



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIR's](#) | [Help](#)

17 February 2009

HTI103049.FE

Haiti: Extent of fraud with respect to identity documents, specifically passports, visas, birth registration documents and marriage certificates

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

An unclassified information bulletin published in December 2008 by the Migration Integrity Unit of the Embassy of Canada in Port-au-Prince and forwarded to the Research Directorate on 9 January 2009 indicates that false identity documents made up almost half of the incidents of fraud uncovered during document checks done in 2007-2008 (Canada 10 Dec. 2008, 2). The following excerpt from the bulletin ties late declaration of birth (*déclaration tardive de naissance*) to fraud:

The late declaration dispositions also gave opportunity to fraudulent behaviour, as a person can change his identity by requesting a late declaration of birth under another name, without cost or any verification/investigation pertaining to the existence of previous identity documents. (ibid., 2)

Two other sources consulted by the Research Directorate point to fraud related to the late declaration of birth (RNDDH 8 Jan. 2009; TDH/UNICEF July 2005, 36). In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 8 January 2009, Haiti's National Human Rights Defense Network (Réseau national de défense des droits humains, RNDDH) states that individuals have taken advantage of late declaration of birth to modify original information (RNDDH 8 Jan. 2009); however, the RNDDH does not identify the information modified. According to a report published by Terre des hommes (TDH) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in July 2005, the fact that it is not mandatory to make a late declaration of birth at the vital statistics office (bureau d'état civil) in one's own commune [administrative district] of residence encouraged people to register their children at different times and in several locations, which created a proliferation of convincing [translation] "false real" birth certificates.

Two sources consulted by the Research Directorate report that some vital statistics officers breach the rules, thereby compromising the vital statistics system in Haiti (GARR 9 May 2008; AlterPresse 26 Apr. 2006). In theory, vital statistics officers could, with impunity, enter any information on birth certificates (GARR 9 May 2008). Some residents are also reportedly issued birth certificates that have not been registered with the National Archives (Archives nationales) (ibid.; AlterPresse 26 Apr. 2006), making them ripe for fraud (ibid.). An article published by AlterPresse in May 2008 reports on a demonstration in the streets of rural Savanette, where demonstrators accused the regional vital statistics office of supplying false birth and marriage certificates to commune residents (AlterPresse 22 May 2008). No other source consulted by the Research Directorate makes any mention of fraudulent marriage certificates.

An article published in the Haitian daily newspaper *Le Nouvelliste* in November 2007 describes how easy it is to obtain false *extraits* [official copies or summaries of documents] from the Haitian National Archives (Archives nationales de Haïti) (16 Nov. 2007). *Extraits*, specifically of birth certificates, are needed to obtain a passport and can be obtained upon payment from neighbourhood [translation] "typists" near the Presidential Palace (*Le Nouvelliste* 16 Nov. 2007). According to the same source, the false *extraits* of birth certificates are reportedly signed by the director of the Haitian National Archives and are very convincing (ibid.). Depending on the buyer's bargaining abilities, the fees for these documents can reach up to 1,000 Haitian gourdes [approximately 32 Canadian dollars (Oanda 16 Jan. 2009)] (*Le Nouvelliste* 16 Nov. 2007). Information on the extent of fraud related to false *extraits* of birth certificates that can be obtained on the streets of Port-au-Prince could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In the case of passport fraud, two sources consulted by the Research Directorate mention the September 2007 arrest of one of the first general directors of the Haitian National Police (Police nationale d'Haïti), who was suspected of belonging to a network of [translation] "counterfeiters specializing in the production of fake travel documents" (*Le Nouvelliste* 10 Sept. 2007; Radio Kiskeya 8 Sept. 2007). Searchers reportedly found identity documents, particularly passports, in his home (ibid.). In October 2005, a manager with the Immigration and Emigration Service (Service de l'immigration et de l'émigration) was arrested for supplying traffickers with 930 blank passport books that were used to make false passports (*Le Nouvelliste* 27 Oct. 2005).

Information on fraudulent visas 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

AlterPresse. 22 May 2008. "Haïti - Identité : manifestation à Savanette pour la réforme de l'état civil national à l'occasion de la commémoration du 88 e anniversaire de l'assassinat Benoit Batraville, le 20 mai 2008." <<http://www.alterpresse.org/spip.php?article7282>> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2009]

_____. 26 April 2006. Djems Olivier. "Haïti : des milliers 'd'enfantômes,' privés d'acte de naissance." <<http://www.alterpresse.org/spip.php?article4540>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2009]

Canada. 10 December 2008. Embassy of Canada in Haïti. *Migration Integrity Unit Bulletin No. 014-1208*. Information bulletin forwarded to the Research Directorate on 9 January 2009 by an Embassy representative.

Groupe d'appui aux rapatriés et réfugiés (GARR). 9 May 2008. "Dossier d'Ericq Pierre : Une occasion à saisir par l'État haïtien pour se responsabiliser par rapport à l'état civil." <http://www.garrhaiti.org/spip.php?article320&var_recherche=etat%20civil> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2009]

Le Nouvelliste. 10 November 2008. Salnave Exantus. "Le problème de l'état civil en Haïti." <<http://www.lenouvelliste.com/article.php?PubID=&ArticleID=63698>> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2009]

_____. 16 November 2007. Péguy André Joseph. "Entre la rue et les Archives nationales...." <<http://www.lenouvelliste.com/articleforprint.php?PubID=1&ArticleID=50801>> [Accessed 15 Jan. 2009]

_____. 10 September 2007. Alain Gaillard. "Léon Jeune derrière les barreaux." <<http://www.lenouvelliste.com/articleforprint.php?PubID=1&ArticleID=48314>> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2009]

_____. 27 October 2005. Roberson Alphonse. "Des faussaires sous les verrous." <<http://www.lenouvelliste.com/articleforprint.php?PubID=1&ArticleID=22045>> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2009]

Oanda. 16 January 2009. "Oanda Currency Converter." <<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2009]

Radio Kiskeya. 8 September 2007. "Arrestation du premier directeur général de la Police nationale d'Haïti, Léon Jeune." (Haitiwebs.com) <<http://www.haitiwebs.com/printthread.php?t=46513>> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2009]

Réseau national de défense des droits humains (RNDDH). 8 January 2009. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by a program manager.

Terre des hommes (TDH) / United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). July 2005. Marlène Hofstette and Fernando Freire. "L'adoption internationale en Haïti." (Haiticulture) <http://www.haiticulture.ch/pdf/haiti_adoption_internationale_rapport_2005.pdf> [Accessed 16 Jan. 2009]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: La Fondation connaissance et liberté (FOKAL) did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Caribbean Net News, Factiva, Haiti Press Network (HPN), Organization of American States (OAS).

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.