



Immigration and  
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration  
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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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12 December 2005

### LKA100501.E

Sri Lanka: Passport issuance procedures; whether a minor can obtain his or her own passport; physical description of passport (2003 - 2005)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The following information on passport issuance procedures was reported on an undated page of the Website of the Department of Immigration and Emigration of Sri Lanka. To apply for a new passport, a person must first obtain an application form from the Department of Immigration and Emigration, either in person, by post or by downloading a copy from the department Website (Sri Lanka n.d.a). The person must submit the application form (form K) and three colour photographs meeting department specifications, in addition to originals and photocopies of birth certificate, national identity card, marriage certificate (if applicable), professional certificate or letter of employment (if applicable), previously expired passport, and citizenship certificate (if the applicant is a naturalized citizen) (ibid.).

If applicants wish to include a child under the age of 16 in their passports, they must submit the following documents along with application form C: three colour photographs meeting Department of Immigration and Emigration specifications, plus originals and photocopies of birth certificate of the child in question, marriage certificate of the parents, "[r]elevant" pages of the parents' passports, court order (if the parents are divorced), death certificate (if the parent is a widow or widower), and if the child was born outside of Sri Lanka, section 5(2) of the certificate of citizenship (ibid.).

A child under the age of 16 may apply for a separate passport. To do so, the applicant must submit application form K, three colour photographs meeting department specifications, written consent from the parents, in addition to originals and photocopies of birth certificate, travel documents of the parents, marriage certificate of the parents and section 5(2) of the certificate of citizenship if the child was born outside of Sri Lanka (ibid.).

Applications for passports must be certified by an attorney, a "Civil List Officer," a justice of the peace or a medical practitioner (ibid.). Applicants must submit the application and relevant documents in person to the Department of Immigration and Emigration or any Divisional Secretariat in the country (ibid.). Persons over the age of 55 may submit their application through a third party (ibid.). A fee of Rs. 2,500 [CAN\$28.20 (Bank of Canada 12 Dec. 2005)] is levied on applications for passports for travel to all countries; for same-day service, the fee is Rs. 5,000 [CAN\$56.40 (Bank of Canada 12 Dec. 2005)] (Sri Lanka n.d.a). A 28 July 2004 *Daily News* article reported that the Ministry of Public Security was reviewing the practice of same-day passport issuance due to concerns that security checks on applicants were inadequate. Information on whether same-day service was still available to passport applicants could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

To renew a passport, applicants must obtain application form O and submit it in person to the Department of Immigration and Emigration or the Divisional Secretariats along with their current passport (Sri Lanka n.d.a). The cost of having the validity of a passport extended is Rs. 100 [CAN\$1.13 (Bank of Canada 12 Dec. 2005)] for each year of extension (Sri Lanka n.d.a). A passport is valid for five years, and can be renewed for another five years, for a maximum period of validity of ten years (ibid.). According to information contained on the Website of the high commission of Sri Lanka in Ottawa, a passport that has exceeded its 10-year validity cannot be renewed (Sri Lanka n.d.b).

In a 5 December 2005 interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the high commission of Sri Lanka in Ottawa stated that the ordinary travel passport has a dark red cover and is 64 pages in length. The official also indicated that information on the appearance of the passport, including copies of sample pages, contained on the Website of the Department of Immigration and Emigration, and attached to this Response, is valid (Sri Lanka 5 Dec. 2005). Please refer to the Department Website for a colour version of the attachment (Sri Lanka n.d.c).

According to the Department of Immigration and Emigration, it serves close to 1,200 passport applicants each day, 60 per cent of whom request passports for travel to the Middle East for work purposes (*Sunday Observer* 10 Oct. 2004).

In July 2003, the Department of Immigration and Emigration announced that it would introduce a new series of passports ("N" series passports) containing security features including a "shadow photograph" (*Sunday Observer* 27 July 2003; see also Sri Lanka 7 Aug. 2003), a laser-printed photograph of the passport holder, and computerized information on the holder (ibid.). According to an official with the Department, the "N" series passports, which would replace the "M" series passports, were designed in an effort to prevent counterfeiting of Sri Lankan travel documents (ibid.; *Sunday Observer* 27 July 2003). The Department of Information reported in August 2003 that the introduction of the "N" series passports was "proceeding smoothly" (Sri Lanka 7 Aug. 2003).

In November 2003, the Authorised Officers Union of the Department of Immigration and Emigration reported in a letter to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that some passport officers were receiving fraudulent birth certificates and identity cards from applicants and issuing them passports using the fraudulent documents (*Daily News* 27 Nov. 2003). About 50 per cent of passports issued each day were "questionable," according to the Union, which called for an inquiry into passport issuance procedures (ibid.). Further information on these allegations could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

For information on passport issuance procedures at the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Ottawa, please consult LKA100914.E of 12 December 2005.

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

Bank of Canada. 12 December 2005. "Currency Conversion Results."  
<[http://www.bankofcanada.ca/cgi-bin/famecgi\\_fds](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/cgi-bin/famecgi_fds)> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2005]

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*Sunday Observer* [Colombo]. 10 October 2004. Ananda Kannangara. "ME Job Seekers to Get Passports Through ALFEA." <<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/>> [Accessed 14 Oct. 2004]

\_\_\_\_\_. 27 July 2003. Don Asoka Wijewardena. "New Forgery-Proof Passports in the Offing." <<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/>> [Accessed 28 July 2003]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

The High Commission of Sri Lanka in Ottawa did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Factiva, Sri Lanka government Web portal.

#### Attachment

Sri Lanka. N.d.c. Department of Immigration and Emigration. "Travel Documents Currently in Use" (7 pages). <[http://www.immigration.gov.lk/html/about\\_us/travel\\_documents.html](http://www.immigration.gov.lk/html/about_us/travel_documents.html)> [Accessed 27 Sept. 2005]

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