

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> 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 Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca.

21 October 2014

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Republic of the Congo: The national identity card; the procedure to obtain the card, the documents required and the timeframe; whether the applicant must pick it up in person when it is ready; whether the national identity card is mandatory and since when, and whether it must be presented to obtain employment or a driver's licence

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the national identity card in the Republic of the Congo was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1. General Information

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Embassy of the Republic of the Congo in Washington, DC stated that according to the law, citizens of the Republic of the Congo must be in possession of a national identity card, especially for the purpose of identification and for their interactions with the state (Republic of the Congo 16 Oct. 2014).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The representative pointed out that, in reality, [translation] "most" Congolese citizens possess a national identity card and that, because of awareness campaigns encouraging the public to obtain the card, "more and more" people have one (ibid.). Congolese electronic media state that, in December 2010, at the inauguration of a new national identity card production system, the Congo's Minister of the Interior and Decentralization asked the public to obtain a national identity card (Congo-Site 23 Dec. 2010; JournaldeBrazza.com 24 Dec. 2010).

According to the embassy representative, the Congolese are legally required to have a national identity card starting from the age of 18 years old (Republic of the Congo 16 Oct. 2014). However, according to Congolese electronic media, the Minister of the Interior and Decentralization stated in December 2010 that obtaining the national identity card was [translation] "a requirement" as of the age of 16 years old (JournaldeBrazza.com 24 Dec. 2010; Congo-Site 23 Dec. 2010).

According to the Central African Information Agency (Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale), an African news agency, the Congolese national identity card was created on 17 July 1960 by Presidential decree No. 6063 (Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale 17 Aug. 2014). The embassy representative also stated that the national identity card dates back to the Republic of the Congo's independence [in 1960] (Republic of the Congo 16 Oct. 2014). According to the representative, the national identity cards have contained biometric data since approximately 2008 (ibid.). These cards have been valid for 10 years (ibid.).

2. Using the National Identity Card to Obtain Employment or a Driver's Licence

According to the embassy representative, an identity card must [translation] "generally" be presented to legally obtain employment (ibid.). The representative explained that this step is necessary, particularly for tax reasons (ibid.). However, she pointed out that some employers could be [translation] "more flexible" and accept a passport as proof of identity (ibid.). She also pointed out that it was possible to use either a passport or the national identity card to obtain a driver's licence (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Format and Appearance of the National Identity Card

According to the representative, the front of the national identity card contains the following elements:

- Republic of the Congo flag
- Photograph of the card bearer
- Bearer's name and given name
- Bearer's location and date of birth
- Bearer's address
- The letters CNI (for National Identification Center (Centre national d'identification, CNI)), followed by a personal identification number (ibid.).

The representative added that the names of the bearer's father and mother, as well as the dates of issuance and expiry are on the back of the card (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Procedure to Obtain the National Identity Card

According to the embassy representative, the national identity card may be obtained at the CNI, which has a central office in Brazzaville, or at one of its regional centres (ibid.). In a December 2010 article, Congo-Site, an Internet site covering news and subjects of interest to the Congolese, states that there are centres in Brazzaville as well as in the cities of Pointe-Noire and Oyo (23 Dec. 2010).

The representative explained that, to obtain a national identity card, the applicant must present a birth certificate and a certificate of nationality, the latter of which is obtained from a tribunal or magistrate (Republic of the Congo 16 Oct. 2014). According to Congolese electronic media, a decree made it free to obtain the national identity card (Congo-Site 23 Dec. 2010; JournaldeBrazza.com 24 Dec. 2010), in March 2009 (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the representative, national identity cards must be applied for in person at one of the processing centres so that fingerprints and photographs may be taken (Republic of the Congo 16 Oct. 2014). The representative added that most of the cards are issued in Brazzaville, even if the biometric data, including the fingerprints and photographs, can be collected in the regional centres (ibid.). However, she added that once a card is ready, the applicant may appoint someone to go and collect it (ibid.).

According to the representative, the timeframes for obtaining the card may vary from one day to three months (90 days), depending on the complexity of the applicant's file (ibid. 21 Oct. 2014).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The representative also stated that, in the case of lost or stolen cards, the embassy can provide a certificate of loss, which enables the bearer to obtain a replacement card, however this procedure must be carried out in the Republic of the Congo (ibid. 16 Oct. 2014). According to the representative, an application for a national identity card may not be submitted from outside of the country (ibid.).

Corroborating information 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.

References

Agence d'information d'Afrique centrale. 17 August 2014. "Fête de l'indépendance : la ferveur patriotique s'est exprimée au Kouilou." <<http://www.adiac-congo.com/content/fete-de-lindependance-la-ferveur-patriotique-sest-exprimee-au-kouilou-18650>> [Accessed 20 Oct. 2014]

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Republic of the Congo. 21 October 2014. Embassy of the Republic of the Congo in Washington, DC. Telephone interview with a representative.

_____. 16 October 2014. Embassy of the Republic of the Congo in Washington, DC. Telephone interview with a representative.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following people and organizations were unsuccessful: Canada – National Documentation Centre of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA); Republic of the Congo – Embassy of the Congo in Benelux and the European Union; Embassy of the Republic of the Congo in France; Honorary Consul of the Republic of the Congo in Toronto.

Internet sites, including: Agence congolaise d'information; AllAfrica; Congopage; *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*; ecoi.net; EdisonTD database; Factiva; France – Cour nationale du droit d'asile; Human Rights Watch; Ireland – Refugee Documentation Centre; *Jeune Afrique*; Keesing Reference Systems; Koaci; Radio France internationale; Republic of the Congo – official site, Secrétariat général du gouvernement; *Star du Congo*; United Kingdom – Home Office; United Nations – Refworld, Integrated Regional Information Networks.

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