

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#)

> [Research Program](#)

> Responses to Information Requests

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](#).

24 September 2013

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Iran: The National Identity Card, including requirements and procedures to obtain the card within the country as well as from abroad; whether the card has replaced the shenasnameh; whether fraudulent cards exist (2012-September 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. National Identity Card of Iran

The Personal Status Registration Organization (PSRO), a department within the Ministry of Interior of Iran, published a booklet of information on the PSRO and its activities (Iran n.d.a, Table of Contents, 12-13). According to the publication, "National ID cards, also known as ID number or social security number is a unique number ... allocated to any individuals with [an Iranian] birth certificate [called the *Shenasnameh* (ibid., 13)]" (ibid., 36). The same publication states that Iranian National Identity Cards are issued by the PSRO headquarters to "all persons over 15 years" of age, are valid for 7 years, and contain "personal data, national ID number and postal code" (ibid., 27). According to Keesing Reference Systems, Iranian domestic identity cards are "mandatory from the age of 15" and are valid for 7 years (n.d.).

According to the website of Middle East Consultancy Services (MECS), a research firm operating since 2000 and whose main objective is "to provide informed, impartial and balanced research and analysis" on the Middle East and North Africa (n.d.),

"[e]ach national ID card contains a ten digit ID number which is exclusive to each card holder" and individuals can be traced and identified by their ten digit ID number (MECS 9 Sept. 2012a). The website also notes that the national ID cards are issued by the "Individuals Registry Office" (ibid.), which is part of the Ministry of the Interior (MECS 9 Sept. 2012b).

The PSRO publication indicates that the national ID card "is the basis of identity" and is required by law to "benefit from public and state-owned services," while at the same time noting that "presently, the card is only used for identification and confirmation of identity and lacks the characteristics for receiving services" (Iran n.d.a, 36, 39). Without providing further details, the publication also notes that the government of Iran intends to replace the national ID card with a smart national identity card which would store biometric data and a digital signature in addition to the data already contained in national ID card (ibid., 39, 40).

The *Iran Daily* newspaper reported on 3 January 2011 that "the first national smart cards have been issued." The article reported that according to Mohammad Nazemi-Ardekani, head of the Personal Record Registration Organization, 10,000 people in Qom were given smart ID cards as part of a pre-pilot program, that the pilot program intends to distribute one million smart ID cards in Qom, and followed that, smart ID cards will be issued to the rest of the country (*Iran Daily* 3 Jan. 2011). The article also quoted Mohammad Nazemi-Ardekani as saying that "[b]y the end of the Fifth Development Plan (2010-2015) and that all people

of the country will receive smart national cards" and "that considering the system used in national smart cards, it will not be possible to forge the cards" (ibid.).

Further information on plans to issue smart cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Whether the National Identity Card Has Replaced the Shenاسنامه

On 24 September 2013, a representative of UNHCR provided information through correspondence with the Research Directorate reporting that "[t]he National ID Card does not replace the birth certificate (Shenasnameh), but the electronic Birth Certificate (Shenasnameh) replaced the non-electronic one".

The MECS website observes that Iranian nationals must have a national ID card and a birth certificate [called Shenاسنامه (9 Sept. 2012b)] (9 Sept. 2012a). An article posted on *The Guardian* website about an art project using old national identification documents found outside of the National Civil Registrations Organization reported that

[b]efore their replacement with more modern ID cards, Iranian identification documents consisted of four-page birth certificates issued without photographs. A holder was required to add a photograph to the document before using it for various legal purposes (*The Guardian* 13 January 2013).

According to the PSRO booklet, a birth certificate is a document kept by the PSRO which registers the birth of an infant and includes the following information: name and surname of the infant, place and date of birth, gender, information relating to the parents including their names and residences, and the witness to the birth or physician's certificate, (Iran n.d.a, 25). Following the registration of the birth of an infant, the PSRO issues an identity document to the Iranian national (ibid., 26). The identity document is a booklet containing information such as "personal particulars, particulars of parents, place and date of birth, a place for registration of marriage, divorce and death information" (ibid.). Identity documents of Iranians under the age of 15 do not contain the pages for marriage and divorce registration, nor do they have a picture (ibid.).

2. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain the Card within Iran

The website of the Embassy of the Republic of Iran in the Netherlands indicates that the National ID card is issued to all Iranians 15 years of age and over in the following situations:

- Applying for a first National ID card;
- Need for replacement for consistency with recently modified Birth Certificate personal details (name, surname, ...);
- Need for replacement due to change in address residence;
- placement for a lost National ID Card;
- Replacement for a damaged National ID Card;
- Expiry of old National ID card (Iran n.d.e).

2.1 Replacement of an ID Card

The National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR) of the Ministry of the Interior website provides information on replacement of ID cards and the issuing of duplicate ID cards, however it does not specify whether the term "ID card" refers to the National ID card or the Shenاسنامه (Iran n.d.b; Iran n.d.c).

According to the website, an ID card can be replaced in the following cases:

- replacement of the "Old Version Identity Cards";
- replacement of a "New Version Identity Card" that is worn out;
- replacement of an ID card following a judicial or administrative decision;
- renewal of an ID card for individuals once they reach 30 years of age in order to replace their photo;
- replacement of the ID card for individuals once they reach 15 years of age (Iran n.d.b).

The website further states that in order to obtain a new identity card, an individual must sign an "ID Card Replacement Certificate (Form No. 1)," which can be requested from the Personal Registration Department (Iran n.d.b). Individuals 18 years of age and older and individuals under 18 years of age who have a "Growth Award" ["Judgement of Maturity" (Iran n.d.g; Iran n.d.h)] may request and sign the certificate themselves (Iran n.d.b). The following people may request and sign the certificate on behalf of another:

- the father or paternal grandfather of a child under the age of 18, provided that his identity card is submitted;

- the mother of a child under the age of 18, provided that she is married to the father of the child and that her identity card is submitted;
- the "legal guardian (guardian, trustee, administrator) of minor and incapacitated persons," along with the relevant documents attesting their legal guardianship (ibid.).

According to the same source, the following documents are required in order to replace an ID card:

1. Original identity card;
 2. Three pieces of 3 x 4 full face front view recent photos (for persons aged 15 years and over);
 3. Payment of the relevant expense in accordance with the current tariff;
 4. If the ID Card which is going to be replaced has no photo, it is mandatory to present original and copy of valid documents affixed with photo such as (passport, military service completion or exemption card, driving licence, transcript of grades affixed with the holder's photo for junior high school and above programs, letter of introduction affixed with photo issued by the relevant school for the students who are studying, or identity card affixed with photo for the employees of government departments while mentioning civil particulars). Meanwhile, the original document shall be returned after conformity of the original and copy of the above mentioned valid documents.
- Civilian employees or businessmen (holding business licence) may verify the holder's identification through endorsement of the photos (ibid.).

2.2 Issuance of a Duplicate ID Card

The NOCR website also provides information on the issuance of a duplicate ID card in the event the card is lost or stolen (Iran n.d.c). The same people that can request a replacement ID card can also sign "Form No. 2," requesting the issuance of a duplicate identity card on behalf of the bearer (ibid.). The following documents must be submitted in support of the application for a duplicate ID card:

- The completed and notarized "Testimony/Affidavit Form [...] (Form No.3)";
- For those over 15 years of age, two recent photos with the personal details of the individual written on the back;
- The original and a copy of a document with the same photo [the same as listed above at number 4 for the replacement ID card], however if none of those documents can be provided, the police will verify the photo of the individual;
- The original and a copy of any "marriage certificate or divorce bill", as well as the ID cards of the children;
- Proof that the sum of [Rials] 100,000/- [approximately C\$4 (XE 19 September 2013)] for a first lost/stolen card or [Rials] 200,000/- [approximately C\$8 (XE 19 September 2013)] for any subsequent requests, was paid to the Bank Melli Iran in favour of the PSRO (Iran n.d.c.).

Applicants requesting a replacement or duplicate identity card are instructed to submit the completed form and necessary documents to the State Personal Status Registration Department during their office hours (Iran n.d.b; Iran n.d.c). The individual does not have to submit their request for a replacement or duplicate ID card to the location where their original ID card was issued as the receiving location will forward it to the correct location for processing and issuance of the new ID card (Iran n.d.b; Iran n.d.c).

3. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain the ID Card from Abroad

3.1 National ID Card

According to the website of the NOCR, Iranians abroad who are more than 15 years of age can either approach a consulate or mail the required documents to the consulate in order to obtain a National ID Card (Iran n.d.d). The requirements to obtain a National ID Card while residing abroad are as follows:

1. To fill out application form for National ID Card specific to Iranians Abroad
2. A certified copy of first and last pages of ID card (if any remarks)
3. Two newly taken photos (endorsed)
4. To pay the related charge according to the current tariff (ibid.).

Similarly, the website of the Iranian Embassy in the Netherlands notes that in order to obtain a National ID Card, an individual must come in person to the Embassy with the following: the completed application form, the original and a photocopy of their Shenاسنامه, two recent photos with their personal details on the back,

and payment for consular fees (Iran n.d.e). The website of the General Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Frankfurt specifies similar requirements (Iran n.d.f).

3.2 Replacement ID Card

The NOCR website also provides information on the replacement of "ID cards" and the issuing of duplicate ID cards for Iranians living abroad, without specifying whether the term "ID card" refers to the National ID card or the Shenاسنامه (Iran n.d.g; Iran n.d.h). With regard to the replacement of the ID card for Iranians abroad, the NOCR observes that the ID can be replaced in the same circumstances as for those living in Iran, can be requested by the same individuals as for those living in Iran, with the exception of the mother of a child under the age of 18, and requires two recent photos (Iran n.d.g).

3.3 Issuance of Duplicate ID Card

According to the information on the NOCR website regarding the issuance of a duplicate ID card to Iranians living abroad in the event theirs is lost or stolen, the procedures and required documents to obtain the duplicate ID card are the same as those described above for Iranians residing in Iran, however the NOCR website does not specify the amount of the fee to be paid (Iran n.d.h).

Individuals should bring their request for a replacement or duplicate ID card, along with the required documents, to a consulate abroad or an NOCR department in Iran (Iran n.d.g). An individual does not have to submit his or her request for a replacement or duplicate ID card to the location where their original ID card was issued, as the receiving location will forward it to the correct location for processing and issuance of the new ID card (Iran n.d.g; Iran n.d.h).

The website of the General Consulate in Frankfurt includes additional requirements for the replacement and issuance of a duplicate ID card, including: additional copies of some documents, a German permanent residence document, and the payment of consular fees (Iran n.d.i; Iran n.d.j).

4. Prevalence of Fraudulent National Identity Cards

Information on the prevalence of fraudulent national identity cards 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.

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Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful: Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Embassy of Pakistan in the United States; Radio Zamaneh Foundation; UNHCR in Turkey.

Internet sites, including: Australia – Department of Citizenship and Immigration; Denmark – Danish Immigration Service; ecoi.net; Factiva; Fars News Agency; Iran – Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Embassy of Pakistan in the United States, National Portal of Iran; Iranian Students' News Agency; Islamic Republic News Agency; Norway – Country of Origin Information Centre, Landinfo; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Tehran Times; United Kingdom – Home Office; United Nations – Refworld, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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[Top of Page](#)

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