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6 July 2011

CHN103753.E

China: The replacement of first-generation Resident Identity Cards (RICs) with second-generation RICs; authorities responsible for RIC replacement; geographic areas that have been covered during the replacement campaign, specifically in Guangdong and Fujian provinces; whether all citizens are required to replace first-generation cards with second-generation cards; whether authorities collect first-generation cards when second-generation cards are issued

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Replacement of first-generation Resident Identity Cards

Chinese government and media sources indicate that, as of 2011, more than one billion people throughout China have replaced their first-generation Resident Identity Cards (RICs) with second-generation RICs (*China Daily* 8 Apr. 2011; China 19 May 2011; *ibid.* 9 Mar. 2010).

Authorities responsible for issuing second-generation RICs

An official at the Embassy of China in Ottawa stated, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, that the Chinese police are responsible for the production and issuance of second-generation RICs (China 19 May 2011). In addition, the Fuzhou government website indicates that local police stations under the Public Security Bureau are processing the RICs in Fuzhou (Fuzhou 21 Jan. 2011). Specifically, the Ministry of Public Security states that residents should apply for their second-generation RICs at the local police station where they are registered as permanent residents (China 9 Mar. 2010). Article 6 of the 2003 Law of the People's Republic of China on Resident Identity Cards similarly states that "the resident identity cards shall be uniformly made and issued by public security organs" (China 2003). Article 8 of the Law indicates that

[a] resident identity card shall be signed and issued by the public security organ under the people's government at the county level at the place where a person's permanent residence is registered. (China 2003)

Geographic areas covered during the replacement campaign

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the official at the Embassy of China in Ottawa stated that the majority of people in China, including those in Guangdong and Fujian provinces, have been issued second-generation RICs (China 19 May 2011). He said that some people who do not have second-generation RICs

are children or are living abroad (ibid.). He indicated that the process of issuing the second-generation RICs is ongoing since some people need to replace lost or damaged cards or change their personal information (ibid.).

An article posted on the *Langya News Media* website states that some elderly people in remote mountain villages have not been able to access the second-generation cards because they "are in difficult family circumstances, have poor health, mobility issues or other problems" (4 Nov. 2010). The embassy official also noted that there may be some very remote areas of China that are still in the process of issuing the second-generation cards to replace first-generation ones (China 20 May 2011).

Chinese media sources report cases in which police officers have travelled to remote areas to process the second-generation RICs for residents (*Langya News Media* 4 Nov. 2010; *Fuzhou News* 8 Apr. 2011). In one example, Daigu police officers of the Mengyin County Public Safety Bureau travelled to the remote mountain village of Shizijian to take photographs and process second-generation RICs for the elderly people in the village (*Langya News Media* 4 Nov. 2010). In another example, police officers in Bili village of Luoyuan County set up a temporary service centre for second-generation RIC processing, so that the residents there would not have to travel to the next nearest police station 20 kilometres away (*Fuzhou News* 8 Apr. 2011).

Whether replacement of first-generation RICs is mandatory

According to information posted on the website of China's Ministry of Public Security, there is no time frame in place as to when first-generation RICs will no longer be accepted (China 9 Mar. 2010). The embassy official also clarified that Chinese citizens can continue to use their first-generation RICs if their cards have not yet expired (ibid. 20 May 2011). He explained that although the government is suggesting that those with valid first-generation RICs change to the second-generation card, they are not forcing citizens to do so (ibid.). Xinhua News Agency reports that an official from a provincial public security department has stated that organizations and individuals can not decline first-generation RICs if the cards are still valid (4 Sept. 2010). However, Chinese media sources also report that second-generation RICs are required in some provinces to register for college and university admission examinations (*WCC Daily* 10 May 2011; Xinhua 14 Sept. 2009).

Collection of first-generation cards when second-generation cards are issued

The Chinese embassy official indicated that when citizens apply for the second-generation RICs, they turn in their first-generation cards to officials (China 20 May 2011). However, he noted that second-generation RICs can be issued to people who have lost their first-generation cards (ibid.). On its website, the Ministry of Public Service states that, when issued a second-generation RIC, the first-generation RIC must be returned to the public security authorities; first-generation cards that are not returned to authorities are no longer valid once the second-generation RIC has been issued (China 9 Mar. 2010).

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.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Officials at the Embassy of Canada in Beijing were unable to provide information for this Response.

Internet sites, including: Asia Society, *Asia Times Online*, *Beijing Review*, China Internet Information Center, *China Perspectives*, *Current History*, *The Economist*, European Country of Origin Information Network, Factiva, Freedom House, Human Rights in China, Human Rights Watch, IHS Jane's, United Nations Refworld, United States, Department of State--Country Reports.

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