CHN102486.E

China: Reports of corrupt officials issuing fraudulent Resident Identity Cards to unsuspecting rural residents and selling the authentic ones to "snakeheads" on the black market (2004 - 2007) Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 26 March 2007 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a representative of the New York-based Human Rights in China (HRIC) states that

[i]t is completely conceivable that corrupt officials could be involved in the illegal production and sale of fraudulent [identity] documents. Reports to this effect circulate regularly, sometimes involving passports as well ... The fake documents would be most useful to people with active arrest warrants trying to evade police notice, or for obtaining employment or housing.

The August 2004 report, Characteristics of Chinese Human Smugglers, published by the United States (US) National Institute of Justice (NIJ), indicates that there are several specialized roles of Chinese human smugglers, or "snakeheads" (Aug. 2004, 9; see also Chin and Godson 24 Jan. 2006, 45). One of these roles includes that of "document vendors," who are involved the production or procurement of identity documents for illegal immigrants (US Aug. 2004, 9; Chin and Godson 24 Jan. 2006, 45). According to the report, "[s]ome documents are authentic, obtained through official or unofficial channels, while others are fraudulent" (US Aug. 2004, 9-10; see also Chin and Godson 24 Jan. 2006, 45).

Corrupt public officials in China are reportedly sometimes key members or partners on "snakehead" organizations (US Aug. 2004, 9; Chin and Godson 24 Jan. 2006, 45). The NIJ report states that

[c]orrupt officials tend[ ] to occupy such low-level but crucial government functions as passport inspectors at border checkpoints, clerical staff for passport applications, and officials who issue documents for residential or marital verification. (US Aug. 2004, 10; see also Chin and Godson 24 Jan. 2006, 46)

Further information on the involvement of corrupt officials with "snakeheads" and in the issuance of fraudulent identity documents could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In an effort to reduce fraud and to correct Resident Identity Card mistakes, the general public in China reportedly now has access to the country's Public Security Bureau (PSB) database, which contains information on 1.3 billion citizens (Xinhua News Agency 9 Feb. 2007; see also China Internet Information Center 11 Apr. 2007). Via the Internet or text message, citizens can reportedly verify whether a Resident Identity Card holder's name matches his or her identity card numbers (Xinhua 10 Feb. 2007; China Internet Information Center 11 Apr. 2007). If the name and numbers correspond, then a picture of the cardholder is sent (ibid.; Xinhua News Agency 9 Feb. 2007). Beijing-based Xinhua News Agency reports that, according to the PSB, about 90 percent of criminals make use of fraudulent identity cards (10 Feb. 2007).
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


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: A professor from the School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University and a researcher at the Institute for International Studies at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Asia Times [Hong Kong], British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, Human Rights in China (HRIC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Laogai Research Foundation, United Kingdom Home Office, United States - Congressional Executive Committee on China (CECC), United States Department of State.

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