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Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Guinea: National identity card, including the requirements and procedure to obtain the card, time frames for issuing the card, characteristics of the card and its lamination process (2011-2014)

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1. Legislative Framework

According to a report that the government of Guinea and UNICEF commissioned from a group of development consultants at the Civil Registration Centre for Development [1] (CRC4D), headquartered in the Hague, Netherlands, Decree 254 of September 1995 and the 1998 bulletin on the procedure for issuing the national identity card make up the legal framework for the Guinean national identity card (CRC4D Mar. 2014, 52). In 20 November 2014 correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative at CRC4D provided a copy of these two documents, which are attached to this Response.

The Decree, the official name of which is Decree D/95/254/PRG/SGG of 1 September 1995 Introducing a New National Identity Card and a New Consular Card (Décret D/95/254/PRG/SGG du 1er septembre 1995, instituant une nouvelle carte nationale d'identité et une nouvelle carte consulaire), states as follows:

The national identity card is mandatory for all citizens from fifteen (15) years of age (Guinea 1995, art. 3)

The national identity card is valid for a renewable term of five (5) years and is issued only to Guinean nationals (ibid., Art. 2).

According to the US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Guinean authorities require all Guinean citizens over 18 years of age to present a national identity card at security checkpoints along the borders and on certain strategic routes in Conakry (15 Apr. 2014, 18).

However, according to an estimate from Sabari Technology, the company that makes Guinea's national identity cards, cited by CRC4D, in 2013 only 20 percent of Guinean citizens who required a national identity card had one (CRC4D Mar. 2014, 32, 41).

In addition, Decree 254 of 1 September 1995 states that [translation] "[e]very applicant for a national identity card registered in the central database receives a national identification number comprising fifteen digits that corresponds to the card number" (Guinea 1995, Art. 12).

In 18 November 2014 correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative from Bao & Fils, a law firm in Conakry founded in 1986 that practises corporate law (Bao & Fils n.d.), identifies the provisions of Order A/2008/813/MEF/SGG of 28 March 2008 on the Setting of Rates for Stamp Duties and Fees for Issuing National Identity Cards (Arrêté A/2008/813/MEF/SGG du 28 mars 2008 portant fixation des tarifs des droits de timbre et des frais d'édition des cartes nationales d'identité). In 20 November 2014 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative enclosed a copy of this document, which is attached to this Response. According to article 1 of the Order, [translation] "[t]he rates of stamp duties and fees for issuing national identity cards are set according to the following scales:

Duty on stamp to be applied = 5,000 Guinean francs (GNF) [C\$0.80]

Fee for issuing the national identity card = 10,000 GNF [C\$1.60]" (Guinea 2008).

Additional information on the legislation related to the national identity card in Guinea could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Characteristics of the Card and Lamination Process

Decree D/95/254/PRG/SGG of 1 September 1995 Introducing a New National Identity Card and a New Consular Card describes the physical characteristics of the national identity card as follows:

[translation]

Material: watermarked paper 90 gr/m²

Format: ID-2 or 70 x 100 mm

Printing: 4 colours offset printing with specific characteristics of the Republic of Guinea

It is entirely plasticized using a heat-seal laminating pouch that is 2 x 125 microns thick and 74 x 105 mm in format.

In addition to its seven-digit sequential number, the national identity card bears the issuing date and a national identification number assigned to the cardholder under the conditions set out in article 11 [...] (Guinea 1995, art. 6).

Pursuant to article 2 of this same Decree, the national identity card must also contain:

[translation]

... the cardholder's surname, given name(s), sex, date and place of birth, parentage, place of residence, profession and description.

The cardholder's left index fingerprint and signature must be affixed on the card. A

recent photograph of the cardholder, with the head uncovered, as well as a statutory revenue stamp cancelled by the stamp of the authority must also be affixed on it (ibid., art. 2).

The 1998 bulletin establishing the procedure for issuing the new national identity card states that the police officer responsible for the file laminates the card at the time the card is handed over to the applicant (Guinea 1998).

The representative from the firm Bao & Fils provided the following information on the physical characteristics of the national identity card and the information it contains:

[translation]

The Guinean national identity card is rectangular in shape and is roughly 9.5 cm long and 6.5 cm wide; the document is fuchsia in colour and contains the following:

On the front: photo identification of the cardholder on a yellow background, two emblems, the stamp of the police station that issued the document, a space for the cardholder's signature;

On the back: the revenue stamp of 5,000 francs [C\$0.80], the left index fingerprint, one emblem, the stamp and signature of the police commissioner.

[...]

The information on the identity card includes the following:

On the front: the cardholder's surname and given name, sex, date and place of birth, parentage and profession.

On the back: the cardholder's place of residence, height, skin colour and hair colour, as well as the issuing date and location and the expiry date (18 Nov. 2014).

Two sources also refer to the lamination of the national identity card but do not provide details about the process (AGP 23 Oct. 2014; Kalenews.org 9 Jan. 2014).

3. Issuing Authority

According to the CRC4D report, the police service, which reports to the ministry of security, is responsible for issuing the national identity card (CRC4D Mar. 2014, 52). Article 6 of Order A/2008/813/MEF/SGG of 28 March 2008 on the Setting of Rates for Stamp Duties and Fees for Issuing National Identity Cards states that [translation] "[t]he issuance of national identity cards remains the exclusive jurisdiction of the police service responsible for forensic identification" (Guinea 2008). A number of sources report that the national identity card is, more specifically, issued by the central police stations (AGP 23 Oct. 2014; Guinée Signal 9 July 2014; Kalenews.org 9 Jan. 2014).

According to a report released by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guinea, the city of Conakry has seven central police stations: two in the commune of Ratoma, two in the commune of Matoto, and one in each of Kaloum, Dixinn and Matam (UN Oct. 2014).

4. Requirements and Procedure to Obtain a Guinean Identity Card

According to an article posted on the online news site Aujourd'hui en Guinée (AG) [2], the following criteria must be met with the central police stations in the capital [Conakry], in this case those in Kaloum and Dixinn, in order to obtain a national identity card:

be of Guinean nationality

speak at least one of the country's national languages

have a birth certificate

have a residence certificate

complete an interview (AG 17 Apr. 2014)

However, according to the same article, none of these criteria are applied in practice (ibid.).

According to the representative from the firm Bao & Fils, a birth certificate extract, two pieces of photo identification and a residence certificate are the documents most often required to obtain a national identity card (18 Nov. 2014). However, according to the Agence guinéenne de presse (AGP), a public service media outlet in Guinea for 54 years (AGP 6 Nov. 2012), in addition to the residence certificate and a copy of the birth certificate, a Guinean citizen who wants to obtain a national identity card must also provide a copy of his or her voter card or former identity card as additional documentation (ibid. 23 Oct. 2014).

An article posted on Balekonews.com [3] indicates that the commissioner responsible for the central police station must sign the Guinean national identity card only in the presence of the applicant, specifically [translation] "after verifying that the applicant is Guinean by asking a few questions, for example, about his or her neighbourhood or native village" (12 Jan. 2011).

The representative from the firm Bao & Fils stated that [translation] "the process must be undertaken by the applicant in person, because the applicant's fingerprints are taken at the time the application is made and because the card is signed by the cardholder at the time it is issued" (18 Nov. 2014).

In addition, a number of sources report police wrongdoing with regard to the issuance of national identity cards, with some police officers demanding higher prices than the official price, making it difficult for Guinean citizens to obtain a card (AGP 23 Oct. 2014; Kalenews.org 9 Jan. 2014; Aujourd'hui en Guinée 17 Apr. 2013). However, the sources consulted differ as to the official price of the Guinea national identity card: 15,000 GNF [about C\$2.50] (AGP 23 Oct. 2014; Aujourd'hui en Guinée 17 Apr. 2013), 20,000 GNF [about C\$3] (AGP 27 May 2014), or even 25,000 GNF [C\$4] according to another source (Kalenews.org 9 Jan. 2014).

5. Time Frames for Issuance

Information on the official time frames for issuing Guinean national identity cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to a 23 October 2014 article from the AGP, a Guinean citizen can obtain a national identity card within three days at a cost of 50,000 GNF [C\$8] or even the same day by paying 70,000 GNF [about C\$11]. In both cases, this is a higher price than the official price of 15,000 GNF.

Two sources consulted also report that in 2013 Guinea experienced a shortage of identity cards (CRC4D Mar. 2014, 52; VisionGuinée.Info 22 Nov. 2013).

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.

Notes

[1] The Civil Registration Centre for Development (CRC4D) is a consulting firm that employs consultants in a variety of disciplines in order to offer solutions for civil registration improvement and ID management in developing countries (CRC4D n.d.).

[2] Aujourd'hui en Guinée is an online Guinean news site created in 2009 by a former general manager of the Guinean newspaper L'Observateur (Radio-Kankan 13 Aug. 2009).

[3] Balekonews is an online Guinean news site (Balekonews 9 Aug. 2010).

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Guinea. 2008. Arrêté A/2008/813/MEF/SGG du 28 mars 2008 portant fixation des tarifs des droits de timbre et des frais d'édition des cartes nationales d'identité. Document sent to the Research Directorate by the representative at the office of Bao & Fils.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Guinea- Embassy in Ottawa; Coalition nationale de Guinée pour les droits et la citoyenneté des femmes; Conakry office of the Organisation internationale pour les migrations; Sabari Technology.

Internet sites, including: Afrik.com; AllAfrica; Droit-Afrique.com; ecoi.net; Economic Community of West African States; Factiva; Galanyi.com; GuinéeConakry.info; Interpol; Keesing Reference Systems; Lexadin; Sabari Technology; SecureIDNews.com; United Nations - Refworld.

Attachments

1. Guinea. 1995. Décret D/95/254/PRG/SGG du 1er septembre 1995, instituant une nouvelle carte nationale d'identité et une nouvelle carte consulaire.
2. Guinea. 1998. Divisional Commissioner. Procédure de délivrance de la nouvelle carte nationale d'identité.
3. Guinea. 2008. Arrêté A/2008/813/MEF/SGG du 28 mars 2008 portant fixation des tarifs des droits de timbre et des frais d'édition des cartes nationales d'identité.

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