



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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| The Board | | 21 September 2010 |
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| About the Board | RWA103584.E | |
| Biographies | | |
| Organization Chart | Rwanda: Procedures for obtaining the National Identity Card, including a physical description of the card; information on when recent versions of the national identity card were made available and where individuals can obtain such cards; whether previous versions of the card are still valid (2007 - 2010) | |
| Employment | | |
| Legal and Policy | | |
| References | Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa | |
| Publications | | |
| Tribunal | | |
| Refugee Protection Division | According to the 2008 Rwandan law which governs the issuance of the national identity cards, | |
| Immigration Division | Possession of and carrying the national identity card is obligatory to every Rwandan aged sixteen (16) and above. Every Rwandan aged sixteen years (16) shall be issued [a] national identity card within a period not exceeding six (6) months following the day [he] or she attained that age. (Rwanda 2008, Art. 11) | |
| Immigration Appeal Division | | |
| Decisions | During a 27 August 2010 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a consular officer at the Embassy of Rwanda in Washington, DC stated that an individual who wishes to obtain a Rwandan national identity card needs to go to the relevant office and prove his or her identity and origin, either with a birth certificate or with a letter from a local leader at the cell administrative level attesting to the applicant's identity (Rwanda 27 Aug. 2010). The Consular Officer stated that an administrative unit has been created to administer the newer electronic national identity cards (ibid.). In a separate 9 September 2010 telephone interview, the same Consular Officer stated that individuals in the Kigali district, where the main office is located, can go directly to this office to apply for a national identity card; people in other districts can go to district branch offices (ibid. 9 Sept. 2010). | |
| Forms | | |
| Statistics | | |
| Research | | |
| Research Program | | |
| National Documentation Packages | | |
| Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets | | |
| Responses to Information Requests | The Consular Officer stated that not many people in Rwanda have birth certificates and that attestations are therefore often needed (ibid.). The Consular Officer explained that a district is divided into sectors, which are divided into cells comprising 15 to 20 households (ibid. 27 Aug. 2010). He further indicated that a cell leader would know everyone under his responsibility and can therefore attest to an individual's identity (ibid.). The Consular Officer stated that a cell leader's attestation is verified at the sector level and that the sector leader adds his own attestation to confirm the veracity of the cell leader's attestation (ibid.). | |
| Recent Research | | |
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| Proactive Disclosure | The Consular Officer stated that birth certificates or attestations are verified at the district [(commune) ibid. 9 Sept. 2010] level, the application is processed, and the information is then sent to the national office, which prints a card and sends it to the district (commune) office, which finally distributes the card (ibid. 27 | |

Aug. 2010). During the 9 September 2010 telephone interview, the Consular Officer further explained that pictures and fingerprints are digitally taken in the relevant district offices, and that personal information is verified through a database (ibid. 9 Sept. 2010) The Consular Officer stated that the district office electronically sends the application information to the national office where the equipment for printing the cards is located (ibid.).

According to the Consular Officer, it is not possible to obtain the card from outside Rwanda as an individual has to go in person to an office in Rwanda (ibid.). However, according to a 31 March 2008 article in the Kampala-based *East African Business Week*, Rwandans living abroad in countries where there are Rwandan embassies were registered during a process to register those who would receive the cards. The article indicates that the project intends to provide cards to all registered Rwandans, but does not indicate how registered Rwandans living abroad could obtain the card or how expatriate Rwandans in countries where there are no Rwandan embassies could be registered (*East African Business Week* 31 Mar. 2008).

Characteristics of the card

Chapter 2 of the 2008 Rwandan *Ministerial Order N°12/07.01* provides the following details of the characteristics of the card (Rwanda 17 July 2008). According to Article 2, the card measures 85.6 mm by 54 mm (ibid. Art. 2) while Article 3 indicates that the card is made of synthetic material (ibid., Art. 3).

Article: 4 Inscriptions on the identity card

On the first side, on which the photo of the holder is, the following shall appear:

1. From the left to the right side, appears the Seal of the Republic of Rwanda followed by the words "REPUBLIC OF RWANDA" in light blue colored letters; below are the words "REPUBLIC OF RWANDA", both followed by a rectangle having the successive colors like as of the flag of the Republic;
2. Below the above mentioned in point 1 of this Article is a black straight line from the lower part of the words "REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA" to the lower part of the rectangle as mentioned in the preceding point;
3. On the left side of the line appears the photograph of the possessor of the identity card in a white vertical egg shape. The egg shape is forty millimeters (40 mm) in large diameter and twenty-nine point three millimeters (29.3 mm) in small diameter. Beside [it] is an egg [shape] in which appear rays of the sun having on twenty four (24) strokes. This egg shape is forty seven millimeters (47 mm) in large diameter and thirty eight point sixty fifteen millimeters (38.75 mm) in small diameter. At the right side of the egg shape is the reduced ghost photo of the holder of the identity card;
4. Below the black straight line mentioned as in point 2. of this paragraph from the top to the bottom the following words are written successively in Kinyarwanda and English as follows:
 - a) INDANGAMUNTU/ NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD;
 - b) Amazina/names;
 - c) Itariki yavutseho/date of birth;
 - d) Igitsina/sex;
 - e) Aho yatangiwe/place of issue;
 - f) Umukono wa nyirayo/signature.

4.5 Below the photograph in the vertical egg [shape] as mentioned in point 3 of this paragraph, the following words are written: "Indangamuntu/National ID N°" followed by the net 16 digit number of the identity card.

On the back of the identity card shall appear:

[From] the top on the right side is a representation of the seal of the Republic of Rwanda in the middle of a representation of the national flag made in monochromatic color. Below appears the reduced ghost photo of the holder of the identity card.

At the top from the left to the right side;

on the top of the sun egg [shape] of twenty six point six millimeters (26.6 mm) in horizontal diameter, the following words are written in the sun rays having twenty four (24) strokes:

1° first line: "Utoraguye iyi karita, wayishyikiriza ubuyobozi bwa polisi bukwegereye";

2° second line: "If found, please return this card to the nearest police station";

3° Below the egg shape is written:

4° first line: "Uzayikoresha binyuranyije itegeko azahanwa";

5° second line: « Whoever uses this card contrary to the law will be punished ».

Below these words, is a black and gray rectangle "2D [barcode]". The rectangle is seven points five millimeters (7,5 mm) in length and one point nine millimeters (1,9 mm) in width. (ibid., Art. 4)

Reproductions of the back and front of a national identity card sample that reflect the characteristics described above are found on Keesing Reference Systems' document checker service for identity documents (Keesing Reference Systems n.d.a; ibid., n.d.b). However, contrary to what is described in Point 1 of Article 4 of the Ministerial Decree cited above, the very top of the front of the card has the words "REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA" in the Kinyarwanda language, in light blue coloured letters, rather than "REPUBLIC OF RWANDA" in English, which is instead found immediately below in smaller, light green coloured letters (Keesing n.d.a). As well, the black straight line described in Point 2 of Article 4 is found beneath the words "REPUBLIC OF RWANDA" rather than beneath "REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA" (ibid.). During the 27 August 2010 telephone interview, the Consular Officer agreed that the card sample found on Keesing's website had the correct characteristics (Rwanda 27 Aug. 2010).

Issuance and validity

The Consular Officer stated that he was unsure of when the latest version of the card was issued (Rwanda 27 Aug. 2010). However, an article found on the official website of the Government of Rwanda reports that the Rwandan president and his wife were among the first to receive a new version of the card on 21 July 2008 (ibid. 21 July 2008). The article stated that 1.6 million cards were ready to be distributed in July 2008 (ibid.). The law governing the issuance of new cards came into effect on 16 July 2008 (ibid. 2008, Art. 15).

Keesings' document checker service notes that versions of the card preceding the 2008 version are no longer valid and states that the validity of the 2008 card is "unlimited" (Keesing Reference Systems n.d.a). In contrast, the Consular Official stated that previous versions remain valid while the country transitions from the previous paper versions of the national identity card to the newer, plastic cards

(Rwanda 27 Aug. 2010). A 14 March 2010 article from the Rwandan daily *The New Times* reports on efforts by the government's National ID Project to encourage people to have their photographs taken to complete their registration for new cards. The article states that according to those responsible for the National ID project, 95 percent of those registered have received their card already (*The New Times* 14 Mar. 2010).

According to an 11 February 2010 press release by De La Rue Identity Systems, the company has been chosen to develop a new eID card that will replace the National ID card with a document that will add more information to allow Rwandans to access certain government services (De La Rue 11 Feb. 2010). The new card will integrate information from the Rwandan ID card, passport and driver's licence (ibid.). The press release states that "[t]he first eID documents are expected to be distributed in around six months, following successful completion of the pilot phase" (ibid.).

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

De La Rue Identity Systems. 11 February 2010. "De La Rue to Provide East Africa's First eID Project." <<http://www.delarue.com/Home/EastAfricaID>> [Accessed 7 Sept. 2010]

East African Business Week [Kampala]. 31 March 2008. Alex Ngarambe. "UK Firm Wins \$18m ID Tender." (AllAfrica/Factiva)

Keesing Reference Systems. N.d.a. "Rwanda - RWA - Domestic Identity Card: Front (B1)." <<http://www.documentchecker.com/rdo.dll/id>> [Accessed 27 Aug. 2010]

_____. N.d.b. "Rwanda - RWA - Domestic Identity Card: Back (B1)." <<http://www.documentchecker.com/rdo.dll/id>> [Accessed 27 Aug. 2010]

The New Times [Kigali]. 14 March 2010. Charles Kwizera. "Rwanda: National ID Photography Resumes Today." <<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/index.php?issue=14200&article=26928>> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2010]

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_____. 17 July 2008. Ministry of Justice. *Ministerial Order N° 012/07.01 of 17/07/2008 Determining the Characteristics of the National Identity Card and the Amount of Contribution Towards the Cost of the Identity Card.* <http://amategeko.net/display_rubrique.php?ActDo=ShowArt&Information_ID=2415&Parent_ID=30701192&type=public&Langue_ID=An&rubID=30701217#30701217> [Accessed 7 Sept. 2010]

_____. 2008. Ministry of Justice. *Law N°14/2008 of 04/6/2008 Governing Registration of the Population and Issuance of the National Identity Card.* <http://amategeko.net/display_rubrique.php>

ActDo=all&Information_ID=2411&Parent_ID=30701178&type=public&Langue_ID=An&rubID=30701184> [Accessed 27 Aug. 2010]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to obtain information from a representative of the Rwandan Embassy in Ottawa were unsuccessful.

Internet sources, including: AllAfrica.com, Ambassade de la République du Rwanda à Bruxelles, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.et), Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refworld, Rwanda - Ministry in the Office of the President in Charge of Information and Communication Technology (MINICT), Rwanda - Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Rwanda Development Gateway, Rwanda Information Portal.


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