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RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Afghanistan: National identity documents issued by government authorities that are currently in circulation in Afghanistan including passports, tazkiras, birth and marriage certificates, and the voter registration card; descriptions of these documents; the procedures and requirements under which holders obtain(ed) them; the dates of their introduction or last issuance (May 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Types of Passports

According to a representative of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Afghan passports "are issued for the purposes of travel outside Afghanistan, and are not common" (16 Apr. 2006). The Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa noted that all passports must carry the following information:

[translation]

First name, Surname (or father's name)

Occupation (optional)

One identity photo (in black and white or colour)

Date of birth (very often mentions only the year of birth - the Christian and the Islamic calendars are used) [the Hijri calendar or the Islamic calendar is a Moon calendar that contains 12 months; each month has, alternatively, either 29 or 30 days (Institut de Mécanique céleste et de calcul des éphémérides, IMCCE n.d.)]

Place of birth (in general, mentions only the province name)

Date of issue (in the Christian and Solar Hegira calendars)

Validity (1 to 5 years)

Extension (can be done by section, by the organizations concerned in Afghanistan or by consulates or consular sections of embassies abroad) (Afghanistan 3 Apr. 2006a).

In a telephone conversation with the Research Directorate, the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa indicated that since 1973 Afghan authorities have issued five types of passports: diplomatic, trade, service, student and ordinary passports. (Afghanistan 3 Apr. 2006b). The diplomatic passport is black, the ordinary passport is blue, and the service passport, the student passport and the trade passport were issued in gray; however, since 1994, these last three passports have been issued in green (ibid. 7 Apr. 2006). According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa, the description of these passports is as follows:

[translation]

No.: D OXXXXX (diplomatic passport) (in general, black in colour)

Issued by the ministry of external affairs – protocol service, exclusively for the president of the Republic, the vice-presidents, the president of the senate, the president of parliament, ministers, deputy ministers, diplomats posted abroad and any other high officials or emissaries of the state. Must contain the recipient's position. Validity: 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, 7 years

No.: SE OXXXXX (passport service)

Issued exclusively upon official request to ministry of external affairs (MEA), department of consular affairs to all officials who do not need diplomatic immunity: bank representatives, representatives of airlines, embassy employees, officials on missions abroad, etc. Must contain the recipient's position. Validity: 1 year (extended exclusively by the MEA, department of consular affairs, or in some cases by the consular sections of embassies.)

No.: TR OXXXXX (trade passport)

Issued on request and after approval by the minister of commerce to company heads or businessmen. Must contain the company name. Validity: 3 years, 5 years or more. (This type of passport is very rare.)

No.: ST OXXXXX (student passport)

Issued by the MEA, department of consular affairs to students or government grant holders. Validity: 1 year (extended exclusively by the MEA, department of consular affairs, or in some cases by consulates or consular sections of embassies). (This passport is increasingly rare.)

No.: OR OXXXXX (ordinary passport or tourist passport)

Issued by the passport department of the ministries of the interior, the passport division in each province, consulates or the consular sections of embassies.

All applicants from Afghanistan who are at least 14 years old.

Validity: 1 to 5 years (Afghanistan 3 Apr. 2006a).

Passports issued by Afghan authorities from 1976 to 1994

The Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa noted that although passports issued by Afghan authorities between 1973 and 1986 are still in circulation, these passports are no longer accepted by the Afghan authorities and must be renewed (Afghanistan 3 Apr. 2006b). According to the Counsellor, Afghan Embassies only accept passports issued by the Afghan governments after 1986 (ibid). The Counsellor indicated that the description of the passports issued since 1973 is as follows:

[translation]

No.	TITLE	NOTES
1	KINGDOM OF AFGHANISTAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour: blue, grey, black • 48 pages • For the period before 1973 • Virtually no longer exists. • Is no longer valid
2	REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour: blue, black, grey • 48 pages, since 1973 • Rarely exists. • Is no longer valid
3	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour: blue, black, grey • 48 pages, since 1978 • Still sometimes exists. • Is no longer valid
4	REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour: blue, black, grey • 48 pages • Introduced in 1986. • Valid
5	ISLAMIC STATE OF AFGHANISTAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour: green Contains security features • 48 pages • Introduced in 1994.

		• Still valid
6	PASSPORT OF AFGHANISTAN	Project under consideration

(3 Apr. 2006a).

Keesing Reference Systems provides information on two Afghan passports, one of which lacks a watermark, as follows:

Passport 1:

Validity: varies from 1 to 5 years, page 8 entry 'Unless extended this passport is valid until' extension possible.

Booklet: c. 125 x 89 mm / 4.9 x 3.5 in. 48 pages

Laminate: page 3, clear laminate, sewn in

Photo: glued, with ink stamp, since 1 January 2003 also with dry embossing stamp

Numbering: 6 digits, preceded by 2 letters, all pages, perforated, first letter printed, page 3, printed

Observations: a 64-page version is also in circulation, this passport was issued after 1992, page 8, stamp of issuing authority, the UV overprinting does not run across the photo (n.d.a).

Passport 2:

Validity: varies from 1 to 5 years, page 8 entry 'Unless extended this passport is valid until' extension possible.

Booklet: c. 125 x 89 mm / 4.9 x 3.5 in. 48 pages

Laminate: page 3, clear laminate, sewn in

Photo: glued, with ink stamp, since 1 January 2003 also with dry embossing stamp

Numbering: 6 digits, preceded by 2 letters, all pages, perforated, first letter printed, page 3, printed

Observations: a 64-page version is also in circulation, this passport was issued after 1992, page 8, stamp of issuing authority, the UV overprinting does not run across the photo, this passport lacks a watermark (n.d.g).

For further information, refer to the attached copies of the Afghan Passport (Keesing Reference Systems n.d.a-f, pp. 6-11 and n.d.g-l, pp. 12-17).

Procedures to apply for and to renew a passport

According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa, the passport can be renewed for a specific length of time by the institutions concerned in Afghanistan or by the consulates or the consular services of the embassies (Afghanistan 3 Apr. 2006a).

In a telephone conversation with the Research Directorate, the Counsellor indicated that to apply for an ordinary passport in Afghanistan, Afghan citizens must go to passport services in Afghanistan with their *tazkira* (identity card) (Afghanistan 7 Apr. 2006). Afghan citizens can also obtain a passport in the consulate or in the consular services of an embassy; they must present their *tazkira* and their regulated papers in the country where they live (*ibid.*). If the applicants are not in possession of such documentation, their identity can be established by conducting a personal interview (*ibid.*). The embassy also verifies their address, profession and other personal information (*ibid.*). The Website of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington indicates that to apply for new passports Afghan citizens require:

1. One passport application form.
2. Three passport-sized photos (with name written at the back and attached with cellophane tape).
3. If you are a U.S. alien resident, provide a copy of your Green Card (front and back), your Social Security card, or evidence to prove your Afghan citizenship, along with one type of photo identification.
4. Please notarize your passport application. If you are applying in person, notarization may not be required.
5. Passport application fee for 5 years of validation: \$104.

Passports with validation for 4, 3, 2 or 1 year are available (Afghanistan n.d.).

To renew a passport Afghan citizens require:

1. One passport extension application form
2. Two passport-sized photos (with name written at the back and attached with cellophane tape.)
3. Your original passport.
4. If you are a U.S. alien resident, provide a copy of your Green Card, or your Social Security card, along with one type of photo identification.
5. Passport renewal fee for 5 years: \$100.

Passport Extensions for 4, 3, 2 or 1 year are available (*ibid.*).

For further information, refer to the attached copies of the form to apply for a new passport (Afghanistan n.d.a, pp.1-2) and the form to apply for a passport extension

(ibid. n.d.b, p. 3) at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington.

Tazkira

The United States Bureau of Consular Affairs referred to the *tazkira* as *taskera* and indicated that "the most universal and accurate document in Afghanistan is the identity card (*taskera*)" (21 Mar. 2006). In 16 April 2006 correspondence, a representative of the AREU indicated that *tazkiras*

are much more common than the passports, and it is estimated that perhaps 70% of Afghans have such documents. They are required for transacting any business with the government, including the purchase or sale of immovable property, the preparation of official documents (including the passports), admission into school and so on.

In 5 April 2006 correspondence, the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa informed the Research Directorate that there are two kinds of identity cards still in circulation in Afghanistan: *tazkiras* (identity cards) and *tazkira* certificates. According to the Counsellor, in 1990 or 1992 the Afghan government stopped issuing the *tazkira*, which is a 20-page identity document, and replaced it with a *tazkira* certificate, which is only one page that includes the minimum essential information: name of the person, father's name, grandfather's name, date of birth (according to the Hijri calendar) and birthplace (Afghanistan 7 Apr. 2006; see also United States 21 Mar. 2006). According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan, the description of the *tazkira* (20-page document) is as follows:

[translation]

TAZKIRA

Document	Description
<i>Tazkira</i> (identity card)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language (in Persian and Pashto) • In the form of a booklet • (11 cm by 8 cm) • (10 sheets, 20 pages)
Cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Symbol of the Republic) • Islamic Republic of Afghanistan • <i>Tazkira</i>
Page 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State symbol • Republic of Afghanistan • Ministry of internal affairs • Department of public identity registration

Page 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration book number • Page number • Registration number • Card number • Code number • Identity photograph (in colour or black and white) • Holder signature
Page 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- Identity • First name Surname • Father's name • Grandfather's name • Place of birth • Date of birth (year of birth in the Solar Hegira calendar) • There is very often a note, such as "1 year in 1345" • Religion • Occupation • Gender; (Male,Female) • Marital status
Page 6	<p>Distinguishing marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height • Eyes • Eyebrows • Skin colour • Hair colour • Other marks • For the head of the family or another member of the family (<i>Tazkira</i> number, register book number, page, register number)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B- Place of registration

<p>Page 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Village, city or province • Province • District • Subdistrict • Village or administrative district • Street name • House number • Volume number • Page number • >Registration number
<p>Page 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. or Ms. whose name appears on this <i>Tazkira</i> is • Indeed a national of the Republic of Afghanistan • Signature • Competent authority
<p>Page 9-10</p>	<p>C - Change of civil or personal status</p>
<p>Page 11-12-13-14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D- Change of principal residence • Province <li style="padding-left: 40px;">District • Subdistrict • Village or administrative district • Street name and house • Volume and page number • Register number • Reason for change of address • Date of change of address • Seal and signature
<p>Page 15-16</p>	<p>Any event that occurred during military service</p>
<p>Page 17-18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information note regarding the <i>Tazkira</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serial number (XXXXXX) six digits
Page 19-20	Cover (blank)

(Afghanistan 5 Apr. 2006).

Procedures for applying for a *tazkira*

According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa, a *tazkira* can be obtained as soon as the birth of a child is registered at the population office but some people request their *tazkira* when they are adults, especially in the countryside (Afghanistan 7 Apr. 2006). When people are older, the chief of the village, the imam of the mosque or the representative of the district must confirm the identity of the applicant (ibid.). According to the representative of AREU, "[t]o obtain a *tazkira*, one applies to the Population and Statistics Office either at the Kabul or Provincial level. There is a specific form required, and witnesses need to testify to your origin in a particular place" (16 Apr. 2006).

Marriage Record Book (*Nakahnama* or *Nekahnama*) and Marriage Certificate

The Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Canada noted in correspondence dated 5 May 2006 that the birth certificate and the marriage record book are both called "*Nakahnama* or *Nekahnama*" and that the Afghan authorities issued both documents. According to the Counsellor, the marriage record book is the official document but the Certificate is a recognized document issued by tribunals or cultural centres (Afghanistan 5 May 2006). In 16 April 2006 correspondence, a representative of the AREU indicated that the marriage certificate "is a document prescribed in Shari'a law and national law, is prepared by local elders or the mullah, and is then registered in the court documents."

In 13 April 2006 correspondence, the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa indicated that Afghan authorities issue a marriage record book of 14 pages in several formats and colours; its dimensions are 13cm x 17cm (13 Apr. 2006). The marriage record book is usually yellow or white (Afghanistan 5 May 2006). The marriage certificate is a one-page document, has different formats (ibid.), and includes the essential information that appears in the marriage record book (Afghanistan 13 Apr. 2006): identity of the groom and the bride, identity of legal representatives, identity of the marriage witness and name and title of person performing marriage ceremony (ibid. 5 May 2006). According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan, information found in the marriage record book includes:

[translation]

NEKAHNAMA

Document	Description
Page 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbol for the Republic of Afghanistan • The word <i>Nakahnama</i> in Persian • [Persian writing]

Page 2	Blank
Page 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The symbol: • Islamic Republic of Afghanistan • Supreme Court • <i>Nakahnama</i> • No.: xxx/xxx • Date of marriage: Solar Hegira calendar • Place of issue: the court of ... (province or administrative district) • Date of registration: of the booklet • Mahr (the dowry): equivalent to 300 afghanis = approximately US \$10 • Document tax: 100 afghanis = approximately US\$2 • Court seal:
Page 4	Some quotations from the Koran regarding marriage

Identity

Page 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity Husband Wife • Name • Father's name • Grandfather's name • Address • Ethnic group • Tazkira no. • Issued at • Age or date of birth • Signature • Photo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of Wakils (legal representatives) • Identity For the husband For the wife

Page 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Father's name • Grandfather's name • Address • Ethnic group • Tazkira no. • Issued at • Occupation or position • Signature • Photo
Page 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity of witnesses to the marriage • Identity Witness 1 Witness 2 • Name • Father's name • Grandfather's name • Address • Ethnic group • Tazkira no. • Issued a Age or date of birth Occupation or position • Signature • hoto • Notes • No. • Dated at: • Stamp and/or seal of: • Department of consular affairs • Ministry of external affairs
	<p>If there are no legal prohibitions with regard to this marriage Certified and signed by:</p>

Page 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The representative of the quarter or village • The imam of the mosque • Or any other local authority
Page 8	<p>The attestation by participants in or guests at the marriage</p> <p>In the absence of legal obstacles, this marriage was celebrated with the full consent of the two people concerned and in the presence of their witnesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature: • 1: • 2: • 3: • 4: • Etc. •(many people may sign here) • Signature of a judge or a competent civil status officer

(Afghanistan 13 Apr. 2006).

The Counsellor indicated that when the marriage record book is issued outside of Afghanistan, the stamp of the office of consular affairs / department of foreign affairs on page six certifies the authenticity of the document (5 May 2006).

For further information, refer to the attached copy of the form to apply for a marriage certificate at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington (Afghanistan n.d.c, p.4).

Birth Certificate and Voter Registration Card

According to a representative of the AREU, birth certificates are rare and "may in certain very unusual circumstances be obtained from the hospital and approved by the Interior Ministry" (16 Apr. 2006). For further information, refer to the attached copy of the form to apply for a birth certificate at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington (Afghanistan n.d.d, p.5).

The representative of the AREU also informed the Research Directorate that the voter registration card was "issued by the UN Election Committee and [its] only function was to permit one to vote in the recently past elections" (AREU 16 Apr. 2006).

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 additional sources consulted in

researching this Information Request.

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Kabul University (ACKU), eoi.net, International Organization for Migration (IOM), The Refugee Studies Center, United States Library of Congress.

Attachments

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