



Home > Research > Responses to Information Requests

RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

New Search | About RIRs | Help

5 August 2008

NGA102888.E

Nigeria: Birth registration process

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Although the registration of births in Nigeria is compulsory (Nigeria 14 Dec. 1992; Nigeria n.d.), only a small proportion are actually registered (*This Day* 3 Sept. 2007; ibid. 25 July 2007; *Daily Champion* 12 July 2007; UN July 2007). Several sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicate that the national average for birth registration stands at about 30 percent (ibid.; *This Day* 3 Sept. 2007; ibid. 25 July 2007; *Daily Champion* 12 July 2007). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in urban areas, approximately 50 percent of births are registered, while in rural areas, only about 21 percent are registered (UN July 2007). Low registration rates in Nigeria have been attributed to a number of factors, including lack of awareness of current legislation and of the importance of birth registration, limited number of registration centres, limited financial resources and a lack of effective registration infrastructures (UN July 2007).

Birth registration is said to be a requirement for enrolment in school, for the issuance of travel documents, and for the proposed new national identity card (*This Day* 25 July 2007; see also *Leadership* 4 June 2008; *This Day* 3 Sept. 2007).

The information in the following three paragraphs was provided by an official at the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa during a 29 July 2008 telephone interview.

Since 1992, the National Population Commission (NPC) has been responsible for the registration of births in Nigeria (Nigeria 29 July 2008). If an individual is not born in a hospital (e.g., is born in a house), then there will not be anyone present to register them with the NPC; however, the parents can obtain a sworn affidavit from their local government, stating that the child was born in that local government area (ibid.). The sworn affidavit can then be taken to the NPC, which will register the child and issue a birth certificate (ibid.). According to the Official, in Nigeria, certain hospitals, churches, and local governments may issue birth certificates; however, these certificates must be taken to the NPC for registration (ibid.).

Individuals born before 1992 may also obtain an NPC birth certificate (ibid.). When registering with the NPC, these individuals must present a sworn affidavit from their local government and must undergo an interview (ibid.). Therefore birth certificates issued by the NPC that indicate that an individual was born before 1992 are valid (ibid.).

The NPC reportedly issues a standard birth certificate (ibid.). The Official could not provide specific details about the format of the birth certificates during the telephone interview; however, he said that the birth certificate includes "standard" information, such as the individual's name, father's name, mother's name, place of birth and date of birth (ibid.).

The website of the NPC indicates that birth registration is free and that children should be registered with them within the first sixty days of birth (Nigeria n.d). Upon registration, the parents may be asked for the following information: child's name, date of birth, place and type of birth and birth order; mother's name, age at birth of child, marital status, education, ethnicity and place of residence; father's name, age at birth of child, marital status, education, ethnicity and place of residence (ibid.).

According to the website, there are several locations at which birth registration takes place, including NPC registration centres, NPC offices at the local government headquarters, NPC desks in hospitals and health centres, and other unspecified designated locations (ibid.). In 2007, there were reportedly 2,322 NPC birth registration centres in Nigeria, or approximately 3 per local government area (*This Day* 25 July 2007; UN July 2007).

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

Daily Champion [Lagos]. 12 July 2007. Adelani Ashamu. "FG to Begin Campaign On Birth Registration." (Factiva)

Leadership [Abuja]. 4 June 2008. Nanman Sunday Wormis. "Jigawa, Zamfara Release N39.4 Million, N24 Million for Birth Registration." (AllAfrica) http://allafrica.com/stories/200806040271.html [Accessed 28 July 2008]

Nigeria. 29 July 2008. Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa, Canada. Telephone interview with an official.

_____. 14 December 1992. Official Gazette. *Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Decree 1992*. http://www.popline.org/docs/087513 [Accessed 29 July 2008]

______. N.d. National Population Commission (NPC). "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Birth Registration." http://www.population.gov.ng/FAQs-Birth%20Reg.pdf [Accessed 28 July 2008]

This Day [Lagos]. 3 September 2007. Agha Ibiam. "Lagos Launches National Birth Registration." (Factiva)

_____. 25 July 2007. Onyebuchi Ezigbo. "Yar'Adua Laments Low Birth Registration." http://allafrica.com/stories/200707250030.html [Accessed 28 July 2008]

United Nations (UN). July 2007. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Nigeria. "Information Sheet: Birth Registration."

http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/WCARO_Nigeria_Factsheets_BirthRegistration.pdf [Accessed 28 July 2008]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Keesing Reference Systems, United Kingdom Home Office, United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), United States Department of State.

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.