

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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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](#).

26 May 2016

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Egypt: Information on national identity cards, including appearance; requirements and procedures to obtain the card, and whether documents required to apply for a card can be obtained by a proxy (2010-June 2016)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

According to a 2014 report by a European Union (EU) election observation mission, which explains national identity and voting laws in Egypt, Law 143/1994 on Civil Status states that each citizen must apply for an identity card within six months of turning 16 years of age (EU 26/27 May 2014, 17). Sources report that failure to show an identity card immediately upon request by authorities is punishable by a fine of 100 to 200 Egyptian Pounds (EGP) [approximately C\$14.75 to C\$29.50] (ibid.; Human Rights Watch 2007). Sources indicate that the Ministry of Interior's Civil Status Department is responsible for issuing national identity cards (ibid.; Lawyer 16 May 2016).

According to Amnesty International (AI), mandatory official identification documents are required in order to enrol in educational institutions, gain employment, access medical treatment and open bank accounts (AI Oct. 2013, 6). The US Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2016 *Annual Report* similarly states that, in Egypt, without an identity card, it is not possible to conduct daily transactions such as banking, school registration, or owning a vehicle or a home (2016). A 2012 article by the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reports that identity cards are required to obtain state medical insurance and to obtain ration cards that permit citizens to buy food more cheaply (UN 18 July 2012).

According to the 2014 EU report on Egyptian elections, since 2011, the Egyptian voter database is based on the Civil Register, listing only citizens who hold a national identity card (May 26/27 2014, 17). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Appearance and Security Features

Two samples of the Egyptian national identity card, including security features, are attached to this Response (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2). Two lawyers based in Egypt stated that there is only one type of national identity card issued in Egypt (Attorney 14 May 2016; Lawyer 16 May 2016). According to Keesing Reference Systems, the type of Egyptian national identity card identified in Attachment 2 was first issued in the year 2000 (n.d.). Sources report that the validity period for the national identity card is seven years (Attorney 14 May 2016; Lawyer 16 May 2016; EFRR 16 May 2016), from the date of issue (ibid.).

3. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain a National Identity Card

3.1 From Within Egypt, Including Use of a Proxy to Obtain a Card

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a lawyer based in Cairo provided the following information regarding the procedure to apply for a national identity card from within Egypt:

An applicant must [go] to the Ministry of Interior's Civil Status department head office in Cairo, any of its offices located in each district in each city, or police stations. The regular application costs EGP 20 [approximately C\$2.95] and [processing takes] 15 working days, while the expedited application costs EGP 80 [about C\$11.82] and [processing takes] 4 working days. (Lawyer 16 May 2016)

The attorney stated that in order to obtain a card, a person must fill out the official application form, pay a fee of 85 EGP [approximately C\$12.85], present their identity documents, and go to "any personal status department in Egypt" in order to have a photograph taken (Attorney 14 May 2016). He further explained that the applicant can submit their completed application at any police station in Egypt which has a personal status department [civil status department], but that not all police stations have these departments (ibid.).

The lawyer indicated that the documents required to obtain a national identity card are:

- Birth certificate ([which] can be extracted from any civil status office [for] EGP 10 [approximately C\$1.45]);
- Old ID card [if applicable];
- Proof of ownership of property (this can be through Electricity/gas/ water bill in the applicant's name) or lease agreement, with date authenticated [by a] Notary Public, of the residence to be put in the ID. In case the applicant lives with his parents or relatives and wants to put their address in his ID, they also must attend to declare such;
- Certificate proving the academic qualification (in this case the occupancy that will be written in the ID will be "hold bachelor in ") or letter from the syndicate that the applicant belongs to or the syndicate's stamp on the ID application (in this case the [occupation] that will be written in the ID will be "free-lance lawyer/ doctor/ engineer/ etc."), or from the current employer to put such on the ID (in this case the [occupation] that will be written in the ID will be "employer at. ... ");
- If married, original copy of the marriage certificate must be submitted;
- In case of renewing the ID, only the old ID and the application are needed unless new data [needs to be added]. (Lawyer 16 May 2016)

According to the Attorney, the documents required for the application for an identity card are a birth certificate, a residential electricity receipt, and a marriage contract, if applicable (14 May 2016).

Regarding the use of a proxy on the behalf of the applicant, the lawyer explained that when applying from within Egypt,

in the case of issuing the identity card for the first time, the applicant must attend in person for submission. However, in the case of renewing [or] replacing a lost identity card, a [power of attorney] specifically empowering the other to apply for and receive IDs from [the] civil status department can be used. (Lawyer 16 May 2016)

Similarly, two sources stated that when a person applies for a new identity card, the applicant must appear in person when applying in Egypt, in order to have a photograph taken (Attorney 14 May 2016; EFRR 16 May 2016). The attorney indicated that, other than the first instance of applying for an identity card and having the photo taken, a lawyer can be used by the applicant to present and receive documents through a power of attorney (14 May 2016). Without providing details, he also stated that a person can apply online for a card renewal "in some cases" (ibid.).

3.2 From Abroad

According to a 2011 news release from the Embassy of Egypt in Ottawa, published on the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, the following are the "papers and requirements for issuance or renewal of the National ID card:"

1. Completing the "Request for issuance of a National ID card" application form. This form shall be available at the venues where the delegation will be providing the service at a cost of \$75 CAD.
2. Applicants should present a valid Egyptian photo ID (Passport, Driving license, Personal ID, Family ID). In the event that such valid photo IDs are not available, applicant may present an expired ID subject to the presence of a relative (up to third degree) and the presentation by this relative of a written attestation to the accuracy of the information in the expired document, OR

in the event that this is also not possible, applicants may present a translated and notarized copy of their Canadian ID documents.

3. For applicants wishing to indicate an Egyptian residential address in their ID card: They would be required to present an Egyptian ID document (Egyptian Passport - Personal or family ID card - Drivers License), or a utility bill (electric - water - natural gas) or a lease/rent contract.
4. For applicants wishing to indicate a Canadian residential address in their ID card: They would be required to present a legalized copy of their Passport or Permanent residence card.
5. In order to prove marital status (married- divorced - widowed) applicants would be required to present the appropriate Egyptian document (marriage contract - divorce ruling - death certificate of spouse) OR an official notarized translation of the relevant Canadian documents.

The Embassy further wishes to inform that the actual issuance of National ID cards takes place in Cairo and takes approximately 8 weeks, after which cards will be ready either for pick up in person, or delivery by courier in which case applicants are requested to provide a pre-paid self-addressed envelope at time of submission of papers. (Egypt 25 Sept. 2011)

The lawyer provided the following information regarding the procedures and requirements to apply for a national identity card from abroad:

There are no differences between the documents needed in Egypt and abroad. However, any document submitted in any language [other] than Arabic, must be translated [by] official translation to Arabic. The applicant also must attend ... the Egyptian Consulate. The applicant must also submit to the Consulate a valid passport with a valid residency in the hosting country. The fees vary from one country to another; in Canada it costs CAD 80. (Lawyer 16 May 2016)

4. Religion and Compulsory Military Service

Sources report that identity cards identify a person's religious affiliation (Human Rights Watch 2007; AI Oct. 2013; EFRR 19 May 2016). AI states that national identity cards only permit individuals to identify as Muslim, Christian, or Jewish; however, since 2009, authorities have applied a policy to issue "individuals whose religious beliefs are not recognized by the State with identification cards with dashes ("-") to indicate they do not belong to the three categories listed above" (AI Oct. 2013, 6). The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010* notes that "some Bahai have obtained national identification cards with a 'dash' for religion" (US 4 Aug. 2011, 20). According to sources, members of the Bahai community encounter difficulties obtaining identity cards (UN 18 July 2012; US 15 Apr. 2016, 26-27), "because the government did not recognize Bahai marriages as legitimate" (ibid.). Further information on how a person's religion is registered on the card could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Country Reports 2015 states that Egyptian national identity cards indicate completion of military service (US 15 Apr. 2016, 26). However, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights (EFRR), an organization that promotes the legal protection of asylum seekers in Egypt (EFRR n.d.), explained that status of military service completion is not written on the identity card, but that information about a person's military service status is accessible from the person's identity number, which is written on the card (ibid. 19 May 2016).

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

Amnesty International (AI). October 2013. *Egypt - Submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 51st Session, November 2013*. <http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1384438447_int-cescr-ngo-egy-15542-e.pdf> [Accessed 18 May 2016]

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United Nations (UN). 18 July 2012. Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN). "No ID No Services." <http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/222381/329804_en.html> [Accessed 18 May 2015]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Canada – Global Affairs; Egypt – Civil Status Organization, Embassy in Ottawa, Embassy in Washington, Government Services Portal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights; six law firms based in Egypt.

Internet sites, including: ecoi.net; Egypt – Civil Status Organization, Consulate General in Montreal, Embassies in Ottawa and Washington, Government Services Portal, Ministry of Interior; European Union – Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online; Minority Rights Group International; United Nations – Refworld.

Attachments

1. Edison TD. N.d. "National Identity Card." <<http://www.edisontd.net/>> [Accessed 19 May 2016]

2. Keesing Reference Systems. N.d. "Egypt - Domestic Identity Card." <<http://www.documentchecker.com/>> [Accessed 19 May 2016]

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