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. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca.

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<th>ERI104940.E</th>
<th>5 September 2014</th>
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<td><strong>Eritrea: Truck driver's licenses, including issuance procedures and appearance (2013-August 2014)</strong> Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa</td>
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Information about truck driver's licenses in Eritrea was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that in order to receive a truck driver's license, the applicant is required to go through training and pass a road test (Professor 18 Aug. 2014; Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014; Canadian mining company 19 Aug. 2014). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a professor of African studies and political science at Pennsylvania State University, who has published books and articles about Eritrea and the Horn of Africa, said that the person is required to attend "driving school" (Professor 18 Aug. 2014). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of a Canadian mining company that is active in Eritrea said that the driver must receive training from "private groups or through a government training program" (Canadian mining company 19 Aug. 2014). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the Eritrean Consulate in Toronto who provided information unofficially, based on his own personal knowledge, said that the applicant is required to pass a written exam in addition to the road test (Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). The Canadian mining company representative indicated that the examiners who assess the applicant's truck driving skills are from the Eritrean equivalent of the Department of Motor Vehicles (Canadian mining company 19 Aug. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that truck driver's licenses are issued by the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Professor 18 Aug. 2014; Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). Sources note that there are multiple grades of licenses, depending on the vehicle's size or weight (ibid.; Canadian mining company 19 Aug. 2014; Professor 18 Aug. 2014). The Professor and the official said that the levels range from level 1 (the basic level) to level 5 (Professor 18 Aug. 2014; Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). According to the Professor, level 1 is for driving small cars, while level 5 is for driving transport trucks (Professor 18 Aug. 2014). Both the Professor and the official believe that licenses for driving smaller trucks start at level 3 and/or level 4 (ibid.; Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, Aaron Berhane, publisher and editor-in-chief of the Toronto-based Meftih newspaper who was the former editor-in-chief and co-founder of the Eritrean newspaper Setit, said that there are five levels of driving licenses as follows:

- Level 1 for motorcycle;
- Level 2 driving license for small cars that carry up to 10kg;
- Level 3 driving license for driving a taxi or working as a driver to a government office, moreover, you can drive a car that can load up to 60kg;
- Level 4 driving license of a truck without trailer;
- Level 5 driving license of a truck with a trailer. In order to obtain a driving license of level 5, you have to pass level 2, 3, and 4 procedures. (Berhane 1 Sept. 2014)

A sample of a level 2 or "2nd Grade" driving license, which is defined as a license "approved to operate a loaded vehicle weighing not more than 3500 kg or a private vehicle with [a] maximum [of] 8 seats & the above vehicles described with [a] light trailer," was found on Keesing's Documentchecker (Keesing's n.d.). The sample, which contains two stamps dated 26 September 1994 and 31 December 2005, is attached to this Response.
Samples of more recent Eritrean driver's licenses could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that truck driver's licenses take the form of a small booklet (Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014; Professor 18 Aug. 2014; Keesing's n.d.) with multiple pages (ibid.; Professor 18 Aug. 2014). The Professor explained that they are similar to a passport, but smaller (ibid.). According to the Professor, information in the license includes the person's name, identity card number, photo, birthdate, and the level of license (1 to 5) (ibid.). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at the GIGA Institute of African Affairs in Hamburg said that truck driver's licenses likely resemble other driving licenses and "always include a photo of the bearer, his name (first name, father's and grandfather's name), and a stamp from the issuing office" (Associate Professor 14 Aug. 2014). According to the official at the Eritrean Consulate in Toronto, the information in the license includes the individual's full name, birthplace, birthdate (only the year), date of issue and a signature of the authority (Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). He also said that the second page of the license includes the grade of the license, the license number, as well as stamps and signatures of authorities (ibid.).

The Professor was aware of licenses that were blue in colour for all levels, but he also said that it is possible that the colours may have changed (18 Aug. 2014). Similarly, the official was also aware of blue licenses but was not certain if there were also other colours issued (21 Aug. 2014). The sample of the grade 2 Eritrean driving license found on Keesing's Documentchecker is blue (Keesing's n.d.).

According to the official, driving licenses are renewed each year and the date of renewal is included in the license (Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). The accompanying note on the Keesing's sample license states that the level 2 license is valid for one year, as of the date of issue on page 1 of the license, and may be renewed, for a year, eight subsequent times (Keesing's n.d.).

According to the Professor at Penn State, higher level driving licenses for driving trucks are not very common and "only people who want to be employed as truck drivers get them" (18 Aug. 2014). According to the official, level 5 licenses are "very uncommon" (Eritrea 21 Aug. 2014). In contrast, Berhane said that it is "common" for people to have truck driver's licenses because "it gives them more advantage to get a job or sneak out from the harsh life of a soldier" (Berhane 1 Sept. 2014). The Associate Professor at the GIGA Institute said that she believed that it is currently difficult to obtain a truck driver's license, because the transport business is controlled by the military and by enterprises that belong to the PFDJ [People's Front for Democracy and Justice] ruling party. Probably only individuals with close relations to the ruling elite are able to obtain such licenses. (14 Aug. 2014)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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

Associate Professor, GIGA Institute of African Affairs, Hamburg. 14 August 2014. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Berhane, Aaron. 9 May 2014. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

Canadian mining company. 19 August 2014. Correspondence from a representative to the Research Directorate.


Professor of African Studies and Political Science, Pennsylvania State University. 18 August 2014. Telephone interview with the Research Directorate.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Canada – Consulate of Canada in Eritrea, Embassy of Canada in Khartoum; Eritrea – Consulate of the State of Eritrea in Switzerland, Embassy of Eritrea in London, Embassy of Eritrea in the Netherlands, Embassy of Eritrea in Washington DC, Ministry of Information; Eritrean-Canadian Human Rights Group of Manitoba; Human Rights Concern Eritrea; International Organization for Migration; Regional Mixed...
Migration Secretariat; three lawyers based in Eritrea. Representatives of the following organizations were unable to provide information: Human Rights Watch; National Document Centre, Canadian Border Services Agency.

**Internet sites, including:** Africa Confidential; Africa Research Bulletin; Amnesty International; Center for Public Integrity; ecoinet; EdisonTD; Eritrea – Embassy of Eritrea in London, Embassy of Eritrea in Washington DC, Ministry of Information; Factiva; Forced Migration Review; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; Jane’s Intelligence Review; Journal of Refugee Studies; International Journal of Refugee Law; Transparency International; UN – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld, UNHCR.

**Attachment**


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