

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

13 May 2014

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India: Status of the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) and the Multi-purpose National Identity Cards (MNICs)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. National Register of Indian Citizens

According to the website of India's Department of Information Technology National Population Register, the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) is a register that is planned as a subset to the National Population Register (NPR) (India n.d.a). It is planned that the NRIC will be established after the completion of the NPR (ibid.). The NRIC is planned to be established at the local (village) level, the sub-district (Tehsil/Taluk level), District, State and National levels (ibid.). The NRIC will be prepared after the verification of the information in the NPR and the establishment of the citizenship of each individual (ibid.). According to information on the website of the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, the vision is for the establishment of an NRIC that could be continuously updated with information about the registration of births and deaths (ibid. n.d.d).

2. National Population Register

The National Population Register (NPR) is a register of "usual residents" of India, including both citizens and non-citizens (ibid. n.d.a). For the purposes of the NPR, the Department of Information Technology defines a "usual resident" as "a person who has stayed in the local area for the past 6 months or a person who intends to stay in the local area for the next 6 months" (ibid.). The NPR is a project under the jurisdiction of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of the Government of India's Ministry of Home Affairs (ibid. n.d.c). The website of the Department of Information Technology states that the objective of creating the NPR is to:

- Help in better utilization and implementation of the benefits and services under [government] schemes
- Improve planning
- Improve security (India ibid.)

There are several components of the NPR project (ibid. n.d.b). The first step of the project was a house-to-house collection of data by enumerators, which was carried out during the 2011 Census (ibid.). The following data was collected:

- Name of the person
- Name of the person as should appear in National Population Register
- Relationship to Head [of household]
- Sex
- Date of Birth
- Marital Status

- Educational Qualification
- Occupation/Activity
- Name(s) of father, mother and spouse in full
- Place of Birth
- Nationality as declared
- Present address of usual residence
- Duration of stay at present address
- Permanent residential address (ibid.)

The second step of the project, the scanning of the NPR schedule forms, was also completed (ibid.; ibid. n.d.a).

The other steps of the project include "data digitization, biometric enrolment and consolidation, LRUR [Local Register of Usual Residents] correction and validation, de-duplication by UIDAI [Unique Identification Authority of India] and issuance of AADHAR number, and consolidation of cleansed data at ORGI [Office of the Registrar General of India]" (India n.d.b). According to the website of India's Department of Information Technology's National Population Register, these activities have not yet been completed but the data entry and biometric enrolment were started (ibid. n.d.a).

The plan for the acquisition of biometric information, which includes a photograph, fingerprints of ten fingers and two iris images, is through enrolment camps in local areas under the guidance of government civil servants (India n.d.a).

According to the *Times of India*, NPR programmes have been stalled in several areas of India (15 June 2013). The same source indicates that the collection of biometric imprints for the NPR has been progressing slowly in Bengal, with only 22 percent of the population of that state covered (*Times of India* 15 June 2013).

According to the *Economic Times*, the Registrar General of India (RGI) has enrolled the biometric details of 140 million people for the NPR project (29 Jan. 2014). The RGI is reportedly collecting biometric details from residents in the following states and union territories: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep, Udupi, Gadag, Uttara Kannada, Haveri, Davangere, Bangalore (rural), Chikkabalur and Kodagu districts of Karnataka (*Economic Times* 29 Jan. 2014).

3. Multi-purpose National Identity Cards

The issuance of a national identity card (or Smart card) is listed as a "proposed" project by the NPR's website (India n.d.b). Similarly, the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner indicates that authorities envision the issuance of Multi-purpose National Identity Cards (MNIC) based on the NRIC (India n.d.d). According to the *Economic Times*, the RGI is collecting biometric data for the purpose of issuing MNICs, however the source does not provide any details on the proposed MNICs (29 Jan. 2014).

According to an article by the media source *Management Compass*, the NPR proposes that all citizens be issued identity cards with "a micro-processor chip of 6.4 Kb capacity which shall capture the demographic and biometric attributes of each individual" (*Management Compass* 21 Nov. 2013). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Further details about MNICs could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. MNIC versus Aadhaar Card

Sources indicate that the Aadhaar card is something different than the MNIC (Canada 21 Apr. 2014; *Management Compass* 21 Nov. 2013). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official of the Embassy of Canada in New Delhi noted that the Aadhaar card is similar to the proposed MNIC, but is different and run by a different branch of the Indian government (Canada 21 Apr. 2014). *The Economic Times* similarly indicates that the MNIC is under the jurisdiction of the RGI, while the Aadhaar card is under the jurisdiction of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) (29 Jan. 2014).

According to the Canadian official, the mandate of the UIDAI is to issue every Indian resident a unique identification number linked to the resident's demographic and biometric information; the number is

reproduced on a card called the "Aadhaar card" (Canada 21 Apr. 2014). Aadhaar enrolment is not mandatory (ibid.; India n.d.e). The website of the UIDAI indicates that one of the purposes of the Aadhaar number is to serve as proof of address and identity (India n.d.e). According to the *Economic Times*, UIDAI had issued 560 million Aadhaar cards as of January 2014 (29 Jan. 2014). For more information about Aadhaar cards, see Response to Information Request IND103736.

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Canada. 21 April 2014. Embassy of Canada in New Delhi. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

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Management Compass. 21 November 2013. Varun Reddy Sevva. "The Aadhaar Project: The Necessary Burden?" (Factiva)

The Times of India. 15 June 2013. Ajanta Chakraborty. "Identity Crisis Slows Aadhaar Rollout." (Factiva)

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Centre for Public Affairs; Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; India – National Population Register.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Asian Centre for Human Rights; ecoinet; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; India – High Commission of India in Ottawa, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Justice, National Crime Records Bureau; Interpol; United Nations – Refworld; US – Department of State.

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