ISR102452.E

Israel: Availability of fraudulent or illegally obtained identity documents (2005 - 2007)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the availability of fraudulent or illegally obtained identity documents in Israel was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In January 2007, Israeli media reported on the arrest by Jerusalem police of six Arab residents of East Jerusalem and one from the West Bank (Ynetnews 10 Jan. 2007). Those arrested were suspected of operating a network that sold false documents to Jews and Arabs across Israel (ibid.) as well as to Palestinians living in the Palestinian Territories (ibid.; Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007). Among the documents that the suspected forgers sold to hundreds of people (ibid.) were Israeli identification cards, Israeli insurance cards and fake court protocols (ibid.; Ynetnews 10 Jan. 2007) on Arab family reunification cases (Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007). The documents, which in some cases were sold for thousands of shekels [hundreds of Canadian dollars (Canada 11 Apr. 2007)] (Ynetnews 10 Jan. 2007; Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007), were bought from intermediaries who forged the documents in their own homes (ibid.). According to the Jerusalem Post, "[t]housands of forged Israeli documents have been sold to Palestinians in recent years, and police are investigating whether the fake ID cards were used in terrorist attacks" (ibid.).

In April 2006, Haaretz published an article which cited the head of the Interior Ministry's Population Registry, Sasi Katzir, as remarking that Israel has become "a desirable target" for immigrants who use forged documents to immigrate under the Law of Return (26 Apr. 2006). Those arrested were suspected of operating a network that sold false documents to Jews and Arabs across Israel (ibid.) as well as to Palestinians living in the Palestinian Territories (ibid.; Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007). Among the documents that the suspected forgers sold to hundreds of people (ibid.) were Israeli identification cards, Israeli insurance cards and fake court protocols (ibid.; Ynetnews 10 Jan. 2007) on Arab family reunification cases (Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007). The documents, which in some cases were sold for thousands of shekels [hundreds of Canadian dollars (Canada 11 Apr. 2007)] (Ynetnews 10 Jan. 2007; Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 2007), were bought from intermediaries who forged the documents in their own homes (ibid.). According to the Jerusalem Post, "[t]housands of forged Israeli documents have been sold to Palestinians in recent years, and police are investigating whether the fake ID cards were used in terrorist attacks" (ibid.).

In response, the Israeli government has considered equipping its diplomatic missions in the former Soviet Union with devices to be used for fingerprinting and identifying false documents and reviving a plan to establish a 24-member detective unit to catch forgers (ibid.). However, information on the implementation of this plan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

A report on Azerbaijani Day.az Web site states that in 2006, Israeli authorities arrested 17 people for using false documents to prove that they were Jewish (19
Mar. 2007), although this figure could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

A 15 November 2006 article published by the Jerusalem Post revealed that, according to Israeli police, an increasing number of women who are being smuggled into Israel as sex slaves by human traffickers were using forged passports, although further or corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In 30 April 2007 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, an immigration program manager at the Embassy of Canada in Tel Aviv stated that while his office did not possess any intelligence data on the availability and prevalence of fraudulent or illegally obtained Israeli identification documents, the Embassy encountered such documents "extremely rarely" (Canada 30 Apr. 2007). Although he acknowledged the Israeli documents' vulnerability to fraud, he also indicated that the Embassy was "not aware that genuine documents could be obtained improperly as Israel is known to have good controls" (ibid.).

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Canada. 30 April 2007. Embassy of Canada, Tel Aviv. Correspondence from an immigration program manager.


Jerusalem Post. 11 January 2007. Etgar Lefkovits. "Seven Arabs Held for Forging Israeli IDs." (Factiva)

_____ 15 November 2006. Rebecca Anna Stoil. "Rising Prices for Sex Slaves Raises Smugglers' Motivation." (Factiva)


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources, including: The Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Embassy of Israel in Ottawa did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI); Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI); British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); European Country of Origin...
Information Network (ecoi.net); European Union (EU); Freedom House; Global Integrity; Human Rights Watch (HRW); International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; Israeli Embassy in Ottawa; Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC; Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Israeli Ministry of the Interior; United Nations (UN) Security Council; United States Department of State; World News Connection (WNC).
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