

# 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 [Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

9 August 2012

### COG104128.FE

Republic of the Congo: Passports, particularly the procedure for obtaining a passport in the Republic of the Congo; who can obtain a service passport; false or fraudulently obtained passports  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Types of passports

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 28 June 2012, the consul of the Republic of the Congo in Toronto stated that there are three types of Congolese passports: the diplomatic passport, which is red; the service passport, which is blue; and the ordinary passport, which is brown. Service passports are issued to high-ranking state officials, such as ministers, directors of public enterprises and diplomats (Congo 28 June 2012). He also stated in another telephone interview on 2 August 2012 that, in some cases, when there are no more ordinary passports, the authorities issue service passports (ibid. 2 Aug. 2012). These passports are stamped to indicate to immigration officers that they are in fact ordinary passports (ibid.). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 3 August 2012, an official of the Embassy of Congo in Washington also stated that about three or four years ago there were no more ordinary passports and the passport office issued service passports instead (ibid. 3 Aug. 2012). She indicated that a "code A" stamp was placed on the service passports to indicate that they were in fact ordinary passports (ibid.).

In another telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 11 July 2012, the consul of the Republic of Congo in Toronto stated that diplomatic passports are issued to persons designated by the ministry of foreign affairs and the office of the president of the Republic of Congo; he indicated that the designation criteria for those individuals are at the discretion of the ministry and the office of the president (Congo 11 July 2012a).

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 11 July 2012, an official of the Embassy of Congo in Washington noted that the biometric passport was introduced in 2008 (Congo 11 July 2012b). Additional information on this topic could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Two diplomatic sources consulted by the Research Directorate stated that ordinary passports are valid for five years, while diplomatic and service passports are valid for three years (Congo 19 July 2012a; ibid. 19 July 2012b).

#### 2. Procedure for issuing passports and information in a passport

According to the consul in Toronto, individuals looking to obtain a Congolese passport must go to the Congo to fill out the application form and have their fingerprints taken (Congo 28 June 2012). Also, applicants must submit the following documents, among other things, during their appointment at the office of the Directorate of Immigration and Emigration:

1. An identification letter from the local government

2. A birth certificate or a declaration of age
3. Two recent, colour passport photographs
4. A letter of consent from the parents in the case of minor children under the age of 16
5. The form from the guarantor, sworn and signed by a commissioner of oaths, a magistrate or a high court judge
6. A marriage certificate, if applicable
7. A police report in the case of a lost passport (ibid.).

Sources stated that Congolese passports are among the government documents issued free of charge (ibid.; *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville* 12 Jan. 2012, 1, 3). According to the daily newspaper *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*, in accordance with a law that came into effect in January 2012, a number of documents, including passports, are issued by the government free of charge (ibid.). However, the website of the Embassy of Congo in Washington noted that the price of a passport is 40,000 CFAF [approximately CA\$74 (XE 9 Aug. 2012)], payable to the office of the immigration service in the Congo (Congo n.d.a).

According to the consul, Congolese passports are biometric and issued only by offices of the Directorate of Immigration and Emigration in the Congo (28 June 2012). Furthermore, the web site of the Embassy of Congo in Washington indicated that "[a]ll Congolese [biometric] Passport applicants should apply IN PERSON in the Republic of Congo" and that the Embassy of Congo in Washington will not accept any passport applications (Congo n.d.a). However, the website of the Congolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation advised Congolese citizens abroad to renew their passport and apply for a biometric passport [translation] "either directly with the emigration services or with the Congolese consulate" in their country of residence (Congo n.d.b).

According to the Congolese consul in Toronto, the following data is found in a Congolese passport: the bearer's first and last names, nationality, date and place of birth and gender; the date of issuance and expiry of the passport; and the name of the issuing office in the Congo (Congo 28 June 2012). With regard to the security features of the biometric passport, the consul explained that there is a digitally encrypted security chip inside the passport (ibid.).

Information on false or fraudulently obtained passports could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Congo. 3 August 2012. Embassy of Congo in Washington. Telephone interview with a representative.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2 August 2012. Congolese Consulate in Toronto. Telephone interview with the consul.

\_\_\_\_\_. 19 July 2012a. Embassy of Congo in Mali. Telephone interview with the secretary of consular services.

\_\_\_\_\_. 19 July 2012b. Embassy of Congo in Cameroun. Telephone interview with the consul.

\_\_\_\_\_. 11 July 2012a. Congolese Consulate in Toronto. Telephone interview with the consul.

\_\_\_\_\_. 11 July 2012b. Embassy of Congo in Washington. Telephone interview with an official

\_\_\_\_\_. 28 June 2012. Congolese Consulate in Toronto. Telephone interview with the consul.

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*Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*. 12 January 2012. Thierry Nougou. "Application de la gratuité de la carte de commerçant, du passeport et du permis de conduire." <<http://www.brazzaville-adiac.com/medias/dossiertele/PDF1408.pdf>> [Accessed 25 June 2012]

XE. 9 August 2012. "Currency Converter Widget." <<http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert/?language=fr&Amount=40000&From=XAF&To=CAD>> [Accessed 9 Aug. 2012]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to reach representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful: Embassy of Congo in Brussels; Embassy of Congo in Cuba; Embassy of Congo in Paris; Embassy of Congo in Pretoria; Embassy of Congo in Kenya; Embassy of Congo in Germany; Embassy of Congo in Brazil; Embassy of Congo in Italy; Embassy of Congo in Sweden; United Nations Information Centre; *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*; Forum pour la gouvernance et les droits de l'homme; Ordre national des avocats du Congo-Brazzaville; Observatoire congolais des droits de l'homme; Republic of Congo – Directorate of Immigration and Emigration, Directorate of Civil Liberties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; *La Semaine africaine*; Marien Ngouabi University.

**Internet sites including:** Africa.Info; African Press Organization; Afrik.com; Afrik53; *Les Afriques*; Afriquinfos; Afrol News; AllAfrica.com; African Development Bank; Un Congo dé-chaîné et indépendant; Congoinfos; Congopage; Congo-site.com; European Research Council; Factiva; *Le Figaro*; France 2; France24; Le Griot.info; International Organization for Migration; Investir en zone franc; *Jeune Afrique*; *Journal de Brazza*; *Journal du Cameroun*; Keesing's Documentchecker; Migration Policy Institute; *Le Nouvel Observateur*; Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides; Ordre national des avocats du Congo-Brazzaville; Organisation internationale de la francophonie; *Le Potentiel*; *La Semaine africaine*; Seneweb; Switzerland – Federal Office for Migration; United Nations – United Nations Development Programme, Integrated Regional Information Networks; United States – Bureau of Consular Affairs.

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