

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#) > [Research Program](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

## Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

22 February 2012

**NGA103976.E**

Nigeria: The e-passport and the machine-readable passport (MRP); procedures to obtain an e-passport through the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa; requirements and procedures to replace a lost or stolen passport; distinguishing features indicating whether a passport is a first-issued passport, a renewal, or a replacement for a lost or stolen passport; passport verification

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### The E-passport and the Machine Readable Passport

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa indicated that the new Nigerian passports are called e-passports, while the old passports are called machine-readable passports (MRPs) (Nigeria 1 Feb. 2012). According to the official, the MRP is still valid, but it is no longer being issued (ibid.). She explained that "it is very difficult to do anything fraudulent with the e-passport" (ibid. 1 Feb. 2012).

### Obtaining an E-passport through the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa

The official at the Nigeria High Commission stated that an e-passport machine was installed at the high commission in Ottawa in August 2011, and that they have been issuing e-passports since then (ibid.). However, due to technical problems, there was "recently a pause on passport issuance," but the embassy has started issuing passports again (ibid.). A notice on the high commission's website states that it "wishes to inform that the remaining passports data captured in April and December 2010 are being sorted out and will be release[d] as soon as possible" (Nigeria [n.d.c](#)).

According to the official, in order to obtain an e-passport in Canada, applicants must complete an application form that is available on the Nigeria Immigration Service website (Nigeria 1 Feb. 2012). The official indicated that, after paying online, a payment slip with an interview date will be automatically generated (ibid.). The official stated that applicants must attend the interview in Ottawa (ibid.). The official also said that Ottawa is the only city in Canada that can issue passports, and she added that, although the embassy has sent teams to some other cities to issue passports in the past, including in August 2011, this does not happen often and may not happen this year (ibid.).

The high commission's website similarly specifies that, to obtain an e-passport, applicants must make an appointment and go to the high commission in person with the following:

- Completed application form and the "acknowledgement slip" from the Nigeria Immigration Service website;
- The MRP used to enter Canada or the passport obtained at the Nigerian high commission in Ottawa;
- Proof of online payment in the amount of US\$65;
- Application identification and reference numbers;
- Two colour passport photographs on a grey background;
- A self-addressed Canadian priority post envelope;
- A money order in the amount of C\$30 addressed to the Nigeria High Commission; and
- Completion of the "Application Tracking section online," which must be completed "before ... documents arrive at the High Commission" (Nigeria [n.d.a](#)).

The official said that once at the embassy, the applicant's photograph and fingerprint are taken (ibid. 1 Feb.

2012). The official also indicated that a birth certificate is required to obtain an e-passport, and added that if an individual does not have a birth certificate, an affidavit is necessary (ibid.).

According to the official, an e-passport cannot be obtained by proxy since applicants must be physically present (ibid.). She added that even a newborn baby is required to be present in order to be photographed (ibid.). However, the official stated that when the MRP was issued, it was possible to obtain an MRP passport by proxy (ibid.).

## Requirements and Procedures to Replace a Lost or Stolen Passport

The website of the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa indicates that the high commission is under no obligation to issue travel document[s] to adult applicants born outside Canada who claim they require [a] passport for the first time or they arrived [in] Canada without a genuine Nigerian Passport. The same applies to claims of loss of [passport]. (Nigeria n.d.b)

According to information on the website, "[t]ravel documents will be issued only when satisfactory reasons and requested original documents are submitted for examination. Applicants must present themselves for an [i]nterview and be prepared to wait for approval" (ibid.).

The website states that upon obtaining approval, applicants will be asked to provide the following documents:

- An original birth certificate and a photocopy of a birth certificate "issued at [the] time of birth by a government agency before 1988," or the original birth registration letter and a photocopy of the birth registration letter from the National Population Commission and "signed by the appropriate State Director";
- Two current colour passport photographs on a "white/grey background";
- A "self-explanatory letter of how [the] applicant came to Canada";
- "The original proxy/false/forged passport";
- A completed online application form and acknowledgement slip that contains application reference and identification numbers and confirms payment;
- A money order of C\$30 payable to the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa;
- A money order of US\$250 payable to the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa;
- A document that indicates the applicant's current immigration status or a letter from "Immigration requesting the applicant to present [a] passport"; and
- Completion of the "Application Tracking section online," which must be completed "before documents arrive at the High Commission" (Nigeria n.d.b).

According to the Nigerian high commission and the Nigeria Immigration Service, if a passport has been lost or stolen, a police report is required (ibid. 1 Feb. 2012; ibid. n.d.d).

The websites of various Nigerian embassies consulted by the Research Directorate have different requirements and procedures to replace a lost or stolen passport (Nigeria n.d.e; ibid. n.d.f; ibid. n.d.g; ibid. n.d.h). The embassies in Cairo, Egypt, and Berlin, Germany, indicate that the application for a replacement passport is forwarded to the Nigeria Immigration Service for approval (ibid. n.d.e; ibid. n.d.f).

## Distinguishing Features of a First-issued Passport, a Renewal, or a Replacement for a Lost or Stolen Passport

The official at the Nigeria High Commission stated that the e-passport has no distinguishing features that indicate whether it was issued to replace a lost or stolen passport or a first-issued passport (Nigeria 1 Feb. 2012). The official added that there is "no place for this information" (ibid.). She was uncertain about whether the MRP passport contained any features indicating that a passport is a replacement for a lost or stolen passport or a first-issued passport (ibid.).

## Passport Verification

The official at the Nigeria High Commission stated that, in order to verify whether a person already has a valid passport in the e-passport system, the authorities can check the applicant's fingerprints (Nigeria 1 Feb. 2012). The official indicated that "as soon as someone puts their finger on the machine, this information can be verified" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

## References

Nigeria. 1 February 2012. Telephone interview with an official of the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.a. Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa. "Notice for All Passport, Visa Applicants and Other Consular Services." <[http://nigeriahcottawa.com/nhc/consular/passport\\_Re-issue.html](http://nigeriahcottawa.com/nhc/consular/passport_Re-issue.html)> [Accessed 10 Feb. 2012]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.b. Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa. "Checklist and Requirement for Missing, Proxy, False or Forged and No Passport." <[http://www.nigeriahcottawa.com/nhc/consular/passport\\_Checklist\\_and\\_R.html](http://www.nigeriahcottawa.com/nhc/consular/passport_Checklist_and_R.html)> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2012]

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\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.e. Embassy of Nigeria in Cairo, Egypt. "Requirements for Replacement of Lost Nigerian Standard Passport." <[http://nigeriaembassycairo.org/word/lostnsp\(1\).doc](http://nigeriaembassycairo.org/word/lostnsp(1).doc)> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2012]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.f. Embassy of Nigeria in Berlin, Germany. "Passport Issues." <[http://www.nigeriaembassygermany.org/consular\\_fee.htm](http://www.nigeriaembassygermany.org/consular_fee.htm)> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2012]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.g. Embassy of Nigeria in Bern, Switzerland. "Replacement of Lost Passport." <<http://www.nigerianbern.org/lostpass.htm>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2012]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.h. Embassy of Nigeria in Budapest, Hungary. "Lost E-passports." <[http://nigerianembassy.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=41](http://nigerianembassy.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=41)> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2012]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the High Commission of Canada in Nigeria, the Consulate General of Nigeria in Atlanta, the Nigerian embassies in London and Washington, and the Nigerian Immigration Service were unsuccessful.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Confidential*; *Africa Research Bulletin*; Al Jazeera; *The Economist*; eoi.net; Nigeria – Consulate General of Nigeria in Atlanta, Embassy of Nigeria in Argentina, Embassy of Nigeria in London, Embassy of Nigeria in Rome, Embassy of Nigeria in Spain, Embassy of Nigeria in Washington; Nigerian Community and Friends in Norway; United Kingdom Border Agency; United States Department of State.

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[Top of Page](#)  
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