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Rwanda: Whether recent changes have been made regarding the issuance of identity cards

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

According to correspondence from the Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration dated 3 July 2008 and forwarded by the Embassy of Rwanda in Ottawa to the Research Directorate on 11 July 2008, Rwandan identity cards have not been issued since 2005 (Rwanda 3 July 2008). According to two sources consulted by the Research Directorate, Rwanda stopped issuing identity cards in 2006 (Rwanda 18 May 2007; Syfia Grands Lacs 20 Sept. 2007). Pending the imminent launch of new identity cards, [translation] "complete identity certificates" (*attestations d'identité complète*) are being used as replacement documents (Rwanda 3 July 2008).

A 6 July 2008 article in *The New Times* of Kigali cites the Coordinator of the National Identity Card Project as stating that "the new electronic national identity cards for Kigali city residents are ready" and will be distributed once the law on citizenship and nationality is passed (*The New Times* 6 July 2008).

The new identity cards will be electronic (ibid. 12 Apr. 2008; Syfia Grands Lacs 20 Sept. 2007), and two types of card will be offered. The first type of identity card, costing 500 Rwandan francs (approximately 0.93 Canadian dollars [Oanda 16 July 2008]), is designed for the general public and will have a computer chip containing [translation] "basic information: name, father's and mother's names, region of origin and of residence, occupation, date of birth, marital status, dependent children under 16 years of age, and spouse's name" (ibid.; see also *East African Business Week* 31 Mar. 2008). The second type of identity card, costing 15,000 Rwandan Francs, is intended for the most affluent citizens, and its chip will contain "numerous types of information, such as health insurance information, Social Security Fund number, voter's registration number, driver's licence number ..." (Syfia Grands Lacs 20 sept. 2007; see also *East African Business Week* 31 Mar. 2008). The cards will be issued in two separate phases (*East African Business Week* 31 Mar. 2008).

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

East African Business Week. 31 March 2008. Alex Ngarambe. "UK Firm Wins \$18M Rwanda ID Tender." (Rwanda Development Gateway) <http://www.rwandagateway.org/article.php3?id_article=8487> [Accessed 15 July 2008]

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Additional sources consulted

Oral sources: The Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in Washington and the Canadian High Commission in Kenya did not respond to requests for information within time constraints.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica.com, Factiva, Freedom House, government of Rwanda, United States Department of State.

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