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. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

DZA104882.FE  

Algeria: Requirements and procedures for obtaining a birth certificate, an extract of the 12-S birth certificate, and a national identity card, including the regional governments responsible for issuing the documents; whether it is possible to obtain the documents in a city other than the city of birth, and whether it is possible to issue the documents to a representative for the applicant (January-May 2014).

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Government Office Responsible for Extracts From Birth Certificates and Identity Cards

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a lawyer in Algiers stated that the Algerian Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities (Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités locales) is the office responsible for creating and producing extracts of birth certificates, extracts of special 12-S birth certificates, and national identity cards, but that town council applies for and issues extracts of birth certificates, and the daïra (the "sub-prefecture" [AFAD 29 May 2014]) issues identity cards (Lawyer 3 June 2014).

2. Algerian Residents

2.1 Obtaining an Extract of a Birth Certificate

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, an official of the Embassy of Algeria in Ottawa stated that, with respect to Algerians living in Algeria, the extract of a birth certificate is issued [translation] "upon seeing the family record book, without requesting other documents" (Algeria 23 May 2014). Similarly, the lawyer in Algiers indicated that presenting the family record book is sufficient in order to obtain an extract of a birth certificate (4 June 2014). The website of the Algerian Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities states that applicants may obtain an extract of a birth certificate by reporting to the civil registrar or by sending [translation] "a handwritten application by post" (Algeria n.d.g). The site provides the following instructions:

[translation]

Applying in person: applicants must identify themselves and provide any information that will facilitate the search.

Applying by post: applicants must send their applications in a self-addressed, stamped envelope; the application includes the applicant's family name, given name, and date and place of birth, as well as a photocopy of the national identity card. (ibid.)

According to sources, extracts of birth certificates can be picked up in any commune [municipality] because the civil status registries are now linked by a computerized system (ibid. 5 June 2014; Lawyer 4 June 2014; L'Expression 19 Feb. 2014; Algérie-Focus 15 Feb. 2014). According to an article published on 24 August...
2013 by Algérie360, a media source in Algiers, while waiting for the new system to be installed, citizens [translation] "suffer terribly" in order to obtain an extract of a birth certificate (Algérie360 24 Aug. 2013).

An article in Algérie-Focus, an [translation] "independent, participatory and general online Algerian news journal" (Algérie-Focus n.d.) indicates that the Ministry of the Interior announced in February 2014 that the civil status registries are [translation] "interconnected" and the citizens "can, theoretically, pick up extracts of their birth certificates in any commune in the country (ibid. 15 Feb. 2014). According to the article, before the civil status registries were computerized, Algerians were [translation] "sometimes required to travel thousands of kilometres to obtain their original birth certificates" (ibid.). Similarly, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the official from the Embassy of Algeria stated that the computerized system that links the civil registries of communes in Algeria is [translation] "in place" (Algeria 5 June 2014). In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a representative of the Association of Algerian Women for Development (Association des Femmes algériennes pour le Développement, AFAD), an organization that provides psychological and legal support to women in precarious situations in society (BALSAM n.d.), stated that [translation] "since the public powers have made things easier, obtaining civil status documents is no longer the obstacle course it has been in recent years, and many things have improved" (AFAD 29 May 2014). However, she added that the computerized system for civil status documents [translation] "will be operational within about two years" (ibid.). According to the Lawyer, [translation] "the system has been interconnected for a few months but, in practice, the system is not yet operating effectively because it frequently becomes disconnected" (4 June 2014).

A report on irregular migrants in Algeria, written by the Euro-Mediterannean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), a network supported by the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) (EMHRN Dec. 2013), indicates that, "in some cases," irregular migrants are unable to obtain a birth certificate for their children or register them in the civil registry (EMHRN 2013, 12). Further information on the efficiency of the system for obtaining extracts of birth certificates could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. For information on procedures related to changes to birth and marriage documents, please refer to Response to Information Request DZA104843.

2.2 Obtaining an Extract of a Special 12-S Birth Certificate

According to the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities, an extract of the special 12-S birth certificate is an official document that contains information on civil status and assigns each citizen a [translation] "unique national identifying number" (Algeria n.d.c). The official of the Embassy of Algeria stated that the extract of the special 12-S birth certificate is [translation] "issued upon presentation of an ordinary birth certificate, or the family record book and a copy of a piece of identification" (Algeria 23 May 2014). According to the Lawyer, presenting the family record book is sufficient to obtain the 12-S (4 June 2014).

According to two sources, the extract of the special 12-S birth certificate is issued by the birth commune based on the civil status registry of births (Algeria n.d.c; Lawyer 2 June 2014). However, the embassy official stated that the extract of the special 12-S birth certificate [translation]
is designed especially for electronic biometric documents (passport and NIC [national identity card]). It is issued by the civil registrar of the applicant's home commune (birth commune). This document is distinctive because it is issued only once in a person's life, unlike the extract of an ordinary birth certificate. (Algeria 23 May 2014)

Similarly, the Lawyer indicated that the 12-S document is issued only once because [translation] "its only purpose is to be placed in the file to obtain a passport and biometric identity card" (Lawyer 2 June 2014).

According to the Algérie360 article, some communes in the Algiers wilaya (province) are experiencing long delays and have cumbersome procedures, to the point where citizens must travel to obtain the 12-S (Algérie360 24 Aug. 2013). The media source, Le Maghreb, a [translation] "national daily newspaper" (Le Maghreb n.d.), states that obtaining a 12-S birth certificate is [translation] "a terrible ordeal" for Algerians living in Algeria (Le Maghreb 26 May 2014).

2.3 Obtaining a National Identity Card

The official of the Embassy of Algeria stated that [translation] "the national identity card is drawn up by the dairas" (Algeria 23 May 2014). The Lawyer in Algeria stated that the [translation] "application to obtain an identity card can be submitted only to the person's daira where they reside," because each daira has "a special office for providing and collecting identity cards" (2 June 2014). According to the website of the Ministry of the
Interior and Local Communities, the national identity card application file includes the form completed and signed by the applicant or the applicant's legal guardian, in the case of minors, as well as:

[translation]
1. the applicant's extract of the 12-S birth certificate;
2. a nationality certificate, in the case of an initial application;
3. the expired national identity card, in the case of a renewal, along with a birth certificate of the father or mother, or failing that, a death certificate for one of the parents;
4. a certificate of residence dated within the last six (6) months;
5. four (4) recent digital and identical colour identification photos;
6. a revenue receipt or revenue stamp in the amount corresponding to the kind of document requested;
7. a copy of the blood type card. (Algeria n.d.a)

2.4 Obtaining an Electronic Biometric National Identity Card

The website of the Ministry of the Interior indicates that the documents that need to be submitted by applicants 18 years of age or older who reside in Algeria include the form completed and signed by the applicant, as well as:

[translation]
1. the applicant's extract of the special 12-S birth certificate, issued on a special form;
2. an Algerian nationality certificate;
3. a certificate of residence dated within the last three (3) months;
4. a family record of civil status for married individuals;
5. a work certificate or school certificate for students;
6. four (4) recent digital and identical colour identification photos;
7. a revenue receipt or revenue stamp in an amount corresponding to the kind of document requested;
8. a copy of the blood type card. (Algeria n.d.b)

According to the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities, one file is sufficient in order to obtain the electronic biometric identity card and passport: [translation] "an application record is filed during a telephone appointment with the local administrative district, the daïra or the consular service of the place of residence" (Algeria n.d.b). Similarly, the official of the embassy in Ottawa stated that only one file is necessary to apply for the electronic biometric identity card and passport (Algeria 23 May 2014). However, he added that biometric national identity cards [translation] "have not yet been issued," and that as soon as they are, they will replace the card that is currently used (ibid.). Likewise, the AFAD representative indicated that biometric identity cards are not yet in circulation (5 June 2014).

3. Out-of-Country Residents
3.1 Obtaining an Extract of the Birth Certificate

According to the official of the embassy in Ottawa, [translation] "all travel and civil status documents are printed and issued by diplomatic and consular posts to Algerian citizens who are regularly established as out-of-country residents and registered with those posts (23 May 2014). Additional information on the requirements for an Algerian national living abroad to obtain an extract of an ordinary birth certificate could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.2 Obtaining an Extract of a Special 12-S Birth Certificate

According to the website of the Algerian consulate in Brussels, the extract of the special 12-S birth certificate is issued only once for out-of-country residents; the application to obtain the special 12-S birth certificate must be supported by presenting one of the following documents:

[translation]
1. the expired or damaged document
2. a passport expiring within six (6) months
3. a passport containing fewer blank pages
4. a sworn statement for individuals requesting a document for the first time
5. a statement of loss or theft. (Algeria n.d.e)

According to the same source, the terms of issue are:

[translation]

1. Nationals born abroad and living in Algeria can obtain the document from the civil registrar of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Algiers.
2. Nationals born and residing abroad can obtain it from the consulate if their birth was transcribed there.
3. For nationals born in Algeria and residing abroad, applicants have three options:
   a. obtain the certificate from the commune of the place of birth while visiting the country,
   b. draw up a power of attorney, duly completed and reviewed by the consulate, so that a third party in Algeria can obtain it from the applicant's commune of birth,
   c. request an extract of the birth certificate directly from the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities: http://demande12s.interieur.gov.dz. (ibid.)

Similarly, the website of the Embassy of Algeria in Ottawa indicates that Algerian citizens born in Algeria can apply for the 12-S birth certificate

[translation]

- directly from the town council in the place of birth in Algeria, either by the applicant or by a duly appointed third party;
- by Internet at the following website: http://demande12s.interieur.gov.dz;
- by submitting or forwarding the application to the consular service in Ottawa, which will forward it to the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities. (Algeria Dec. 2013)

3.2.1 Applying for and Processing a "12-S Application" Made by Internet

Sources indicate that the government has engaged in efforts to reduce the delays in the procedure for issuing the 12-S abroad (Le Maghreb 26 May 2014; El Watan 26 May 2014). According to sources, the new system for issuing the 12-S birth certificate to Algerian citizens born in Algeria and living abroad (via the website of the Ministry of the Interior) was put in place in May 2014 (ibid.; Le Maghreb 26 May 2014).

According to the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities regarding the special 12-S birth certificate, the steps for processing an application submitted via the website include:

[translation]

The registration consulate must ensure that the applicant is already registered.

- After confirming registration, the application will be visible by the applicant's wilaya of birth and will be forwarded to the commune of birth.
- The commune will draw up the 12-S birth certificate.
- The communes will send all 12-S certificates to their respective wilayas.
- After verification and consolidation, all the wilayas will send all the certificates to the Ministry of the Interior and Local Communities, which will, in turn, send them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sorts and sends the 12-S certificates by country and by consulate.
- The consulate delivers the 12-S birth certificate to the applicant. (Algeria n.d.d)

According to sources, an extract of the 12-S birth certificate is necessary to obtain a biometric passport (Algeria Dec. 2013; Algeria n.d.f). Information on the requirements and procedures to obtain an ordinary or biometric passport from within the country and abroad can be found in Response to Information Request DZA104509.

3.3 Obtaining a National Identity Card
According to the website of the Embassy of Algeria in Ottawa, the "lawfully registered national" may be issued a national identity card or have a card renewed by providing:

- the form issued by our registrar,
- (4) identical and recent passport photos,
- $2 CAN for postage fees,
- the expired identity card. (Algeria n.d.h)

The same source noted that applicants must present themselves at the embassy "when submitting the application and when picking up the card" (Algeria n.d.h).

### 3.4 Obtaining an Electronic Biometric National Identity Card

The website of the Ministry of the Interior indicates that "one file is sufficient to obtain the electronic biometric identity card and passport," and for applicants living abroad, the application includes the form completed and signed by the applicant and:

1. the applicant's extract of the special 12-S birth certificate, issued on a special form;
2. a valid consular registration card;
3. proof of the stay abroad;
4. a work certificate or school certificate for students;
5. four (4) recent digital and identical colour identification photos;
6. a revenue receipt or revenue stamp in the amount corresponding to the kind of document requested;
7. a copy of the blood type card. (Algeria n.d.b)

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the official of the Embassy of Algeria indicated that biometric identity cards have not yet been issued and that applicants who use the form on the website of the Ministry of the Interior for the electronic biometric passport file will be issued an ordinary identity card (10 June 2014).

### 4. Issuing Documents to a Representative for the Applicant

The Lawyer indicated that "the applicant may appoint another person, provided that person has a legalized or notarized power of attorney" (2 June 2014). However, the official of the Embassy of Algeria stated that:

- the person applying for the ordinary or 12-S birth certificate may draw up a legalized power of attorney so that a third party may obtain the civil status documents, in the applicant's name, from the commune of birth, but may not do so for the issuance of a national identity card, which requires the applicant's presence for fingerprinting of the left index finger. (Algeria 23 May 2014)

Nevertheless, in an article published by *El Watan*, a media source, a man who travelled to his wife's birth town to obtain her 12-S certificate, had to present an extract of the 12-S birth certificate, a copy of the identity card, a marriage certificate, a copy of the family record book and a "sworn statement that the applicant has never applied for the 12-S ... despite assurances from the ministry that the procedures have been made easier" (*El Watan* 16 July 2013). Additional information on using a representative to obtain extracts of the birth certificate and identity cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 5. Expiry Date

According to two sources, the extract of the birth certificate expires after one year, the identity card expires after 10 years, and the 12-S does not expire (Lawyer 4 June 2014; Algeria 5 June 2014).

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

Algeria. 10 June 2014. Telephone interview with an official of the Embassy of Algeria in Ottawa.


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Association femmes algériennes pour le développement (AFAD). 5 June 2014. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

_____. 29 May 2014. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.


_____. 16 July 2013. "On vous le dit." (Factiva)


Lawyer, Algiers. 4 June 2014. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

_____. 3 June 2014. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

_____. 2 June 2014. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following officials were unsuccessful: Algeria – embassies in Ottawa and Washington, consulates general in Montreal, New York and Strasbourg; Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités locales; Caritas; France terre d'asile; Ligue Algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme; five lawyers in Algiers.

Internet sites, including: Algeria – embassies in Ottawa, London, Washington, consulates general in Brussels, Montreal, New York, Pontoise, Strasbourg; Algerie1.com; Algeria Press Service; Algeria Times; Assemblée Populaire Commune El Biar; Assemblée Populaire Commune d'Alger; Ecoi.net; El Mujahid; US – Department of State; Freedom House; United Kingdom – Home Office; Journal officiel de la république algérienne démocratique et populaire; Keesing Reference Systems; Le Quotidien D'Algérie; Le Soir d'Algérie; Maghrebia; town council of Alger-Centre; North Africa Journal; UN – Refworld.

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