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Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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24 November 2006

PAK102043.E

Pakistan: The procedure for applying for a Pakistan Origin Card (POC) and for a National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP); a description of both cards, including whether the information contained on the POC is the same as the information on the NICOP; whether a thumb print is required for the POC and the NICOP

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Pakistan Origin Card (POC)

The following documents must be submitted when applying for a Pakistan Origin Card (POC): a completed POC application form, 2 photographs taken on a blue background, a bank draft or bank receipt, a copy of a foreign passport and one proof of Pakistani origin (Pakistan n.d.a; *ibid.* n.d.b). A copy of a Pakistani passport, a copy of a National Identity Card (NIC), proof of property owned in Pakistan and proof of a relationship with a Pakistani (e.g., a birth or marriage certificate) are all considered valid evidence of Pakistani origin (*ibid.*). The Web site of the Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada also indicates that married women in possession of a NIC in their maiden name must provide a photocopy of their husband's NIC as well as their marriage certificate; that applicants must submit a photocopy of their foreign passport, permanent residence card, landing paper or citizenship card; and that applicants without a NIC must provide photocopies of their parents' NICs (*ibid.* n.d.e). POC application forms can be obtained from any Pakistani embassy or at any of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA)'s Swift Registration Centers (SRC); forms can also be downloaded from NADRA's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.b) and the Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.f). Applications can also be completed online through NADRA's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.g). A copy of the POC application form and instructions on how to complete the form, obtained from NADRA's Web site, are attached to this Response to Information Request.

POCs are valid for 7 years from the date of issuance (*ibid.* n.d.b). The fee for a POC is USD 100 for adults and USD 50 for minors (*ibid.*). The fee cannot be paid at the SRCs; rather, the fee must be paid at designated banks or at Pakistani embassies (*ibid.*). A list of the designated branches and account numbers is posted on NADRA's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.a). POCs can be collected from local NADRA Central Distribution Points or from Pakistani embassies (*ibid.* n.d.b).

National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP)

The National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP) is issued to Pakistanis who work abroad or who hold dual nationality as a substitute identification document to the National Identity Card (NIC) (*ibid.* n.d.c). The following documents must be submitted when applying for a NICOP: a completed English application form; a completed Urdu Application Form, not necessary if the applicant has a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC); four passport-sized photographs; a money order or cashier's check to cover the application fee; a copy of the applicant's Pakistani passport (valid or expired for less than one year); a copy of the applicant's National Identity Card (NIC), RG-2 (Form-B) or, if neither is available, the registration document for Pakistani children born abroad; a stamped and self-addressed return envelope (*ibid.*); and a marriage certificate, if applicable (*ibid.* n.d.d). Application forms can be obtained from any Pakistani embassy, from NADRA provincial or regional headquarters, or be downloaded either from NADRA's Web site (*ibid.*) or the Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.f). Applicants in Pakistan can also process NICOP applications at any NADRA SRC (*ibid.* n.d.d). Applications can also be completed online on NADRA's Web site (*ibid.* n.d.g). However, a 19 July 2006 *Business Recorder* article reports that NADRA's online application server was not functioning and had been suspended for several months. The article also states that NADRA officials require documents that are not listed as required in NADRA's booklet on POC and NICOP applications, thereby creating difficulties

for those applying in person (*Business Recorder*, 19 July 2006). A copy of the NICOP application form and instructions on how to complete the form, obtained on NADRA's Web site, are attached to this Response to Information Request.

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NICOPs are valid for 10 years from the date of issuance (Pakistan n.d.c; *ibid.* n.d.d). The fee for a NICOP is USD 15 for both adults and minors (*ibid.*; *ibid.* n.d.c). The fee can be paid at NADRA SRCs and most Pakistani embassies; some embassies, however, require the fee to be paid at designated banks (*ibid.* n.d.d). A list of the designated branches and account numbers is posted on NADRA's Web site (*ibid.*). NICOPs can be collected from local NADRA Central Distribution Points or from Pakistani embassies (*ibid.*).

The following information was provided by an official from the Consulate General of Pakistan in Toronto in correspondence with the Research Directorate dated 3 November 2006. Contrary to information provided on the Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada and NADRA Web sites, the Official stated that only "one photograph each is required for NICOP and POC applications as per [the] latest instructions." The Official did not clarify when he was given these instructions. He added that thumb prints must be submitted as part of the application when applying for a NICOP or a POC; these prints will also appear on the card itself. Without specifying how, the Official also indicated that the information contained on the POC is "somewhat different" than the information contained in the NICOP.

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

Business Recorder [Karachi]. 19 July 2006. "NADRA Fails to Start NICOP/POC Online Registration." <<http://www.brecorder.com/index.php?id=453469&currPageNo=3&query=nadra&search=1&term=2004-07-01|2006-09-30&supDate=>> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2006]

Pakistan. 3 November 2006. Consulate General of Pakistan in Toronto. Correspondence from an official.

_____. N.d.a. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "POC: The Pakistan Origin Card." <<http://www.nadra.gov.pk/site/295/default.aspx>> [Accessed 30 Oct. 2006]

_____. N.d.b. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "POC: Frequently Asked Questions." <<http://www.nadra.gov.pk/site/329/default.aspx>> [Accessed 1 Nov. 2006]

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_____. N.d.d. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "NICOP: Frequently Asked Questions." <<http://www.nadra.gov.pk/site/328/default.aspx>> [Accessed 1 Nov. 2006]

_____. N.d.e. Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada. "National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis." <<http://www.pakmission.ca/NICOP.pdf>> [Accessed 1 Nov. 2006]

_____. N.d.f. Diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Canada. "Consular Services." <<http://www.pakmission.ca/frameconsularservices.htm>> [20 Nov. 2006]

_____. N.d.g. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "Apply Online." <<http://www.nadra.gov.pk/site/439/Default.aspx>> [Accessed 20 Nov. 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: *Daily Times* [Lahore], *Dawn* [Karachi], Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Dublin, Factiva.

Attachments

Pakistan. N.d.h. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "Pakistan Origin Card" and "Instructions". <<http://www.nadra.gov.pk/images/poc.pdf>> [Accessed 1 Nov. 2006], 2 pp.

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