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.

MRT105237.FE

Mauritania: National identity documents in use in Mauritania, including the passport, identity card, birth certificate and marriage certificate; description of those documents and procedures for obtaining them (2012July 2015)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Identity Card

According to the National Population and Secure Document Register (Agence nationale du registre des populations et des titres sécurisés, ANRPTS) of Mauritania, the identity card is an official document establishing the identity and nationality of the holder (Mauritania n.d.a). The Decree No. 2012-030/Repealing and Replacing the Decree No. 200.028 of 19 March 2000, Instituting a National Identity Card and Establishing the Requirements for its Issuance (Décret n° 2012-030/abrogeant et remplaçant le décret n° 2000.028 du 19 mars 2000, instituant une carte nationale d’identité et fixant les conditions de sa délivrance) sets out the coming into force of the card and the procedure for its issuance (ibid., 2012b). The Decree is attached to this Response (Appendix 1).

The Decree stipulates that the identity card is valid for ten years and is mandatory for all Mauritians who are at least sixteen (16) years of age and enrolled in the National Population Biometric Register (Registre national biométrique des populations) (Mauritania 2012b, Art. 2-3). The Decree also states that applications to issue, replace or renew the national identity card must be done in person at a Citizen Welcome Centre (Centre d’accueil des citoyens, CAC) (ibid., Art. 4). The Mauritanian Information Agency (Agence mauritanienne d’information, AMI) states that in June 2013, there were 180 welcome centres issuing biometric civil status documents to the country’s 216 communes (AMI 20 June 2013).

Details on the procedures to follow and the documents required to apply for a card, including for minors or individuals under guardianship or if a card is lost or stolen, are set out in the Decree herein attached (ibid.).

According to an article published in January 2013 on the Islamic Republic of Mauritania Hub (Carrefour de la République islamique de Mauritanie, CRIDEM) information portal, the former national identity card, issued in 2010, which was valid for 10 years, became invalid in certain administrations where users were encouraged to present the latest version of the national biometric identity card (CRIDEM 7, Jan. 2013). The article adds that

[translation]

The measure taken by certain administration[s] to ask that the new national biometric identity card be presented has been interpreted as a pressure tactic to make users go to ANRPTS centres to pick up their newly issued national identity cards or to simply register (ibid.).
Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Issuance Fee

According to sources, a fee of 1,000 ouguiya [approximately C$5] must be paid in order to obtain the identity card (Fall 7 Sept. 2013; Sahara Media 23 June 2012). Sahara Media, an online Mauritanian daily, indicates that in the past, payment was not required to obtain the previous version of the identity card (ibid.). Furthermore, in an op-ed published on CRIDEM, the Chair of Secours Net, a Mauritanian economic development and human rights NGO (Secours Net, n.d.) states that [translation] “[t]his amount is a barrier to many citizens ... to obtain their new identity card” (Fall, 7 Sept. 2013).

AMI reports that 1.6 million identity cards had been made as of June 2013, and 65 percent of them had been delivered (AMI, 20 June 2013).

1.2 Physical Characteristics

ANRPTS states that the card is made of polycarbonate, which makes it [translation] “break and crack resistant” (Mauritania, n.d.a). Because the information on the card is engraved by laser, it is allegedly [translation] “indelible” (ibid.). The card contains the holder’s photograph and personal information, which are also stored on an electronic microchip (ibid.).

A copy of the front and back of the identity card is attached to this Response (Attachment 2). Details on the appearance, security features and data contained on the card are provided in articles 8 and 9 of the Decree herein attached (Attachment 1).

2. Passports

Passports issued by Mauritania are regulated by Decree No. 2012-032/PM/MIDEC Regulating Travel Documents (Décret N° 2012-032/PM/MIDEC réglementant les titres de voyage) (Mauritania 2012a). The Decree is attached to this Response (Attachment 3). Passports are valid for a five-year [translation] “non-extendable” period (Mauritania, 2012a, Art. 12). Article 9 of the Decree specifies that [translation]

applications to issue, replace or renew an electronic and biometric passport can only be made by the applicant in person at a CAC. It will be delivered by the CAC where the application was submitted (ibid. Art. 9).

In addition, Article 13 of the Decree stipulates that the passport can be delivered only to the applicant or their legal representative (ibid., Art. 13). Chapter 2 of the Decree provides additional details on the procedures related to passport issuance, replacement and renewal (Mauritania, 2012a). Article 2 of the Decree stipulates the procedure to follow if travel documents are lost or stolen inside or outside the country (ibid.).

2.1 Physical Features

The [translation] “regular” passport of Mauritania is olive green-coloured and contains 34 or 66 pages (Mauritania, 2012a, art. 4). There is also a burgundy-coloured diplomatic passport and a blue service passport (ibid.). According to ANRPTS, [translation] “the biometric passport is a secure official document made up of polycarbonate pages[;] it also has an electronic microchip containing data (ibid. n.d.b). ANRPTS adds that [translation] “because of the laser-engraved information, the biographical information in the passport cannot be amended or altered” (ibid.). Chapter 5 of the attached Decree provides a detailed description of the passport and its security features (ibid. 2012a).

3. Extracts of Civil Status Documents

Article 19 of Law No. 2011-003 Repealing and Replacing Act No. 96.019 of 19 June 1996 Regarding the Civil Status Code (Loi n° 2011-003 abrogeant et remplaçant la loi n° 96.019 du 19 juin 1996 portant Code de l’état civil) states that, [translation] “[i]t is mandatory for all civil status documents to be drafted in Arabic; the extracts can be drafted in any other customary language” (Mauritania 2011, Art. 19). The Law also specifies that civil status documents indicate the following:

- the name of the document;
- the national identification numbers (numéros nationaux d'identification, NNI) and the nationality of the document’s beneficiaries;
- the nationality of the father, mother and other parties;
• the year, month, day and place of the event;
• the year, month, day and place where the document was issued;
• the NNIs and the first and last names of all parties cited therein; and
• if required, the photograph or any other necessary note (ibid.).

In addition, the Law stipulates that the person’s identity must show in succession:

• their NNI;
• their first name;
• their father’s first name; and
• their last name (ibid., Art. 20).

3.1 Birth Certificate Extract

According to the file on identity and travel documents (Reciprocity Schedule) published by the United States (US) Department of State on Mauritania, “[a] birth certificate (extrait d’acte de naissance) can be obtained from the enrollment center (centre d’accueil des citoyens) of the commune in which the child was born” (US n.d.). The US Department of State indicates that

[w]ithin 60 days of the birth, the applying parent must provide the hospital birth record and the marriage certificate of the parents. If the birth registration is done more than 60 days after the child’s birth, a court judgment is required before the birth certificate can be issued. The applying parent must go to the court with two witnesses who can confirm the birth of the child. The parent must then take this judgment to the enrollment center along with the hospital birth record and the marriage certificate to receive a birth certificate. The fee for this service is 200 UM [about C$1] (ibid.).

Similarly, on the ANRPTS website, it states that the parent who, in the 60 days following the child’s birth, makes a declaration and applies for a birth certificate must provide the CAC in the commune where they live with [translation] “the extract from the birth register of the health care facility” where the child was born along with the parents’ marriage certificate extract (Mauritania n.d.c).

According to ANRPTS, in addition to the mandatory information in the civil status documents required by the Law and detailed above, the birth certificate is to indicate:

• the child’s gender;
• the child’s first and last name; and
• the date, place of birth, occupation and address of the father and mother (ibid.).

3.2 Marriage Certificate Extract

According to the US Department of State,

[a] marriage certificate (extrait d’acte de mariage) attesting the marriage of a man and woman may be obtained from the enrollment center of the commune in which the marriage occurred. Supporting documents required include a court judgment delivered by the Cadi (judge) and identification paperwork for the spouses. Mauritanian citizen spouses must provide national identification cards. Non-citizens must provide a residence card (carte de sejour). The fee is 200 UM (US n.d.).

According to ANRPTS, it is mandatory for a marriage certificate to indicate:

• the name of the document;
• the first and last name, date and place of birth, occupation and address of the husband and wife and their NNIs;
• the first and last name, date and place of birth, nationality and address of the “Wely” guardian and the NNI;
• the first and last name, date and place of birth, occupation and address of the representatives, duly constituted, of the husband and wife, and their NNIs;
• the first and last name, addresses, nationalities and NNIs of the witnesses[;] and
• the first and last name, address and nationalities of the mother and father of the couple (Mauritania n.d.d).

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


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful: Mauritania – Agence nationale du registre des populations et des titres sécurisés, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Paris, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Washington.

Websites, including: AfricaTime; Alakhbar; Le Calame; ecoi.net; Factiva; IRIN; Kassataya; Mauritania – e-services.gov.mr, Mauritania.mr, ministère des Affaires internationales et de la Coopération, Servicepublic.gov.mr; Maurisahel; United Nations – Refworld; NOORINFO.com.

Attachments
