

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](#).

1 October 2014

ETH104950.E

Ethiopia: Appearance of identity cards and birth certificates issued in Addis Ababa, including description of features, variation in appearance, and issuing authorities (2012-2014)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview of the Administration of Addis Ababa

Information posted on the website of the government of Ethiopia indicates that there are nine national regional states in Ethiopia and two administrative states (or chartered cities); Addis Ababa City administration is one of the two administrative states (Ethiopia n.d.b). The same source indicates that the national regional states and administrative states are further divided into approximately 800 woredas [districts] and 15,000 kebeles [neighbourhoods] (ibid.). The capital city of Addis Ababa consists of 6 zones, 28 woredas and 328 kebeles (dwelling associations) (ibid. n.d.a). The language of Addis Ababa's city administration is Amharic (ibid.). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Canada in Addis Ababa said that there are 10 "sub-cities" in Addis Ababa (Canada 17 Sept. 2014).

2. Overview of Identity Cards Issued Throughout Ethiopia

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Ottawa indicated that there is no identity card issued at the national level, except for passports (Ethiopia 22 Sept. 2014). The Ethiopian official explained that instead, all the regional governments, which use different languages such as Oromifa, Amharic, Somali, Tigregna and English, have their own identification cards, including Kebele cards (ibid.). According to the US Department of State's Country Reciprocity Schedule, identity cards in Ethiopia are issued by kebeles to people 18 years and older but there is "no uniform identification document" (US n.d.).

3. Identity Cards Issued in Addis Ababa

The Canadian embassy official explained that as of 2012, all ID cards in Addis Ababa have been standardized and contain the same information, but vary in colour (Canada 17 Sept. 2014). The Canadian official said that the word "Kebele" has been replaced by "Woreda" on the card (ibid.). Similarly, according to information last updated on its website on 22 July 2011, the Addis Ababa Government Acts and Civil Status Document Registration Office is responsible for registering residents of the city and issuing them resident ID cards, which are provided to residents at the woreda level (Ethiopia 22 July 2011).

The Canadian official provided the Research Directorate with samples of the Addis Ababa City Administration Woreda Residents ID Card (including a translation), which are attached to this Response. Based on the translation provided by the Canadian official, information contained on the card includes: the individual's full name; woreda; kebele; "H.No.;" mother's full name; telephone number; date of birth; place of

birth; sex; ethnicity; occupation; a sealed photo; the name of a person to be called in case of an accident; the date of issue; the name of the person who issued the card; and a signature (Canada 17 Sept. 2014).

The ID card also contains the following notice on the back of the card: [translation]

1. If you found this ID card please return it to the above mentioned address or to the concerned city administration
2. The resident should always hold this ID card
3. When the resident vacate[s] from the Kebele he/she should retu[r]n the ID [card].
4. This ID shall be valid for 2 years starting from the issue date. (ibid.)

The Canadian official also noted that there is an emblem on the ID cards which is the same emblem on Addis Ababa birth certificates (ibid. 18 Sept. 2014).

According to the official, the ID cards are printed with a desk printer and the stamps on the cards are "actual stamps" rather than prints of stamps (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Regarding the authentication of stamps on ID cards, the Ethiopian official said:

The validity of the stamps or seals will be verified by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Department of Foreign Affairs before these documents have been brought abroad. Then they have to be presented to respective Embassies or Consulate Generals, in foreign countries, for authentication. (Ethiopia 22 Sept. 2014)

The same source noted that regional identity cards, such as kebele cards, are not accepted by the embassy as a document proving Ethiopian nationality for the issuance of passports (ibid.).

4. Birth Certificates Issued in Addis Ababa

The Ethiopian official said that regional governments issue their own birth certificates (ibid.). According to its website, the Addis Ababa Government Acts and Civil Status Document Registration Office registers vital events of residents of Addis Ababa, including births, and provides residents with legal documents or certificates (Ethiopia 22 July 2011).

The Canadian official provided the Research Directorate with a sample of a birth certificate issued in Addis Ababa, which is attached to this Response. The birth certificate is bilingual, and the English information on the sample birth certificate includes the following: the title City Government of Addis Ababa Ethiopia Birth Certificate; the certificate number and a "CSR No.;" the individual's photo; full name; date of birth; place of birth; sex; nationality; father's name and nationality; mother's name and nationality; date of issue; and a signature of an "Officer of Civil Status" (Canada 17 Sept. 2014). According to the Canadian official, the birth certificates follow a standard format, except the seal and signatory of the officers differ from one sub-city to another (ibid.). The Canadian official further explained that the birth certificates "are in a form of a frame, yellowish colour with a pattern" and contain an emblem on the top of the paper (ibid. 18 Sept. 2014).

The Canadian official noted that the birth certificates are printed with a desk printer and that the stamps are "actual stamps" rather than printed stamps (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Regarding the authentication of stamps on birth certificates, the Ethiopian official said:

The validity of the stamps or seals will be verified by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Department of Foreign Affairs before these documents have been brought abroad. Then they have to be presented to respective Embassies or Consulate Generals, in foreign countries, for authentication. (Ethiopia 22 Sept. 2014)

The Canadian official also noted that all 10 sub-cities within Addis Ababa provide birth certificates from the Addis Ababa City Government (Canada 18 Sept. 2014). However, the Addis Ababa Government Acts and Civil Status Document Registration Office indicates that the service of registering births is carried out at the woreda level (Ethiopia 22 July 2011).

The Ethiopian official said that their embassy accepts birth certificates as a document showing Ethiopian nationality, but that they must be authenticated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ibid. 22 Sept. 2014). Similarly, the Canadian official said that the Canadian consular section generally requires "a certified birth certificate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to process passport or citizenship applications" (Canada 18 Sept. 2014).

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

Canada. 18 September 2014. Embassy of Canada to Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

_____. 17 September 2014. Embassy of Canada to Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

Ethiopia. 22 September 2014. Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Ottawa. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

_____. 22 July 2011. Addis Ababa Government Acts and Civil Status Document Registration Office. "Message from Head of the Office." <http://www.aawk.gov.et/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1%3Awelcome-to-joomla&catid=30%3Amsghead&Itemid=54&lang=en> [Accessed 16 Sept. 2014]

_____. N.d.a. Ethiopian Government Portal. "Addis Ababa City Council." <<http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/de/stateaddisababa>> [Accessed 16 Sept. 2014]

_____. N.d.b. Ethiopian Government Portal. "Regional States." <<http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/de/regional-states>> [Accessed 26 Sept. 2014]

United States (US). N.d. Department of State. "Ethiopia Reciprocity Schedule." <<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/fees/reciprocity-by-country/ET.html>> [Accessed 11 Sept. 2014]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact individuals and representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Human Rights Watch; Professor at Pennsylvania State University; and three lawyers based in Addis Ababa. A lawyer based in Addis Ababa was unable to provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Africa Confidential; Africa Research Bulletin; ecoi.net; EdisonTD; *Ethiopian Herald*; Ethiopian Organization in the Greater Toronto Area; Europa World Plus; Factiva; Keesing's Documentchecker; Norway – Landinfo; United Nations – Refworld.

Attachments

Ethiopia. N.d. Addis Ababa City Administration. "Woreda Resident ID Card." Sent to the Research Directorate by an official at the Canadian embassy in Addis Ababa, 17 September 2014. Translated by Yimi Translation Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia. N.d. City Government of Addis Ababa. "Birth Certificate." Sent to the Research Directorate by an official at the Canadian embassy in Addis Ababa, 17 September 2014.

[Tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Date modified: 2016-01-05