



Immigration and  
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration  
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### CMR102449.FE

Cameroon: The existence of fraudulent national identity cards and the possibility of obtaining one (2000 - 2007)

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According to a report on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cameroon, published in July 2006 by the Association for Children, Youth and the Future (Association Enfants, Jeunes et Avenir, ASSEJA), a Cameroonian non-governmental organization that works on issues related to child trafficking and child labour (ASSEJA July 2006, 67), [ASSEJA English version] "intermediaries give the children to suppliers, who provide the children with falsified documents, such as birth certificates, identity cards and other documents that would facilitate their travels without being suspected by the police" (ASSEJA July 2006, 49). The March 2005 Swiss Refugee Council (Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés, OSAR) report on identity documents in various African countries states that

[translation]

[t]he falsification of documents is widespread in Cameroon. Birth documents, identity cards, marriage certificates, certificates of arrest, and certificates of release are regularly falsified. There is an open trade in blank documents, although it is clearly illegal.

There is no official template for documents. Authentic documents, issued by the authorities, differ in their appearance. If the authorities run out of official forms, they use copies or use a typewriter to draw up documents. Authentic documents can therefore appear to have been falsified. Only a lawyer can assess, to some extent, a document's authenticity.

French and English are the official languages of Cameroon. Consequently, the various administrations have both French and English names. Official documents are often bilingual. The English version appears below the French. (Mar. 2005, 7)

The report on a fact-finding mission to Cameroon between 23 January and 3 February 2001 by the Danish Immigration Service, citing a number of unidentified sources, notes that many Cameroonians who tried to obtain a passport "often presented false identity cards and birth certificates but were still issued with passports" (Denmark 2001, Sec. 8.1.3). However, the same report explains that, in Cameroon, it is particularly difficult to assess whether administrative documents are genuine because of the many obstacles, including

corruption (Denmark 2001, Sec. 9.1).

No specific information on the existence of fraudulent national identity cards and the possibility of obtaining one in Cameroon could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Association Enfants, Jeunes et Avenir (ASSEJA). July 2006. *L'exploitation sexuelle des enfants à des fins commerciales au Cameroun*.  
<[http://www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Cameroon/Cameroun\\_ESEC\\_French.pdf](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Cameroon/Cameroun_ESEC_French.pdf)>  
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Denmark. 2001. Danish Immigration Service. *Danish Immigration Service: Fact Finding Mission to Cameroon (23 January to February 2001)*.  
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Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR). March 2005. *Informations sur les documents d'identité africains*.  
<[http://www.osar.ch/2005/04/07/050301\\_documents\\_afrika-1?appendLang=fr](http://www.osar.ch/2005/04/07/050301_documents_afrika-1?appendLang=fr)>  
[Accessed 6 Feb. 2007]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** The government of Cameroon, Keesing Reference Systems, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Organisation internationale de la francophonie, United States Department of State.

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