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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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18 December 2007

Afghanistan: Issuance of *taskera* (*tazkira*) inside or outside of Afghanistan; information contained in the document during the Taliban and post-Taliban period  
 Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 16 April 2006 correspondence, a representative of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) - a donor-funded, Kabul-based research organization (AREU n.d.) - indicated that *tazkiras* [identity documents] are much more common than passports. The Representative stated that about 70 percent of Afghans have such documents (AREU 16 Apr. 2006). Similarly, the report of a Finnish fact-finding mission to Afghanistan states that the *taskira* (referred to in the report as *Tashkera*) is the most commonly used identity document in Afghanistan (Finland Sept. 2006, 36). The United States (US)-issued Reciprocity Schedule states that the *taskera* is "the most universal and accurate document in Afghanistan" (US n.d.). According to the AREU Representative, the identity cards "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" (AREU 16 Apr. 2006).

— In 7 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).

According to the Counsellor of the Embassy of Afghanistan, the description of the *tazkira* (20-page document) is as follows:

[translation]

Document	Description
<b>Tazkira (identity card)</b>	Language (in Persian and Pashto) In the form of a booklet (11 cm by 8 cm) (10 sheets, 20 pages)
<b>Cover</b>	(Symbol of the Republic) <b>Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</b> <b>Tazkira</b>
Page 3	State symbol

	<p style="text-align: center;">Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of internal affairs Department of public identity registration</p>
Page 4	<p>Registration book number Page number Registration number Card number Code number Identity photograph (in colour or black and white) Holder signature</p>
Page 5	<p>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</p>
Page 6	<p>Distinguishing marks Height Eyes Eyebrows Skin colour Hair colour Other marks For the head of the family or another member of the family (Tazkira number, register book number, page, register number)</p>
Page 7	<p>B- Place of registration (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>Mr. or Ms. .... whose name appears on this Tazkira is indeed a national of the Republic of Afghanistan</p>

	Signature Competent authority
Pages 9-10	C - Change of civil or personal status
Pages 11-12-13-14	Change of principal residence Province 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
Pages 15-16	Any event that occurred during military service
Pages 17 - 18	General information note regarding the Tazkira Serial number (XXXXXX) six digits
Pages 19 -20	Page 19-20 Cover (blank).

(Afghanistan 5 Apr. 2006 emphasis in original)

### **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 those who live in the countryside (Afghanistan 7 Apr. 2006). However, not every birth is necessarily registered in Afghanistan, especially if the birth took place at home - as is commonly the case - rather than in a hospital (Afghanistan 22 Nov. 2007). In the case of adults, 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 AREU Representative "[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).

The Finnish fact-finding mission states the following with respect to the process for obtaining a taskira:

The identity of the applicant is confirmed through the local register of population. Due to Afghanistan's violent past, many registers have been destroyed. Because of this, it is common, that village elders/ religious authorities, give a testimony in behalf of the applicant, stating that the applicant is from the family he claims be. If the applicant has living relatives, it is also enough if his father or uncle in person testify to the local district official that the applicant is a kin. Then it is enough that the name of the applicant's relative is in the local register of population. After the identity of the applicant has been verified, the matter is referred to the provincial police. It is common, that the provincial police headquarters has an small passport office. The applicant has to provide his photos of himself and file an official application for "tashkera" with the "petition letter". After filling the application, the application will need the signature of the provincial chief of

police or his deputy. With his approval, the documents will be sent to the administrative capital of the region, where the Tashkera will be printed. The document will then be sent to the police station, where it can be collected by the person or his close relative. (Finland Sept. 2006, 36)

The information regarding the manner in which an individual's identity is established is corroborated by an official with the Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan (22 Nov. 2007). The Official stated that an applicant's living relative(s) will testify to the person's identity (Afghanistan 22 Nov. 2007). If the relative appears in the local register, the applicant's identity is considered to be confirmed (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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Afghanistan. 22 November 2007. Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan in Ottawa. Interview with an official.

\_\_\_\_\_. 7 April 2006. Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan in Ottawa. Telephone interview with the Counsellor.

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United States. N.d. Department of State. "Afghanistan: Reciprocity Schedule." <[http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/reciprocity/reciprocity\\_3493.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/reciprocity/reciprocity_3493.html)> [Accessed 6 Dec. 2006]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Afgha.com, Amnesty International (AI), Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Council on Foreign Relations, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Inter Press Service (IPS), Refugee Council, Relief Web.

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