

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.

4 July 2011

UGA103781.E

Uganda: Requirements and procedures with which adults must comply to obtain their birth certificate, including which identity documents they need to provide, and whether it is sufficient to provide information about their parents; the physical description of the birth certificate, including what information appears on it; whether a third party can obtain or replace someone else's lost birth certificate, or whether individuals must apply in person
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Procedure for registering a birth and obtaining the birth certificate

According to officials at the Uganda High Commissions in Ottawa and in London, birth certificates are obtained through the Office of the Registrar of births and deaths (Uganda 17 June 2011; *ibid.* 1 June 2011). The Universal Birth Registration campaign, led by international children's development organization Plan (Plan n.d.b), explains that the Office of the Registrar General, in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, is "responsible for ensuring that registration is carried out in all districts of the country" (*ibid.* n.d.a). District registrars are required to send birth registration records to the Office of the Registrar General for the "long" birth certificates (*ibid.*).

In a 17 June 2011 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the High Commission official in London stated that birth certificates may only be obtained in person at the Office of the Registrar General, which is in Kampala (Uganda 17 June 2011). However, the initial registration of the birth is carried out at the local level and in health facilities such as hospitals (*ibid.* Oct. 2010, 28; ICC 12 Oct. 2007, 7-8). Births should then be reported to the local government, which can issue the "so-called 'short' birth certificates," and also to the Registrar General (*ibid.*).

An official at the Canadian High Commission to Kenya, which is also responsible for Uganda, stated in his correspondence with the Research Directorate that

[w]hen submitting an application for a birth certificate for a new born baby, the birth certificate applicant must attach a live-birth statement which states the names of the parents. It may or may not have the child's name [since] in Uganda, it is customary in some cultures to inform the clan elders of the birth and request that the child be named. In this case a name may not be available at birth and the live-birth statement will indicate the baby's gender without the name.

The application is submitted [to] the Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Kampala. Payment is made through the designated bank and processing for a long birth certificate is done and registered within 10 working days. (Canada 30 June 2011)

The Canadian official added:

Some well-established hospitals process the birth certificates for the babies born in their institutions. If the child is not born in designated/authorized hospitals, the parent may register the birth by obtaining written confirmation from the local leaders, including district leaders. Short Birth certificates are issued by Ministry of Health at district level. Again, a live-birth statement from a hospital is required to process a Short Birth Certificate. The holder is required to apply for the long birth certificate and have the birth registered with the Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Kampala. (*ibid.*)

Process for adults wishing to obtain their birth certificate

The High Commission official in London stated that to obtain a birth certificate, an individual needs to provide identification and complete forms that provide details about his or her parents and lineage (e.g., grandparents),

place of origin (village and district) and, if applicable, the facility in which the individual was born (Uganda 17 June 2011). Staff at the Registrar's office will verify the information provided, including by consulting with local authorities where the individual was born (ibid.).

According to the Canadian High Commission official,

Because it was not mandatory to have a birth certificate issued at birth in the past, it might happen that an individual may apply for a birth certificate without providing source documents (live-birth statement). In such cases, the normal process would be to have the local leaders confirm knowledge of knowing the parents of the individual and of the child/children born to the couple. However, [on] some occasions, individuals had been able to obtain birth certificates simply by presenting themselves at the registrar's office, indicating their identity and the names of their parents and, sometimes, swear an affidavit. (Canada 30 June 2011)

A report prepared by the Victims Participation and Reparations Section of the International Criminal Court (ICC) likewise states that

where a registration is not made at the time of birth, Ugandans can later obtain a certificate from Sub-county Chiefs [...] (at a fee) by swearing an oath before these officials. This may be required, for instance, upon applying to university. A person may obtain a birth certificate (at a cost of approximately UD \$5) later in their lives, if they can prove that they did not receive one at birth or that they did obtain a certificate but have lost it. (ibid., 8)

In an article in the Ugandan daily *The Independent* on the ease by which a fraudulent government-issued identity document can be purchased, an undercover reporter explains that when visiting an office of the Registrar of births and deaths, the receptionist outlined the legitimate procedure for acquiring the birth certificate before telling him how he could bypass the official bureaucratic process (10 Aug. 2010). The reporter stated that by negotiating a fee with the person whom the receptionist had recommended, he received his officially authenticated birth certificate "with the authentic stamp and signature" in two days rather than the usual month (*The Independent* 10 Aug. 2010).

Description of birth certificate

In a 1 June 2011 interview, the High Commission official in Ottawa explained that birth certificates are printed on security paper and should include a serial number, the name of the individual, the date and place of birth, the sex of the individual, the signature of the official responsible for issuing the certificate, the Ugandan emblem, the names of the parents, and their residence, occupations and nationality (Uganda 1 June 2011). The London-based official added that hospitals record births and issue their own document confirming the birth (ibid. 17 June 2011).

The ICC report specifies the differences between various birth-related documents, including the short and long birth certificates, and provides more details on what they contain:

Birth notification cards and birth certificates do not contain a photograph of the person. They contain the following information.

- a. A birth notification card is issued by a hospital to confirm the delivery and includes the name of the mother (but not of the father), the sex and weight of the baby and date and time of the birth.
- b. A "short" birth certificate contains the name and sex of the child, the name and nationality of both the father and the mother as well as the date and place of birth, and a registration number.
- c. A "long" birth certificate contains the same information as the "short" certificate and in addition, the residence of the parents and the full name, occupation and residence of person who has provided the information leading to registration and in what capacity he/she provides the information, as well as provision for adding another name at a later stage (such as after baptism). (ICC 12 Oct. 2007, 8)

The Canadian official stated that Ugandan birth certificates are printed on A3-size paper with red border lines and "very little security features" (Canada 30 June 2011). According to the official, the birth certificate has 12 columns containing a registration number, the date, time and place of birth, the name and sex of the baby, and the full name, residence, occupation and nationality of both parents (ibid.). The birth certificate also contains the full name, occupation and residence of the declarant, which could be either parent or a third party, and the capacity under which the declarant provides information (ibid.). In addition, the birth certificate includes the date of the birth's registration, the signature of a sub-county chief and the baby's name if added after the birth registration (ibid.).

Replacement of lost or stolen birth certificates

The High Commission official in Ottawa stated that to replace a lost or stolen birth certificate, an individual must go to the Office of the Registrar of births and deaths and show proof of identity, such as a driver's permit or a passport (Uganda 1 June 2011). The individual must also provide both a statement explaining what happened to the original birth certificate as well as a police report (ibid.). According to the High Commission official in London, it is easier to obtain a replacement birth certificate, rather than a new birth certificate, since a database record of it exists (ibid. 17 June 2011). He also corroborated the statement that applications for replacement birth certificates must be made in person at the Office of the Registrar of births and deaths in Kampala (ibid.). However, the

Canadian official asserted, without providing any details, that it is possible for a third party to apply for a replacement birth certificate (Canada 30 June 2011).

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. 30 June 2011. High Commission of Canada to Kenya. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The Ugandan Embassy in Washington, DC and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) did not have information for this Response. Attempts to contact representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Uganda were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: allAfrica.com; Embassy of the Republic of Uganda, Washington, DC; European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net); Factiva; Keesing Documentchecker; Parliament of Uganda; *Sunrise*; Uganda High Commission London; Uganda - Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Uganda Online Website Directory; United Kingdom Home Office, United Nations (UN) - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Refworld; United States Department of State.

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