representations which the applicant knows to be false and which facts, information, documents or representations are intended to materially affect the outcome of the application;

   **“manifestly unfounded application”** means an application for asylum made on grounds other than those on which such an application may be made under this Act;

   **“Minister”** means the Minister of Home Affairs;

   **“prescribed”** means prescribed by regulation;

   **“refugee”** means any person who has been granted asylum in terms of this Act;

   **“Refugee Reception Office”** means a Refugee Reception Office established under section 8 (1);

   **“Refugee Reception Officer”** means a Refugee Reception Officer referred to in section 8 (2);

   **“Refugee Status Determination Officer”** means a Refugee Status Determination Officer referred to in section 8 (2);

   **“regulation”** means any regulation made under this Act;

   **“rules”** means the rules made by the Appeal Board under section 14 (2);

   **“social group”** includes, among others, a group of persons of particular gender, sexual orientation, disability, class or caste;

   **“Standing Committee”** means the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs, established by section 9:
"this Act" includes the regulations;

"UNHCR" means the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

( Editorial Note: S. 1 to be substituted by s. 1 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

1A. . . . . .

( Editorial Note: S. 1A to be inserted by s. 2 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

2. General prohibition of refusal of entry, expulsion, extradition or return to other country in certain circumstances.-Notwithstanding any provision of this Act or any other law to the contrary, no person may be refused entry into the Republic, expelled, extradited or returned to any other country or be subject to any similar measure, if as a result of such refusal, expulsion, extradition, return or other measure, such person is compelled to return to or remain in a country where-

(a) he or she may be subjected to persecution on account of his or her race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group; or

(b) his or her life, physical safety or freedom would be threatened on account of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or other events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either part or the whole of that country.

( Editorial Note: Para. (b) to be substituted by s. 3 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

3. Refugee status.-Subject to Chapter 3, a person qualifies for refugee status for the purposes of this Act if that person-

(a) owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted by reason of his or her race, tribe, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it; or

( Editorial Note: Para. (a) to be substituted by s. 4 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

(b) owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either a part or the whole of his or her country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge elsewhere; or

( Editorial Note: Para. (b) to be substituted by s. 4 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

(c) is a dependant of a person contemplated in paragraph (a) or (b).

( Editorial Note: Para. (c) to be substituted by s. 4 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

4. Exclusion from refugee status.- (1) A person does not qualify for refugee status for the purposes of this Act if there is reason to believe that he or she-

(a) has committed a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity, as defined in any international legal instrument dealing with any such crimes; or

(b) has committed a crime which is not of a political nature and which, if committed in the Republic, would be punishable by imprisonment; or
(Editorial Note: Para. (b) to be substituted by s. 5 (b) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

(c) has been guilty of acts contrary to the objects and principles of the United Nations Organisation or the Organisation of African Unity; or

(d) enjoys the protection of any other country in which he or she has taken residence.

(Editorial Note: Para. (d) to be substituted by s. 5 (c) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) (c), no exercise of a human right recognised under international law may be regarded as being contrary to the objects and principles of the United Nations Organisation or the Organisation of African Unity.

5. Cessation of refugee status.- (1) A person ceases to qualify for refugee status for the purposes of this Act if-

(a) he or she voluntarily reavails himself or herself of the protection of the country of his or her nationality; or

(b) having lost his or her nationality, he or she by some voluntary and formal act reacquires it; or

(c) he or she becomes a citizen of the Republic or acquires the nationality of some other country and enjoys the protection of the country of his or her new nationality; or

(Editorial Note: Para. (c) to be substituted by s. 6 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

(d) he or she voluntarily re-establishes himself or herself in the country which he or she left; or

(e) he or she can no longer continue to refuse to avail himself or herself of the protection of the country of his or her nationality because the circumstances in connection with which he or she has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist and no other circumstances have arisen which justify his or her continued recognition as a refugee.

(2) Subsection (1) (g) does not apply to a refugee who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to avail himself or herself of the protection of the country of nationality.

(3) The refugee status of a person who ceases to qualify for it in terms of subsection (1) may be withdrawn in terms of section 36.

6. Interpretation, application and administration of Act.- (1) This Act must be interpreted and applied with due regard to-

(a) the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UN, 1951);

(b) the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (UN, 1967);

(c) the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU, 1969);

(d) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948); and

(e) any other relevant convention or international agreement to which the Republic is or becomes a party.

(2) The Minister is responsible for the administration of this Act.

(Editorial Note: s. 6 to be repealed by s. 7 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wording of Sections

7. Delegation of powers and duties.- (1) The Minister may delegate any power granted to, or duty imposed
upon, him or her in terms of this Act, except the duty referred to in section 6(2), to an officer in the Department.

(2) A power or duty so delegated must be exercised or performed in accordance with the directions of the Minister, who may at any time withdraw such delegation.

(3) A delegation under subsection (1) does not prevent the Minister from exercising the power or performing the duty in question himself or herself.

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.7 to be substituted by S.8 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

WORDING OF SECTIONS

CHAPTER 2

REFUGEE RECEPTION OFFICES, STANDING COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS AND REFUGEE APPEAL BOARD

(EDITORIAL NOTE: Heading to Chapter 2 to be substituted by S.9 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

WORDING OF SECTIONS

8. Refugee Reception Office.- (1) The Director-General may establish as many Refugee Reception Offices in the Republic as he or she, after consultation with the Standing Committee, regards as necessary for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Each Refugee Reception Office must consist of at least one Refugee Reception Officer and one Refugee Status Determination Officer who must-

(a) be officers of the Department, designated by the Director-General for a term of office determined by the Director-General; and

(b) have such qualifications, experience and knowledge of refugee matters as makes them capable of performing their functions.

(3) The Director-General must, with the approval of the Standing Committee, ensure that each officer appointed under this section receives the additional training necessary to enable such officer to perform his or her functions properly.

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.8 to be substituted by S.10 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

WORDING OF SECTIONS

8A. . . . . .

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.8A to be inserted by S.11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8B. . . . . .

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.8B to be inserted by S.11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8C. . . . . .

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.8C to be inserted by S.11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8D. . . . . .

(EDITORIAL NOTE: S.8D to be inserted by S.11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)
8E. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8E to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8F. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8F to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8G. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8G to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8H. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8H to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8I. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8I to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

8J. .......
(Editing Note: s. 8J to be inserted by s. 11 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

9. Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs.- (1) There is hereby established a Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs.
   
   (2) The Standing Committee must function without any bias and must be independent.
   
   (3) The headquarters of the Standing Committee must be determined by the Minister.
   
   (Editing Note: s. 9 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

10. Composition of Standing Committee.- (1) The Standing Committee must consist of-
   
   (a) a chairperson; and
   
   (b) such number of other members as the Minister may determine, having regard to the likely volume of work to be performed by the Committee.

   (2) The chairperson and other members of the Standing Committee must be appointed by the Minister with due regard to their experience, qualifications and expertise, as well as their ability to perform the functions of their office properly.

   (3) A person may not be appointed as a member of the Standing Committee if he or she-

   (a) is not a South African citizen;

   (b) has been sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine during the preceding four years.

Wordings of Sections

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   (2) The chairperson and other members of the Standing Committee must be appointed by the Minister with due regard to their experience, qualifications and expertise, as well as their ability to perform the functions of their office properly.

   (3) A person may not be appointed as a member of the Standing Committee if he or she-

   (a) is not a South African citizen;

   (b) has been sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine during the preceding four years.

Wordings of Sections
11. **Powers and duties of Standing Committee.** - The Standing Committee-

(a) may formulate and implement procedures for the granting of asylum;

(b) may regulate and supervise the work of the Refugee Reception Offices;

(c) may liaise with representatives of the UNHCR or any non-governmental organisation;

(d) must advise the Minister or Director-General on any matter referred to it by the Minister or Director-General;

(e) must review decisions by Refugee Status Determination Officers in respect of manifestly unfounded applications;

(f) must decide any matter of law referred to it by a Refugee Status Determination Officer;

(g) must monitor the decisions of the Refugee Status Determination Officers; and

(h) must determine the conditions relating to study or work in the Republic under which an asylum seeker permit may be issued.

(3) The Appeal Board must function without any bias and must be independent.

(4) At least one of the members of the Standing Committee must be legally qualified.

(5) The Appeal Board must consist of a chairperson and at least two other members, appointed by the Minister with due regard to a person's suitability to serve as a member by virtue of his or her experience, qualifications and expertise and his or her capability to perform the functions of the Appeal Board properly.

(6) At least one of the members of the Appeal Board must be legally qualified.

(b) must be a South African citizen;

(c) has been sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine during the preceding four years.

14. **Powers and duties of Appeal Board.** - (1) The Appeal Board must-

(a) hear and determine any question of law referred to it in terms of this Act;

(b) hear and determine any appeal lodged in terms of this Act;

(c) advise the Minister or Standing Committee regarding any matter which the Minister or Standing Committee refers to the Appeal Board.

(2) The Appeal Board may determine its own practice and make its own rules.
15. **Meetings of Standing Committee and Appeal Board.**—In the case of both the Standing Committee and the Appeal Board—

(a) meetings must be convened by the chairperson;

(b) the majority of members constitutes a quorum;

(c) decisions must be taken by a majority of votes, and in the case of an equality of votes, the chairperson has a casting vote.

(3) Rules made under subsection (2) must be published in the Gazette.

(6) (Editorial Note: **S. 14 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.**)

**Wording of Sections**

16. **Periods of office of members of Standing Committee and Appeal Board.**—In the case of both the Standing Committee and the Appeal Board—

(a) a member is appointed for five years;

(b) any member is eligible for re-appointment upon expiry of his or her term of office;

(c) any member may resign by tendering a written notice of resignation to the Minister.

(2) The Minister may only act in terms of subsection (1) if the member concerned and the relevant chairperson have been given an opportunity to make representations or comments on the matter and the Minister has taken any such representations and comments into consideration.

(3) Rules made under subsection (2) must be published in the Gazette.

(6) (Editorial Note: **S. 16 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.**)

**Wording of Sections**

17. **Removal from office of member of Standing Committee or Appeal Board.**—(1) Any member of the Standing Committee or Appeal Board may be removed from office by the Minister on account of misconduct or inability to perform the functions of his or her office properly.

(2) The Minister may only act in terms of subsection (1) if the member concerned and the relevant chairperson have been given an opportunity to make representations or comments on the matter and the Minister has taken any such representations and comments into consideration.

(3) Rules made under subsection (2) must be published in the Gazette.

(6) (Editorial Note: **S. 17 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.**)

**Wording of Sections**

18. **Filling of vacancies in Standing Committee or Appeal Board.**—The Minister may appoint a suitable person in a vacancy arising from the death, resignation or removal from office of a member of the Standing Committee or Appeal Board, for the remainder of the term of office of the member in respect of whom the vacancy has occurred.

(2) The Minister may only act in terms of subsection (1) if the member concerned and the relevant chairperson have been given an opportunity to make representations or comments on the matter and the Minister has taken any such representations and comments into consideration.

(3) Rules made under subsection (2) must be published in the Gazette.

(6) (Editorial Note: **S. 18 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.**)

**Wording of Sections**

19. **Remuneration of members of Standing Committee and Appeal Board.**—The members of the Standing Committee and the Appeal Board must receive such remuneration, allowances and other benefits as may be determined by the Minister with the approval of the Minister of Finance.

(2) The Minister may only act in terms of subsection (1) if the member concerned and the relevant chairperson have been given an opportunity to make representations or comments on the matter and the Minister has taken any such representations and comments into consideration.

(3) Rules made under subsection (2) must be published in the Gazette.

(6) (Editorial Note: **S. 19 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.**)

**Wording of Sections**
20. **Administrative staff of Standing Committee and Appeal Board.**—The administrative work connected with the performance of the functions of the Standing Committee and the Appeal Board, must be performed by officers of the Department, designated by the Director-General for that purpose.

( Editorial Note: s. 20 to be repealed by s. 12 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

**Wordings of Sections**

CHAPTER 3

APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM

21. **Application for asylum.**—(1) An application for asylum must be made in person in accordance with the prescribed procedures to a Refugee Reception Officer at any Refugee Reception Office.

( Editorial Note: Sub-s. (1) to be substituted by s. 13 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

**Wordings of Sections**

(2) The Refugee Reception Officer concerned-

(a) must accept the application form from the applicant;

(b) must see to it that the application form is properly completed, and, where necessary, must assist the applicant in this regard;

(c) may conduct such enquiry as he or she deems necessary in order to verify the information furnished in the application; and

(d) must submit any application received by him or her, together with any information relating to the applicant which he or she may have obtained, to a Refugee Status Determination Officer, to deal with it in terms of section 24.

( Editorial Note: Sub-s. (2) to be substituted by s. 13 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

**Wordings of Sections**

(3) When making an application for asylum, every applicant must have his or her fingerprints or other prints taken in the prescribed manner and every applicant who is 16 years old or older must furnish two recent photographs of himself or herself of such dimensions as may be prescribed.

( Editorial Note: Sub-s. (3) to be substituted by s. 13 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

**Wordings of Sections**

(4) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no proceedings may be instituted or continued against any person in respect of his or her unlawful entry into or presence within the Republic if-

(a) such person has applied for asylum in terms of subsection (1), until a decision has been made on the application and, where applicable, such person has had an opportunity to exhaust his or her rights of review or appeal in terms of Chapter 4; or

(b) such person has been granted asylum.

(5) The confidentiality of asylum applications and the information contained therein must be ensured at all times, except that the Refugee Appeals Authority may, on application and on conditions it deems fit, allow any person or the media to attend or report on its hearing if-

(a) the asylum seeker gives consent; or

(b) the Refugee Appeals Authority concludes that it is in the public interest to allow any person or the media to attend or report on its hearing, after taking into account all relevant factors including-

(i) the interests of the asylum seeker in retaining confidentiality;

(ii) the need to protect the integrity of the asylum process;

(iii) the need to protect the identity and dignity of the asylum seeker;

(iv) whether the information is already in the public domain;

(v) the likely impact of the disclosure on the fairness of the proceedings and the rights of the asylum seeker; and

(vi) whether allowing any person or the media access to its proceedings or allowing the media to
21A. . . . . .
(Editors' Note: S. 21A to be inserted by s. 14 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

21B. . . . . .
(Editors' Note: S. 21B to be inserted by s. 14 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

22. Asylum seeker permit.-(1) The Refugee Reception Officer must, pending the outcome of an application in terms of section 21(1), issue to the applicant an asylum seeker permit in the prescribed form allowing the applicant to sojourn in the Republic temporarily, subject to any conditions, determined by the Standing Committee, which are not in conflict with the Constitution or international law and are endorsed by the Refugee Reception Officer on the permit.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (1) to be substituted by s. 15(a) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(2) Upon the issue of a permit in terms of subsection (1), any permit issued to the applicant in terms of the Aliens Control Act, 1991, becomes null and void, and must forthwith be returned to the Director-General for cancellation.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (2) to be substituted by s. 15(a) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(3) A Refugee Reception Officer may from time to time extend the period for which a permit has been issued in terms of subsection (1), or amend the conditions subject to which a permit has been so issued.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (3) to be substituted by s. 15(a) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(4) The permit referred to in subsection (1) must contain a recent photograph and the fingerprints or other prints of the holder thereof as prescribed.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (4) to be substituted by s. 15(a) of Act No. 33! of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(5) A permit issued to any person in terms of subsection (1) lapses if the holder departs from the Republic without the consent of the Minister.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (5) to be deleted by s. 15(b) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(6) The Minister may at any time withdraw an asylum seeker permit if-

(a) the applicant contravenes any conditions endorsed on that permit; or

(b) the application for asylum has been found to be manifestly unfounded, abusive or fraudulent; or

(c) the application for asylum has been rejected; or

(d) the applicant is or becomes ineligible for asylum in terms of section 4 or 5.

(Editors' Note: Sub-s. (6) to be amended by s. 15(c) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

(7) Any person who fails to return a permit in accordance with subsection (2), or to comply with any condition
set out in a permit issued in terms of this section, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years, or to both a fine and such imprisonment.

23. Detention of asylum seeker.- If the Minister has withdrawn an asylum seeker permit in terms of section 22(6), he or she may, subject to section 29, cause the holder to be arrested and detained pending the finalisation of the application for asylum, in the manner and place determined by him or her with due regard to human dignity.

(Editorial Note: Sub-s. (2) to be substituted by s. 16 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

24. Decision regarding application for asylum.- (1) Upon receipt of an application for asylum the Refugee Status Determination Officer-

(a) in order to make a decision, may request any information or clarification he or she deems necessary from an applicant or Refugee Reception Officer;

(b) where necessary, may consult with and invite a UNHCR representative to furnish information on specified matters; and

(c) may, with the permission of the asylum seeker, provide the UNHCR representative with such information as may be requested.

(2) When considering an application the Refugee Status Determination Officer must have due regard for the rights set out in section 33 of the Constitution, and in particular, ensure that the applicant fully understands the procedures, his or her rights and responsibilities and the evidence presented.

(3) The Refugee Status Determination Officer must at the conclusion of the hearing-

(a) grant asylum; or

(b) reject the application as manifestly unfounded, abusive or fraudulent; or

(c) reject the application as unfounded; or

(d) refer any question of law to the Standing Committee.

(4) If an application is rejected in terms of subsection (3)(b)-

(a) written reasons must be furnished to the applicant within five working days after the date of the rejection or referral;

(b) the record of proceedings and a copy of the reasons referred to in paragraph (a) must be submitted to the Standing Committee within 10 working days after the date of the rejection or referral.

(5) . . . . .

(6) . . . . .

(Editorial Note: Sub-s. (5) to be added by s. 17 (c) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

(Editorial Note: Sub-s. (6) to be added by s. 17 (c) of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)
25. **Review by Standing Committee.**—(1) The Standing Committee must review any decision taken by a Refugee Status Determination Officer in terms of section 24 (3) (b).

(2) Before reaching a decision, the Standing Committee may-
   
   (a) invite the UNHCR representative to make oral or written representations;
   
   (b) request the attendance of any person who is in a position to provide it with information relevant to the matter being dealt with;
   
   (c) on its own accord make such further enquiry and investigation into the matter being dealt with as it may deem appropriate; and
   
   (d) request the applicant to appear before it and to provide such other information as it may deem necessary.

(3) The Standing Committee—
   
   (a) may confirm or set aside a decision made in terms of section 24 (3) (b); and
   
   (b) must decide on a question of law referred to it in terms of section 24 (3) (d).

(4) The Standing Committee must inform the Refugee Status Determination Officer concerned of its decision in the prescribed manner and within the prescribed time.

(5) After the Standing Committee has decided a question of law referred to it in terms of section 24 (3) (d), the Standing Committee must refer the application back to the Refugee Status Determination Officer with such directives as are necessary and the Refugee Status Determination Officer must decide the application in terms of the directives.

(6) Any entity which has been invited to submit a report under subsection (4) may submit a report in such form as it deems appropriate.

(7) Any report submitted under subsection (4) or (6) shall be treated as evidence in any proceedings in which it is relevant and shall be admissible in so far as it is relevant.

(8) The Standing Committee may—

   (a) request any entity which has been invited to submit a report under subsection (4) or (6) to make further representations in respect of the report, and

   (b) request any person or entity to clarify any statement or information contained in a report.

(9) Any person or entity who has been invited to make representations under subsection (8) shall have the opportunity to make further representations in respect of the report within the prescribed time and manner.

26. **Appeals to Appeal Board.**—(1) Any asylum seeker may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Board in the manner and within the period provided for in the rules if the Refugee Status Determination Officer has rejected the application in terms of section 24 (3) (c).

(2) The Appeal Board may after hearing an appeal confirm, set aside or substitute any decision taken by a Refugee Status Determination Officer in terms of section 24 (3).

(3) Before reaching a decision, the Appeal Board may—

   (a) invite the UNHCR representative to make oral or written representations;

   (b) refer the matter back to the Standing Committee for further inquiry and investigation;

   (c) request the attendance of any person who, in its opinion, is in a position to provide the Appeal Board with relevant information;

   (d) of its own accord make further inquiry or investigation;

   (e) request the applicant to appear before it and to provide any such other information as it may deem necessary.

(4) The Appeal Board must allow legal representation upon the request of the applicant.
27. **Protection and general rights of refugees.** A refugee-

(a) is entitled to a formal written recognition of refugee status in the prescribed form;

(b) enjoys full legal protection, which includes the rights set out in Chapter 2 of the Constitution and the right to remain in the Republic in accordance with the provisions of this Act;

(c) is entitled to apply for an immigration permit in terms of the Aliens Control Act, 1991, after five years' continuous residence in the Republic from the date on which he or she was granted asylum, if the Standing Committee certifies that he or she will remain a refugee indefinitely;

(d) is entitled to an identity document referred to in section 30;

(e) is entitled to a South African travel document on application as contemplated in section 31;

(f) is entitled to seek employment; and

(g) is entitled to the same basic health services and basic primary education which the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time.

(28) **Rights of refugees in respect of removal from Republic.**-(1) Subject to section 2, a refugee may be removed from the Republic on grounds of national security or public order.

(2) A removal under subsection (1) may only be ordered by the Minister with due regard for the rights set out in section 33 of the Constitution and the rights of the refugee in terms of international law.

(3) If an order is made under this section for the removal from the Republic of a refugee, any dependant of such refugee who has not been granted asylum, may be included in such an order and removed from the Republic if such dependant has been afforded a reasonable opportunity to apply for asylum but has failed to do so or if his or her application for asylum has been rejected.

(29) **Restriction of detention.**-(1) No person may be detained in terms of this Act for a longer period than is reasonable and justifiable and any detention exceeding 30 days must be reviewed immediately by a judge of the High Court of the provincial division in whose area of jurisdiction the person is detained, designated by the Judge President of that division for that purpose and such detention must be reviewed in this manner immediately after
the expiry of every subsequent period of 30 days.

(2) The detention of a child must be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

(Editorial Note: S. 29 to be substituted by s. 24 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

30. **Identity document to refugee.**-(1) A refugee must be issued with an identity document which must contain-

(a) an identity number of the holder compiled in the prescribed manner;

(b) the holder's surname, full forenames, gender, date of birth and the place or country where he or she was born;

(c) the country of which the holder is a citizen, if any;

(d) a recent photograph of the holder; and

(e) the holder's fingerprints or other prints, taken and displayed in the prescribed manner.

(2) An identity document referred to in subsection (1) must be in the prescribed form.

(Editorial Note: S. 30 to be substituted by s. 25 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

31. **Travel document to refugee.**-A refugee may apply for a travel document in the prescribed manner.

(Editorial Note: S. 31 to be repealed by s. 26 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

32. **Unaccompanied child and mentally disabled person.**-(1) Any child who appears to qualify for refugee status in terms of section 3, and who is found under circumstances which clearly indicate that he or she is a child in need of care as contemplated in the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983), must forthwith be brought before the Children's Court for the district in which he or she was found.

(2) The Children's Court may order that a child contemplated in subsection (1) be assisted in applying for asylum in terms of this Act.

(3) Any mentally disabled person who appears to qualify for refugee status in terms of section 3 must be assisted in applying for asylum in terms of this Act.

(Editorial Note: S. 32 to be repealed by s. 26 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

33. **Dependants of refugee.**-(1) A person who qualifies for refugee status in terms of section 3(a) or (b) and who would like one or more of his or her dependants who have accompanied him or her to the Republic to receive asylum must, when applying for asylum, also assist every such dependant to apply for asylum in terms of this Act or apply on behalf of any such dependant who is not able to apply by himself or herself.

(2) Where a dependant of a recognised refugee is within the Republic in accordance with an asylum seeker permit or has been granted asylum in terms of this Act, and ceases to be a dependant by reason of his or her marriage, his or her attaining the age of majority or the cessation of his or her dependence upon the recognised refugee, as the case may be, he or she may be permitted to continue to remain within the Republic in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(3) Upon the death of a recognised refugee or upon his or her divorce, every person who, immediately before such death or divorce was within the Republic in terms of this Act as a dependant of such recognised refugee, may be permitted to continue to remain within the Republic in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(4) Nothing contained in this Act may prevent a dependant of a recognised refugee or a person who has, in terms of subsection (2) or (3), been permitted to continue to remain in the Republic from applying for recognition as
34. **Obligations of refugees.**-A refugee must abide by the laws of the Republic.
( Editorial Note: **S. 34** to be substituted by **s. 27** of **Act No. 33 of 2008** with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

**CHAPTER 6**
**SUPPLEMENTARY AND GENERAL PROVISIONS**

35. **Reception and accommodation of asylum seekers in event of mass influx.**-(1) The Minister may, if he or she considers that any group or category of persons qualify for refugee status as is contemplated in **section 3**, by notice in the Gazette, declare such group or category of persons to be refugees either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as the Minister may impose in conformity with the **Constitution** and international law and may revoke any such declaration by notice in the Gazette.

(2) The Minister may, after consultation with the UNHCR representative and the Premier of the province concerned, designate areas, centres or places for the temporary reception and accommodation of asylum seekers or refugees or any specific category or group of asylum seekers or refugees who entered the Republic on a large scale, pending the regularisation of their status in the Republic.

(3) The Minister may appoint any person as a manager of an area, centre or place designated under **subsection (2)**.

(4) The Minister may at any time withdraw the designation of an area, centre or place contemplated in **subsection (2)**.

36. **Withdrawal of refugee status.**-(1) If a person has been recognised as a refugee erroneously on an application which contains any materially incorrect or false information, or was so recognised due to fraud, forgery, a false or misleading representation of a material or substantial nature in relation to the application or if such person ceases to qualify for refugee status in terms of **section 5**-

(a) the Standing Committee must inform such person of its intention of withdrawing his or her classification as refugee and the reasons therefor; and

(b) such person may, within the prescribed period, make a written submission with regard thereto.

(2) After consideration of all material facts and with due regard for the rights set out in **section 33** of the **Constitution**, the Standing Committee may withdraw such recognition and such person may be dealt with as a prohibited person under the Aliens Control Act, 1991.

(3) Any refugee whose recognition as such is withdrawn in terms of **subsection (1)** may be arrested and detained pending being dealt with in terms of the Aliens Control Act, 1991.
( Editorial Note: **S. 36** to be substituted by **s. 29** of **Act No. 33 of 2008** with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

37. **Offences and penalties.**-Any person who-

(a) for the purpose of entering, or remaining in, the Republic or of facilitating or assisting the entry into or residence in the Republic of himself or herself or any other person, commits any fraudulent act or makes any false representation by conduct, statement or otherwise; or
(b) fails to comply with or contravenes the conditions subject to which any permit has been issued to him or her under this Act; or

(c) without just cause refuses or fails to comply with a requirement of this Act; or

(38) Regulations.- (1) The Minister may make regulations relating to-

(a) a large-scale influx of asylum seekers into the Republic;
(b) the manner in which and period within which a matter must be referred to the Standing Committee;

(2) A regulation under subsection (1)(a) may only be made in consultation with the Premier of any province into which the influx takes place.

(39) Training of staff.-The Director-General must, in consultation with the Standing Committee, take such steps as to ensure the appropriate training of any person-

(a) to whom powers are delegated in terms of this Act; or
(b) who is appointed in any capacity in terms of this Act.

(40) Transitional arrangements.- Any person who, immediately before the commencement of this Act, was in the process of applying for asylum or was a recognised refugee must be regarded as having applied for asylum or
as having been recognised as a refugee in terms of this Act, and the provisions of this Act apply in all respects to such applicant and his or her application and such refugee, as the case may be.

(Editorial Note: S. 40 to be repealed by s. 32 of Act No. 33 of 2008 with effect from a date to be fixed by the President by proclamation in the Gazette - date not fixed.)

Wordings of Sections

41. Short title and commencement.-This is the Refugees Act, 1998, which comes into operation on a date determined by the President by proclamation in the Gazette.