



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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10 February 2005

CHN43231.E

China: Information on a bilingual (Chinese/English) birth certificate issued under the seal of the Ministry of Health, including the year when this type of certificate was first introduced and any special design and layout features; whether the certificate is standard throughout China; procedures for obtaining the certificate (2002-2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information on the Birth Certificate

A law professor at the University of Hong Kong, who is also the director of the Centre of Comparative and Public Law, provided the following information in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 16 and 23 January 2005.

While unable to indicate whether the certificate was standard throughout China, the professor stated that the bilingual birth certificate which is attached to this Response was "exactly the same" (23 Jan. 2005) as the one that had been issued to his daughter (16 Jan. 2005).

Though he could not indicate the year when this type of certificate was first introduced in China, the professor indicated that he received this bilingual birth certificate upon his daughter's birth in 2001 (16 Jan. 2005).

The professor further stated that he showed the sample certificate attached to the Information Request to a "very experienced" doctor at the Children's Hospital in Shenzhen, who opined that the certificate was authentic (23 Jan. 2005). According to the professor, the key to verifying such a certificate's authenticity lies in the birth certificate number, which can be checked at the "health administration of the place of birth" (23 Jan. 2005).

When asked about the procedures for obtaining the certificate, the professor stated the following on his personal experience:

... the process was a very rigid one and the hospital ... had little discretion in issuing the certificate because of family planning policies. There was one terminal in the hospital through which one authorized doctor ... could register each new birth with the competent government authority (16 Jan. 2005).

No corroboration of the information provided by the professor could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

On 21 October 2004, the Xinhua News Agency reported that, beginning on 1 December 2004, China's Health Ministry and its Public Security Ministry would begin to jointly issue a new birth certificate in order to "reduce forgeries." The Xinhua News Agency claimed that these new birth certificates, the most recent version since 1 January 1996, would be issued by "delivery institutions" throughout China by 1 July 2005 (21 Oct. 2004). The new certificate was to feature "electronic watermark bar codes" and contain information such as the baby's health condition at birth and the identity of its relatives (Xinhua 21 Oct. 2004).

No further information on the birth certificate could be found by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

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

Professor of law at the University of Hong Kong and director of the Centre of Comparative and Public Law. 23 January 2005. Correspondence.

_____. 16 January 2005. Correspondence.

Xinhua News Agency. 21 October 2004. "New Birth Certificate Issued to Fight Forgeries." <<http://www.china.cn/english/Life/109954.htm>> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Australia. 1999. Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Country Information Service. *A Guide to PRC Documentation Part 3* .

_____. March 1995. Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Country Information Service. *A Guide to PRC Documentation Part 2* .

Oral sources: Human Rights in China, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Ottawa, United States Department of State.

Two other oral sources did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: BBC, China Internet Information Center, United States Embassy in China.

Attachment

China. n.d. Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China. Sample birth certificate. (Attached to Information Request)

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