



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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15 December 2005

### LKA100502.E

Sri Lanka: Issuance procedures for birth certificates and copies thereof; the language that appears on the certificates; circumstances under which a Ministry of Foreign Affairs stamp would appear on the certificate (2005)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In a 5 December 2005 interview with the Research Directorate, the first secretary of the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Ottawa provided the following information. Every child born in Sri Lanka is issued a birth certificate. The issuing authority for birth certificates is the Registrar General. The process for issuing birth certificates is decentralized, so the District Registrars and the Divisional Secretariats are assigned the task of issuing birth certificates. Divisional medical officers at the hospitals will complete a birth certificate at the time of birth on behalf of the Divisional Secretariats. In that case, the signature of the medical officer will appear on the back of the certificate as the issuing authority. Divisional Secretariats may sign the birth certificate under the title "Assistant District Registrar."

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 7 December 2005 and 6 December 2005, the first secretary indicated that, if a child is born outside of a hospital, then the registrar of births and deaths, the local representative of the District Registrar, would issue the birth certificate. The father of the child, or a designated person (Sri Lanka 7 Dec. 2005), must present the registrar with a letter signed by the *Grama Niladari* (ibid. 6 Dec. 2005), the village-level office responsible to the Divisional Secretariat (ibid. 5 Dec. 2005). Once the birth certificate has been issued, the registrar will send a copy to the Divisional Secretariat.

According to information provided by the first secretary on 5 December 2005, the procedure for obtaining a copy of a birth certificate is as follows: Persons may apply for a copy of a birth certificate at the District Registrar's office. The normal processing time is two weeks, though an urgent request may be made and a certificate issued on the same day. No specific identity document is necessary to complete the application, but applicants must provide the full names of the mother and father, the number and date of registration of the birth certificate, and an envelope with a return address. If the applicant does not have the number or date of registration, nor his birth date, then the District Registrar's office can, for a specified fee, undertake the necessary research to locate this information. The first secretary pointed out that, in cases where the information provided by the applicant is incomplete, the issuing procedure could take up to three months. According to the first secretary, copies of birth certificates are deposited with the Divisional Secretariats. If the Divisional Secretariats do not have a copy of the birth certificate, then the Central Registration Office under the authority of the Registrar General will issue a copy.

The language found on a birth certificate is either Sinhala or Tamil, though the issuing officer may also complete the certificate in English. The seal of Sri Lanka is embossed on the certificate.

Regarding a Ministry of Foreign Affairs stamp appearing on a birth certificate, the assistant registrar general of the Department of the Registrar General stated that a stamp of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Consular Division would be placed on a birth certificate requested abroad and channelled through a Sri Lankan mission (Sri Lanka 11 Oct. 2001). The stamp indicates the date the document was received by the foreign ministry (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

Sri Lanka. 7 December 2005. High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Ottawa. Correspondence from the first secretary.

\_\_\_\_\_. 6 December 2005. High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Ottawa. Correspondence from the first secretary.

\_\_\_\_\_. 5 December 2005. High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Ottawa. Meeting with the first secretary.

\_\_\_\_\_. 11 October 2001. Department of the Registrar General. Interview with the assistant registrar general.

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** *Daily News*, Factiva, Sri Lanka Government Web Portal.

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