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25 April 2007

SYR102398.E

Syria: Procedures to obtain, renew and replace a national identity card
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the Syrian national identity card was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the following information was obtained from an official at the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons in Brussels:

... Syrians should request their ID cards at their local administrations (town or village municipality). Between 2003 and 2005, all Syrian ID cards had to be renewed. Old ID documents had to be replaced by modern plastic ID cards the size of a bank card. Yet in 2006, many Syrians had still not received their new ID documents. (Belgium 28 Feb. 2007)

The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons reports that some Syrians had problems obtaining their national identity card because they no longer lived in their originating town where their application had to be submitted (ibid. 18 Apr. 2007). Estimates suggest that upon submission of the application to one's municipality, it takes three to ten months to receive the national identity card (ibid.).

An official from the Canadian Embassy in Damascus provided the following information:

At age 16, applicants should go to the civil status department and apply for a [national identity card]. Applicants get finger-printed before the [card] is issued. There is no expiry date on the [card] and therefore no requirement for renewal. The only time a renewal is required is if the government decided to change the format of the [card]. However, if a [card] is lost, applicants should report the case to the police and obtain a police report to apply for a replacement. (Canada 28 Mar. 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.

Reference

Belgium. 18 April 2007. Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. Correspondence with an official.

_____. 28 February 2007. Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. Correspondence with an official.

Canada. 28 March 2007. Canadian Embassy, Damascus. Correspondence with an official.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Consular officials at the Embassies of Syria in Ottawa and Washington did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Asylum Law, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Beijing, Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Canberra, Freedom House (FH), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Keesing Reference Systems, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syrian Embassy - London, Syria Gate, United Kingdom (UK) Immigration and Nationality Directorate, United States (US) Department of State.

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