

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email [Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

2 December 2014

### ERI105012.E

Eritrea: Birth certificates issued by the Public Registration Office of Zoba Maekel [Maakel] (Central Zone); including whether the certificate has a standard format and appearance (2013-November 2014)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Birth Certificates in Zoba Maekel

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Eritrea stated that the procedures to obtain a birth certificate in Eritrea are as follows:

(i) the parent or legal guardian writes an application letter to the Area Administration (lowest administrative structure) stating his/her desire to obtain the same; (ii) The Area Administration checks the physical file of the household whether the person concerned is registered in the physical file. If not, the Area Administration advises the claimant to have the name of the person concerned to be entered in the physical file; (iii) To have the name of the person entered in the records of the physical file, the parent or legal guardian is required to produce a vaccination card which is drawn by a clinic after confirming information from the Birth Notification of a maternity hospital/MCH; (iv) Then the Area Administration writes a letter of support to the Maekel Region Public Registration Office, requesting that the person be assisted with the issuance of a birth certificate; (v) The Public Registration Office requires the parent or legal guardian to produce copies of his or her nationality ID card and residential ID cards of the parents/guardian alongside with the support letter of the Area Administration; (vi) Upon paying the sum of ERN 25.00 (roughly USD1.60) the Public Registration Office gives to the parent/legal a form to be filled and signed by the parents/guardian; and (vii) The birth certificate is finally issued. (UN 1 Dec. 2014)

The UNHCR representative also provided the following procedures to obtain a birth certificate from abroad:

With his/her application letter, [the Eritrean expatriate] has to attach a copy of his/her nationality ID card and proof of his/her payment of the 2% Government tax payable by Eritrean nationals in the Diaspora that is authenticated at the Consular Section here in Asmara and a duly issued Power of Attorney to a person in Eritrea. (ibid.)

A copy of an Eritrean birth certificate, provided by the UNHCR representative, is attached to this response. For further information on issuance procedures and requirements for birth certificates in Eritrea, please refer to Response to Information Request ERI104539.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative at the Eritrean Canadian Community Centre of Metropolitan Toronto (ECCC), a community-based, non-profit organization that provides support to Canadians of Eritrean descent as well as newly arriving Eritreans in Toronto (ECCC n.d.), indicated that he was

not aware of any standard form for birth certificates in Eritrea but that "some regions use older forms and there are new forms available" (ECCC 27 Nov. 2014). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of the US in Asmara indicated that "there is a 'template' [for the Eritrean birth certificate] in the sense that the form looks somewhat alike but each region is slightly different" (1 Dec. 2014).

The US embassy official stated that it is possible to have two different spellings of the central region ('Zoba Maekel' or 'Zoba Maakel') on the same birth certificate, noting that "there is no standard transliteration of Tigrinya [the language spoken in Eritrea]" and that they "see name changes all the time" on birth certificates (26 Nov. 2014). Similarly, the representative at the ECCC indicated that an Eritrean birth certificate can contain two different spellings of Zoba Maekel (ECCC 27 Nov. 2014). Lastly, the UNHCR representative indicated that it is "only an issue of inadvertence and non-standardization of spellings" and that "Maakel or Maekel simply means Central region" (1 Dec. 2014).

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

Eritrean Canadian Community Centre of Metropolitan Toronto (ECCC). N.d. "ECCC Mission Statement." <<http://www.ecctoronto.ca/home.html>> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2014]

\_\_\_\_\_. 27 November 2014. Correspondence from a representative to the Research Directorate.

United Nations (UN).. 1 December 2014. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Correspondence from a representative to the Research Directorate.

United States (US). 26 November 2014. Embassy of the United States in Asmara, Eritrea. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1 December 2014. Embassy of the United States in Asmara, Eritrea. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral Sources:** Attempts to contact the following representatives and organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Canada – Consulate of Canada in Asmara; Demographic and Health Surveys Program; Eritrea – Consulate of Eritrea in Toronto, Embassy of Eritrea in Washington, DC, Ministry of Information; UK – British Embassy in Asmara; World Health Organization.

**Internet sites, including:** AllAfrica; Amnesty International; Association of Eritrean Journalists in Exile (AEJE); Capital Eritrea News; ecoi.net; Eritrean-Canadian Human Rights Group (Hidmona); Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; Keesing's Documentchecker; Newstime Africa; United Nations – High Commissioner for Refugees, Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld, Reliefweb, UNICEF; US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; US – Department of State, USAID.

## Attachment

Eritrea. 5 March 2008. Certificate of Birth. Municipality of Asmara, Public Registration Office. Sent to the Research Directorate by the UNHCR representative.

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