



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Mauritania: National identity documents in use in Mauritania, including the passport, identity card, birth certificate and marriage certificate; description of those documents; procedures for obtaining those documents (August 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Identity card

In correspondence dated 3 July 2006, a representative of SOS Slavery Mauritania (SOS Esclaves Mauritanie), a Mauritanian anti-slavery organization, indicated that the identity document in use in Mauritania is the national identity card. This information was corroborated on 4 July 2006 by the Ambassador of Mauritania in Ottawa. In correspondence, the First Counsellor at the Embassy of Mauritania and the Representative of SOS Slavery stated that the national identity card has been in use since 2001 and that it is valid for 10 years (Mauritania 16 July 2006; SOS Slavery 3 July 2006). The national identity card is [translation] "a hard plastic rectangular card that bears the national emblem, a colour photograph, an individual bar code, and the signature of the director general of the national police" (Mauritania 4 July 2006). It also bears the holder's given and family names, the date and place of birth, the card's period of validity, and the name of the issuing authority (ibid. 16 July 2006). The identity card is [translation] "linked to the holder's fingerprints in a national database" (ibid.). The Representative of SOS Slavery added that the identity card is the same size as a European or American calling card and that it is [translation] "tamper-resistant" (3 July 2006).

Actual-size (Mauritania 4 July 2006, 1) and magnified (SOS Slavery 3 July 2006, 2 - 3) images of the Mauritanian national identity card are attached to this Response.

The Representative of SOS Slavery stated that national identity cards are issued by the director general of the national police [translation] "on the strength of a birth certificate duly issued by a municipal or administrative authority" (3 July 2006). The Ambassador of Mauritania added that the birth certificate must appear in the 2001 census database and that the applicant must appear in person to obtain his or her identity card (4 July 2006). No additional information on the documents that a person must submit or on the procedures for obtaining a Mauritanian identity card could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

According to the Representative of SOS Slavery, the first cards issued soon began to [translation] "have worn edges from frequent use" (3 July 2006). He also indicated that many Mauritians, particularly those in remote areas, do not have a national identity card or still possess the old paper document, which has not been issued since 2002 (SOS Slavery 3 July 2006).

Passport

In correspondence, the First Counsellor at the Embassy of Mauritania and the Representative of SOS Slavery indicated that the Mauritanian passport is issued by the national security branch (Mauritania 16 July 2006; SOS Slavery 3 July 2006). In order to obtain a passport, a person must submit a valid birth certificate

and recent police record and report in person to receive his or her passport (Mauritania 4 July 2006). No additional information on the documents that a person must produce or on the procedures he or she must follow to obtain a Mauritanian passport could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

According to the First Counsellor at the Embassy of Mauritania, a passport is valid for three years and contains the following information: the holder's given name, family name, date and place of birth; the card's period of validity; the name of the issuing authority; and a photograph (Mauritania 16 July 2006).

Keesing Reference Systems provides information on two types of Mauritanian passports (n.d.a; n.d.b). The first type has a six-digit number, preceded by a letter (Keesing n.d.a). The number appears as perforations at the top of all pages and is printed on the first page (ibid.). Other information on the passport includes the following:

Passport 1**validity:**

3 years, page 5

a 3-year extension possible

booklet

c. 153 x 103 mm / 6.0 x 4.1 in.

32 pages

lamine:

pages 1 and 3, clear laminate, sewn in

photo:

glued, with an ink stamp (Keesing n.d.a).

The second type of passport has a seven-digit number, preceded by a letter (Keesing Reference Systems n.d.b). The number appears as perforations at the top of all pages and is printed on the first page under the title (ibid.). Other information about the passport includes the following:

Passport 2**validity:**

5 years, page 5 entry 'It expires on'

extension possible

booklet:

c. 125 x 88 mm / 4.9 x 3.5 in.

32 pages

lamine:

pages 1 and 3, matt laminate with print, sewn in

photo:

glued, with an ink stamp (Keesing n.d.b).

No information on why Mauritania has two types of passports could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

Birth and marriage certificates

A birth certificate can be obtained from the mayor of the commune in which the applicant was born, or from a *cadi* (Islamic judge) (US 16 May 2006). If there is no *cadi*, then it can be obtained from the head of the administrative district in which the person was born (ibid.).

A marriage certificate can be obtained from the *cadi* of the place where the marriage occurred in cases of Muslim weddings; the document can be obtained from the head of the administrative district in cases of non-Muslim marriage ceremonies (ibid.).

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, the First Counsellor at the Embassy of Mauritania stated that birth and marriage certificates [translation] "are not considered to be pieces of identification because they do not bear a photograph" (16 July 2006). No information on the procedures for obtaining Mauritanian birth and marriage certificates or on the information contained in those two documents could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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.

References

Keesing Reference Systems. N.d.a. "Mauritania - National Passport: Cover (P1)." <<http://www.documentchecker.com/rdo.dll>> [Accessed 17 July 2006]

_____. N.d.b. "Mauritania - National Passport: Cover (P2)." <<http://www.documentchecker.com/rdo.dll>> [Accessed 17 July 2006]

Mauritania. 16 July 2006. Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Ottawa. Correspondence from the First Counsellor.

_____. 4 July 2006. Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Ottawa. Correspondence from the Ambassador.

SOS Esclaves Mauritanie. 3 July 2006. Correspondence from a representative.

United States (US). 16 May 2006. Bureau of Consular Affairs. "Mauritania: Reciprocity Schedule." <<http://travel.state.gov/visa/reciprocity/Country%20Folder/M/Mauritania.htm>> [Accessed 20 July 2006]

Attachments

Mauritania. 4 July 2006. Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in Ottawa. "Carte d'identité nationale mauritanienne," page 1.

SOS Esclaves Mauritanie. 3 July 2006. "Carte d'identité nationale mauritanienne," pages 2 and 3.

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