Responses to Information Requests

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SLE105365.E

Sierra Leone: Appearance of national identity cards, including description of security features (2000-November 2015)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Background

   In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the National Registration Secretariat (NRS), the government body which issues Sierra Leonean identity cards (Sierra Leone 2008), stated that the current version of the national identity card was introduced in August 2009 (ibid. 18 Nov. 2015). According to the same source, since August 2009, the previous version of the card was no longer being issued and is no longer valid (ibid.). Two government sources indicate that the appearance of the identity card has only changed once since 2000 (ibid.; ibid. 16 Nov. 2015).

   In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Sierra Leone in Brussels indicated that the validity period of the national identity card is five years (16 Nov. 2015). The official at the NRS indicated that the identity card is valid for five
years for citizens of Sierra Leone (18 Nov. 2015). For residents who are not citizens of Sierra Leone, the national identity card is valid for one year (ibid.).

Sources indicate that there are no variations of the identity card (ibid.; ibid. 16 Nov. 2015).

2. Description and Appearance of the Card
2.1 Information Contained on the Card

The official at the NRS indicated that the current identity card is laminated, has a green background, and contains the following information:

- Date of birth of the card holder;
- Place of birth of the card holder;
- Date of issue;
- Expiry date;
- Unique identification number [made of the abbreviation "SL" followed by eight digits];
- Signature of the card holder;
- Sex of the card holder;
- Signature of the Chief Registrar (on the back of the card);
- Civil status (either citizen or foreign resident) of the card holder (on the back of the card);
- District of residence (on the back of the card); and
- Social Security number of the card holder if the card holder has one (on the back) (ibid. 18 Nov. 2015).

The official at the Embassy of Sierra Leone in Brussels added that there is a picture of the card holder on the card, and a smaller copy of the picture on the back of the card and indicated that the identity card is approximately the size of a regular credit card, made of hard plastic and does not contain the address of the card holder (17 Nov. 2015).

2.2 Security Features of the National Identity Card

The official at the NRS provided the following details about the main security features of the identity card:

- A circle with the inscription "SL" in the middle and the coat of arms of Sierra Leone, features that have "a silver-like shining reflection" visible with the naked eye and prominent when exposed to light;
- A map of Sierra Leone with a copy of the card holder's picture in the centre;
- Another circle outside the map of Sierra Leone with the inscription "SL", the background colour of which varies according to the card holder's status (red for citizens, blue for residents from an ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States - country, green for residents from a non-ECOWAS African country, and white for residents from a non-African country);
The coat of arms of Sierra Leone on the bottom right side;  
The flag of Sierra Leone above the picture of the card holder;  
A barcode containing the card holder's personal information (on the back of the card); and  
The "Cotton Tree of Freetown" [1] in blue print (on the back of the card) (ibid. 18 Nov. 2015).

A sample of the current version of the national identity card was sent to the Research Directorate by the official at the NRS and is attached to 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.

Note

[1] The Cotton Tree of Freetown is a tree located in the centre of Freetowns's old town and is considered "Freetown's most famous landmark" (Lonely Planet n.d.).

References


Sierra Leone. 18 November 2015. National Registration Secretariat. Telephone interview with an official.


Additional Sources Consulted


Internet sites, including: EdisonTD; European Union – Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online (PRADO); Factiva; My Sierra Leone Online; Sierra Herald; Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation; Sierra Leone Live; Sierra Leone News; Sierra Leone
Attachment


Date modified:
2018-06-25