# Ombudsperson find Border Guards failure to ensure the right to seek asylum

Seimas Ombudsman stated that State Border Guard Service (SBGS) officers created unjustified obstacles to exercising the right to apply for asylum.

In four different cases, applications were not accepted from citizens of Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi and Russia. SBGS asserted that persons who attempted to cross the Lithuanian border with Belarus at border checkpoints did not submit asylum applications to officers, but could not prove this.

The Seimas Ombudsman launched two investigations on her own initiative after information appeared in the media about the potentially unlawful behavior of border officials. During the investigations, audio recordings were obtained in which citizens of Kenya and Sudan clearly expressed their need to seek asylum in Lithuania.

- In one of the audio recordings, a woman says: “We are seeking asylum.” A male voice responds in Lithuanian: “What is this? Who? What?” In the ensuing conversation, the woman tries to explain that she spoke to the Red Cross and wants to seek asylum, but the man says in English that he does not understand what is being said.
- The second recording captures a similar situation. The woman says: “But we can seek asylum.” The man replies in Lithuanian: “What’s going on here?” The woman asks to speak English, but is only told in Lithuanian: “Go there and do something.” She claims that the Red Cross called the border crossing and told the asylum seekers to stay there. The man replies in Lithuanian: “I don’t understand what you’re saying.”
- on April 1, 2025, Somali citizens approached the VSAT officers working at the Šalčininkai border checkpoint not only verbally, but also in writing - the individuals had written asylum applications and a sheet with the inscription "I ask for international protection in Lithuania".
- The Seimas Ombudsman found that the written asylum application was also ignored by the VSAT officers on April 17, when a Russian citizen who had been punished for anti-war rhetoric sought to submit it at the Kena railway border checkpoint. At the Kena checkpoint, this person was instructed to submit the application in Kybartai, but the officers working there did not pay attention to the document presented to them. The Russian citizen once

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again unsuccessfully tried to apply for asylum in Lithuania while traveling on the return route. During the investigation, it turned out that the VSAT already knew about the person's intentions.
- A video recording taken on 20 June 2025, which shows officers of the State Border Service of Lithuania not accepting written asylum applications from Burundian citizens, a woman and a man, and handing them decisions refusing entry to Lithuania. The recording shows an officer bringing sheets of paper, throwing them on the floor next to the people and saying “Go, go”. Despite the individuals’ attempts to continue talking to the officers, they are repeatedly told to leave.

Despite the legal obligation, video recordings of SGBS' officers were not available due to malfunction of the devices or deleted before the retention period elapsed.

**Source(s)**

- Seimas Ombudsmen's Office | Lietuvos Seimo Kontrolieriai (11 August, 2025), [Border guards failed to ensure right to seek asylum], https://www.lrski.lt/en/news/border-guards-failed-to-ensure-right-to-seek-asylum.html

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