



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Canada

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Cameroon: Information on the existing identity documents, particularly the national identity card, including the agency that issues this card, the conditions and documents required for obtaining the card, and a detailed description of the card and its use; whether a Cameroonian citizen living abroad can obtain a national identity card; whether the former paper cards are still valid (May 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Several sources indicated that a national identity card does exist in Cameroon (Cameroon-Info.net 31 Dec. 2003; *ibid.* 23 July 2001a; *ibid.* 23 July 2001b; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; Embassy of France 12-19 Apr. 2004). According to some sources, this card is computerized (*ibid.*; Cameroon-Info.net 31 Dec. 2003; *ibid.* 23 July 2001a; *ibid.* 23 July 2001b).

Quoting the delegate general of Cameroon's national police force, an article published on the Cameroon-Info.net Website stated that a division of the national police force coordinated activities for the production of computerized national identity cards (23 July 2001b). In reference to the procedures for obtaining and issuing the card, the same source indicated that an applicant must produce

[translation]

a certificate of citizenship (to be obtained from the competent authority), proof of employment, a certified copy of a birth certificate (*acte de naissance* or *extrait d'acte de naissance* or *jugement supplétif*), as well as an original copy and an uncertified photocopy of a marriage licence (for married women). The applicant must pay a tax of 1,000 FCFA and 1,800 FCFA for a digital photograph. If an applicant does not have the aforementioned documents, he or she can go to an identification office with the sum of 6,000 FCFA. The police then collect all relevant information on the applicant, including civil status, photograph, fingerprints, signature and physical description (Cameroon-Info.net 31 Dec. 2003; see also Cameroon-Info.net 23 July 2001a).

The same source explained that

[translation]

the new procedure for issuing the national identity card will gradually come into effect at identification offices throughout the country. The former version of the identity card will gradually be replaced and will remain valid until 30 June 2004.

[Until then] paper identity cards will continue to be accepted for administrative purposes, commercial and banking transactions, and other legal procedures (Cameroun-Info.net 31 Dec. 2003).

According to a report published in October 2003 by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration of the Canadian House of Commons, the Cameroonian national identity card is [House of Commons English version] "used as a form of ID for administrative purposes " (Canada Oct. 2003, 41). Moreover, other sources indicated that this card is required for voting registration (Embassy of France 12-19 Apr. 2004) and to vote in national elections (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). Both the national identity card and the Cameroonian birth certificate provide access to basic services, such as health and education (The Rainforest Foundation n.d.).

Few details regarding the information which appears on the Cameroonian national identity card could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, in reference to Cameroon, the report from the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration of the Canadian House of Commons indicated that the national identity card bears the holder's name, place and date of birth, and registration number (Canada Oct. 2003, 41). The same report also described the card as [House of Commons English version] "a paper card" (ibid.).

No information on whether a Cameroonian citizen living abroad can obtain a national identity card, or on whether other documents could serve as identification 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

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The Rainforest Foundation. n.d. "Baka Rights and Mapping, Cameroon."
<<http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/fcpage.php?fcpage=Baka%20Rights%20and%20Mapping%20-%20Cameroon&language=EN>> [Accessed 12 May 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The chargé d'affaires at the High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon in Ottawa and the Canadian Diplomatic Mission in Cameroon did not respond to a request for information within the time constraints for this Response.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica, High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon, European Country of Origin Information Network (Ecoi), Government of Cameroon, International Crisis Group (ICG), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United States Department of State.

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