Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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. 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.

LBY104666.E

Libya: Identification documents, including national identity cards (NID) and birth certificates; requirements and procedures for obtaining and renewing identity documents, both within the country and abroad; availability of fraudulent documents (2011-November 2013)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. National Identity Numbers (NID) and Cards

The Libya Herald, a Tripoli-based newspaper, reports that the Libyan National Identity Number Department manages identity number projects and identity card projects (Libya Herald 8 February 2013). The same article reported in February 2013 that the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister announced that "over six million new National Identity Numbers have been issued for Libyans" by the National Identity Number Department (ibid.). The article quotes the head of the National Identity Number Department, who states that with this number, "ID cards, driving licenses, passports etc, can now be issued" (ibid.). The Libya Herald reported in May 2013 that the National Identification Number project "[had] furnished 83.2 percent of Libyans with a national ID number" (6 May 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In 2012, the Libya Herald noted that the issue of Libya's exact population is "controversial," and reported that the Central Bank of Libya perceived that, in reference to the Bank's concerns over identity fraud, "there was no definitive official database of Libyans" (3 Mar. 2012). On 8 February 2013 the Libya Herald reported that the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister noted that when gathering information for the National Identity Number, "we started from zero." Libyan Business TV, a business news service which works closely with the National Transition Council and its representatives (2013), reports that the NID system is based on the shattered records of the [Gaddafi] Civil Authority Registry that has proved to have an exaggerated number of unauthenticated family books and records. To make matters even worse, the NID Numbers were issued based on the Civil Authority Registry records without the physical authentication of the Libyan citizen holding that number. (19 Feb. 2013)

1.1. Procedure for Obtaining a NID Number in Libya

Information about how to obtain a NID number in Libya was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. The Libya Herald reports that the head of the National Identity Number Department explained that no citizen is issued with [an identification] number unless their documentation is in order at the Civil Registries. The name, date of birth, sex, and mother's name, for example, must be clear. If there is doubt, people will not be issued a number and will be asked to refer to the Civil Registry. Only when the Civil Registry is happy will a new National Identity Number be issued. (8 Feb. 2013)
In February 2013, the *Libya Herald* reported that numbers will be communicated to Libyans "through SMS and the internet" (ibid.). In May 2013 it noted that "people can check electronically if their ID number has been issued [and] there are several ways to do so, the main information required being the family book registration number and year of birth" (ibid. 6 May 2013).

1.2 Procedure for Obtaining a National ID Card

1.2.1 Obtaining a National ID Card in Libya

Information about procedures for obtaining a national identity card while in Libya could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response, however, related information is provided below.

The *Libya Herald* reports that, under the Gaddafi regime, "Libyans had to visit centres in person with all relevant documentation, have a photograph taken and also submit a DNA sample" (*Libya Herald* 3 Mar. 2012). According to the *Libya Herald*, the old ID cards would have been green and "bearing a picture of the dictator ... [and] carried biometric details, including DNA and blood groups" (ibid. 3 Feb. 2013).

On 18 April 2012, the *Libya Herald* reported that the Passport, Nationality, and Foreign Affairs Office in Sirte had started issuing new identity cards and "so far it had issued ... 2,500 [new] identity cards and renewed more than 4,000 existing identity cards." On 22 July 2012, the *Libya Herald* reported that the Libyan Passport and Nationality Department had opened an office at the University of Sirte to issue and renew identity cards.

1.2.2 Obtaining a National ID Card from Abroad

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate a representative from the Embassy of Libya to Canada in Ottawa stated that a Libyan National Identity Card cannot be given out by the Embassy in Canada and can only be obtained in Libya (15 November 2013). Corroborating information about obtaining a national ID card while abroad could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Birth Certificates

2.1 Obtaining Birth Certificates in Libya

According to the US Department of State Country Reciprocity Schedule for Libya, in order to obtain a birth certificate, "Libyan applicants, or a friend or relative of the applicant, must appear in person at the appropriate municipality office" (US n.d.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.2 Obtaining Birth Certificates from Abroad

The representative from the Embassy of Libya in Ottawa stated that to acquire a new birth certificate in Canada from the Embassy of Libya an applicant must submit:

- an original Canadian birth certificate
- a filled out application form
- the original passport of the mother
- when the mother is not Libyan, a letter from the mother consenting to this process and approved by a notary public is required
- the original passport of the father
- fee = C$ 20 (15 Nov. 2013)

The representative noted that this application can be submitted in person, by email, or by mail to the Embassy of Libya in Ottawa (15 Nov. 2013).

According to the US Department of State Country Reciprocity Schedule for Libya,

To obtain a Libyan birth certificate, non-national applicants must send all pertinent information (including name, date and place of birth, and full names of parents) to their respective Embassy in Tripoli. That Embassy will then make a formal request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain the certificate from the appropriate municipality. (US n.d.)

3. Passports
Libya Business TV reports that on 8 February 2013, the Libyan Deputy Prime Minister announced the new Libyan e-passport (19 Feb. 2013). Security Document World, a web-based news portal providing information on purchasing, manufacturing and integrating security-document centred solutions (2013), reports that the new biometric passport "is based on new national identity numbers" (Security Document World 11 Feb. 2013). The Libya Herald reports that the Bundesbruckerei Gmbh (the German Federal Printing company) had been contracted to produce the biometric passports (Libya Herald 21 July 2013). The Libya Herald states that the creation of a National Identity Number aims to reduce "duplication of passports" (ibid. 8 Feb. 2013). It also reports that "all current old-type passports will remain valid and that the new passports would be phased in gradually" (ibid. 21 July 2013).

Sources report that Bundesbruckerei Gmbh was in its final preparations to release the biometric passport at the end of July 2013 (Biometric Update 22 July 2013; Libya Herald 21 July 2013) and that necessary equipment would be transferred to Tripoli for passport production by Libyan authorities (ibid.).

According to the Libya Herald, the Passport, Nationality, and Foreign Affairs Office in Sirte has "started issuing new passports ... [and] so far it had issued 1,340 new passports" (ibid. 18 Apr. 2012). Corroborating information on whether the biometric passports have been distributed, and on the number of new passports distributed, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Libya Herald indicates that the Gaddafi era passports had green covers, and that new Libyan passports will have a blue cover (ibid.). Sources also indicate the new passports are blue with a gold crescent and star on the front (Biometric Update 22 July 2013; Security Document World 11 Feb. 2013). Corroboration on the physical appearance of passports could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.1 Obtaining a Passport in Libya

On 22 July 2012 the Libya Herald reported that the Libyan Passport and Nationality Department opened an office at the University of Sirte to issue and renew passports.

Information on procedures for obtaining Libyan passports from within Libya could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.2 Obtaining a Passport from Abroad

3.2.1 New Passport Application Procedures

The website of the Libyan Embassy to the United States in Washington, DC, provides electronic consular services and forms to Libyans in the US, including new passport applications and renewal applications (Libya n.d.a). The website states that to apply for a new passport while abroad, an individual is required to provide the nearest Libyan embassy with the following items:

[translation]

Fill out two passport application forms (please complete all of the required sections, particularly the Family Registry Number and the Family Booklet Number.)

Enclose previous passport

Three photographs taken against a light background, i.e. normal passport photos

Family booklet or a copy of the family booklet, or an administrative certificate related to the birth of the applicant issued by Civil Registration in Libya if the previous passport was not provided.

Fees: [US]$30 payable by Money Order

Pre-paid envelope. (Libya n.d.b)

A representative from the Embassy of Libya in Ottawa provided documentation to the Research Directorate which states that to acquire a new passport while abroad in Canada, an individual is required to provide the Embassy of Libya, Consular Section in Ottawa with the following:

1. Fill two forms of passport application
2. Supply of 3 recent photos 3x4cm (name must be authenticated and printed on back of photo which must not be older than 15 days);
3. A true copy of the family booklet of the head of the family;
4. A true copy of the Libyan ID;
5. A true copy of the birth certificate;
6. The old passport must be presented along [with] the application;
7. Processing fees of [C]$45;
8. Prepaid and self addressed return envelop;
9. All documents and materials should be sent to the [Embassy of Libya, Consular Section in Ottawa]. (Libya 15 Nov. 2013)

The representative noted that this application can be submitted in person, by email, or by mail to the Embassy of Libya in Ottawa (ibid.).

3.2.2 Additional Procedures for Children

The website of the Libyan Embassy in Washington, DC, indicates that in addition to the regular application procedures listed above, for children born in the US to acquire a new Libyan passport, families are required to provide the following items to that Embassy:

[translation]
- original birth certificate for children born in the United States
- father's passport if the Family Booklet is not available
- original certificate of marriage between the father and the mother if the Family Booklet is not available
- photocopy of the mother's passport whether the mother is a Libyan citizen or not. (n.d.b)

3.2.3 Passport Renewal Procedures

The website of the Libyan Embassy in Washington, DC, stated that to renew a Libyan passport while abroad, an individual is required to provide the following to that Embassy:

[translation]
- Fill out two passport renewal application forms
- Fill out one registration form for Libyans living abroad
- Enclose your previous passport to be renewed
- Two 4x6 cm photographs
- Fees: [US]$20 payable by Money Order. No personal cheques and no cash are accepted. Only Money Order payable to Libya Embassy.
- Pre-paid return envelope with tracking number. (n.d.c)

A representative from the Embassy of Libya in Ottawa provided documentation to the Research Directorate which states that to renew a Libyan passport while in Canada, an applicant must submit:

- a completed renewal form;
- a 4x6 cm colour picture; and
- a fee of C$ 40. (15 Nov. 2013)

The representative noted that this process goes more quickly and is easier to get than a new passport (ibid.).

4. Family Booklet

In a 24 May 2012 article, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), the United Nations’ (UN) humanitarian news service, reported that the "main proof of citizenship" in Libya is the family booklet, "in which all members of the family are listed and which is presented when applying for jobs, university studies and scholarships, or when taking out a loan from the bank." The Carter Center, a human rights and democracy NGO active in 70 countries and founded by the former US President Jimmy Carter, (Carter Center n.d), indicates that "[a] family book, issued by the government, is a consolidated document to record marriages, births, and deaths for the family" (ibid. 7 July 2012, 26). The World Food Programme indicated in a 2011 report on food security in Libya that the booklet enables Libyan families to purchase subsidized food rations at cooperatives and stores where they are registered (UN April 2011, 14). Sources also report that the family booklet is required for voter registration (African Union 2012, 7; Carter Center 7 July 2012, 26).

5. Marriage Certificates
According to the undated US Department of State Country Reciprocity Schedule for Libya, in order to obtain a marriage certificate, non-national applicants must follow the same procedures as for birth certificates. Libyan applicants, or a friend or relative of the applicant, must appear in person at the appropriate Sharia (Moslem religious) court. (n.d)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

6. Identity Document Issues Encountered by Particular Groups in Libya

Refugees International (RI), an independent organization focused on "lifesaving assistance and protection for displaced people" (RI n.d), and the Center for Civilians in Conflict, an NGO that works to "make warring parties more responsible to civilians before, during, and after armed conflict" (Center for Civilians in Conflict n.d), note in a 2011 joint field report on the protection of vulnerable minorities in Libya that sub-Saharan Africans in Libya "have been robbed of all their money and possessions, including identity cards and passports" (RI 8 Nov. 2011).

Sources report that Tuareg and Tebu [also spelled Tabu] populations in Libya have difficulty accessing and obtaining identity documents (AI 23 April 2012; UN 24 May 2012). The Oxford University Department of International Development, in a 2012 conference report about the impacts of the Arab Spring on forced migration, writes that

the Tuareg and Tebu populations in southern Libya struggle with issues of citizenship and statelessness, respectively. The Tuareg do not have sufficient identity and status documentation, and experience increasing levels of marginalisation according to whether they have passports, government issued identification documents, birth certificates, or no form of identification. The Tebu have had their citizenship withdrawn, have no documentation, and therefore enjoy no state rights. (Oxford 20 Mar. 2012)

Similarly, on 23 April 2012, Amnesty International (AI) reported that the Tebu people have "been refused the renewal of their identification documents, driving licenses and passports." IRIN reports that "thousands of non-Arabs like Tuaregs have no official documentation attesting to their citizenship... those who settled in the country 40 or 50 years ago were denied family booklet[s] and possess neither Libyan nor any other citizenship" (UN 24 May 2012). The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) reports that there is an "issue of identity of some people in the South that perceive themselves as Libyans but do not have proper identity documents" (25 November 2012).

7. Fraudulent Documents

Information about fraudulent documents in Libya was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Libya Herald reports that the previous regime "had a major problem with identity fraud," citing the Central Bank of Libya's concern over the "presence of forgeries in the blue-coloured family books issued," and that during the "dying days" of the regime, Gaddafi's administration "purportedly distributed thousands of Libya identity cards and passports to non-Libyans in an effort to gain numerical and military support" (Libya Herald 3 Mar. 2012). The Libya Herald reported in January 2013 that the Interior Minister indicated that "there are many fraudulent passports in circulation, especially outside Libya" (ibid. January 31, 2013). 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


Libya. 15 November 2013. Embassy of Libya to Canada, Ottawa. Telephone interview with a representative.


<http://www.libyaherald.com/2013/05/06/new-id-numbers-issued-to-over-80-percent-of-population/#axzz2jJOhR4MX> [Accessed 6 May 2013]

Oxford University. 20 March 2012. Aya Bonfiglio, Department of International Development. The Arab Spring and Beyond: Human Mobility, Forced Migration, and Institutional Responses.
<http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/rsc-reports/wr-arab-spring-beyond-120612.pdf> [Accessed 4 Nov. 2013]


### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral source:** Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Canada – Embassy to Libya in Tripoli; International Organization for Migration; Libya – Consulate in Washington, Embassy to Canada, Embassy to the United States; UN – High Commission for Refugees

**Internet sites, including:** Canada – Embassy to Libya; Factiva; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Organization for Migration; Libya – Civil Registry Authority, Civil Status Department, Consulate to France, Consulate to the United States, Embassy to the United States; *The Tripoli Post*; UK – Country of Origin Information Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; UN – High Commission for Refugees, Refworld, Reliefweb, Support Mission to Libya; US – Department of State, Office of Personnel Management. The following websites were not functional: www.egov2012.ly; Libya – Civil Registry Authority; www.gov.ly. Attempts to locate the following websites were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Libya – Civil Status Department, National Identity Numbers Department.