



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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23 July 2010

### NGA103507.FE

Nigeria: Procedure for issuing passports inside and outside of Nigeria, including information included in the passport and the measures taken to detect fraudulent passports; whether passports from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are issued in Nigeria

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On its older website, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) reports that there are different types of passports in Nigeria: the diplomatic passport (red cover); the official passport (blue cover); the standard passport (green cover); the "pilgrims" passport, whose colour varies from year to year; and the Seaman's book or certificate of identity (maroon cover) (Nigeria n.d.b).

According to the NIS, Nigerian passports are issued in NIS offices in Nigeria and in diplomatic missions and consular offices abroad (ibid.). However, Nigerian diplomatic missions are authorized to issue only standard passports and emergency travel certificates (ibid. n.d.e; ibid. n.d.h).

### Procedures to obtain standard passports

According to information on the websites of a number of Nigerian embassies and consulates, as well as the NIS website, individuals who want to obtain a standard Nigerian passport must complete an application form, pay the requisite fees and book an interview electronically on the NIS website (ibid. n.d.d; ibid. n.d.f; ibid. n.d.h; ibid. n.d.g).

The older NIS website states that applicants must provide the following documents at their interview in order to obtain a standard passport:

- Guarantor's form duly signed by a commissioner of oaths plus
- Photocopy of (a) Data page from guarantor's passport and (i) Photocopy of National identity card
- (ii) Drivers Licence
- Father's Letter of [consent] for minors under 16yrs (Mother's letter of consent in case of deceased father)
- Marriage Certificate where applicable
- Husband's consent letter

or

Letter of introduction for employee of government or corporate organization

- Court affidavit and police report in case of lost passport
- Birth Certificate or Age declaration
- Letter of identification from Local Government of origin or residence
- One (1) passport photograph
- Acknowledgement slip and receipt of payment. (ibid. n.d.b)

However, the new NIS website states that applicants must provide the following documents:

1. Local Government letter of identification.
2. Birth certificate / age declaration.
3. 2 recent colour passport photographs
4. Guarantor's form sworn to before a commissioner of Oaths / Magistrate / High Court Judge
5. Parents' letter of consent for minors under 16 years
6. Marriage certificate where applicable
7. Police report in case of lost passport
8. Submit application with supporting documents to passport office / Embassy / High commission. (ibid. n.d.i)

### **Information included in the passport and security measures taken against fraud**

With respect to the information contained in the Nigerian passport, in a 14 June 2010 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Embassy of Nigeria in Brussels stated that it is the same as what is found in any other passport, namely, the given name and surname, the nationality, the date and place of birth, the gender of the passport holder, the passport issuance and expiration dates, as well as the name of the office that issued the passport. Additional information on the details contained in a Nigerian passport could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

An 18 April 2010 article published in the Lagos newspaper *Daily Champion* reports that to counter the increasing number of cases of forgery, duplication, identity theft and other crimes related to passports, the NIS introduced a machine readable e-passport in 2007 (see also Nigeria n.d.d). At an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) conference on Machine Readable Travel Documents, Biometrics and Security Standards, held in April 2009 in Abuja, the Comptroller General of the NIS stated that the arrival of the new e-passport "restored the dignity of the Nigerian and the integrity of ... Nigeria's travel documents" (Nigeria n.d.a). According to the Comptroller General, the passport's security features and the whole issuing process ensure the genuineness of the travel document (ibid.). The website of the Consulate General of Nigeria in Hong Kong provides the following information on the security features of the Nigerian passport:

Inside the passport, there are many new security features, including intricate designs, complex watermarks, specialized fibres (which sometimes appear over the photo) and an electronic chip secured by advanced digital encryption techniques. (ibid. n.d.d)

Additional information on the effectiveness of the security measures implemented by the Government of Nigeria could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) passports**

On its former website, the NIS indicates that passports from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are issued in all immigration offices across the country (Nigeria n.d.c). In an interview granted to the African Press Agency (APA), the NIS public relations officer stated that the international passport that was issued in Nigeria and the national passport of Nigeria, which are machine readable, would be replaced by the ECOWAS e-passport and would no longer be accepted as of 1 January 2011 (APA 3 Jan. 2010; *Les Afriques* 13 Jan. 2010). It will then be the only passport accepted in Nigeria, both for Nigerians and for nationals from other ECOWAS countries (APA 3 Jan. 2010). To obtain this passport, applicants will have to provide [translation] "many documents, including a local government letter of identification, a birth certificate or declaration of age, and two recent identification photographs" (ibid.).

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.

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### **Additional Sources Consulted**

**Oral Sources:** Attempts to reach the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa were unsuccessful.

**Internet sites, including:** Afrik.com, Afrol News, Forced Migration Online (FMO), France24.com, Grioo.com, InfoSud Belgique (InfoSud), Internationale de l'éducation (IE), *Jeune Afrique*, Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM), Radio France internationale (RFI), United Nations (UN) Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), United States (US) Department of State, Voltaire.net.org.

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