

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#)

> [Research Program](#)

> Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

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.

20 August 2015

BGD105263.E

Bangladesh: Reports of fraudulent documents (2011-2015)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

The *Ad-hoc Query on Assessment of Authenticity of Documents Produced by Asylum Seekers from Bangladesh*, a document published in 2014 by the European Commission that compiled input provided by 21 EU member countries, indicates that the following countries noted that fraudulent documents have been submitted by Bangladeshi asylum seekers: Austria, Belgium, Latvia, Sweden and Norway (EU 15 Dec. 2014, 1-6). According to the response by the Netherlands, "it seems to be very easy to get access to several types of [fraudulent] documents" (ibid. 5). In contrast, Hungary responded that of the six cases of documents that they assessed for authenticity, no evidence of forgery was found (ibid., 4).

Latvia, Sweden and Norway indicated that they have seen cases of fraudulent passports being submitted by Bangladeshi asylum seekers and that the items that are commonly falsified include photos and personal information that has been changed (ibid., 4-5). Latvia noted that the passports themselves appear to be produced by the authorities, but that changes to the original content in the passports are then made (ibid., 4).

According to a website of the US Embassy in Dhaka that informs applicants about the risks of providing false information when trying to obtain a US immigration visa, "three common trends of fraud in immigration visa cases" in Bangladesh are:

- age fraud, whereby an individual falsifies their age and provides "legitimate documents with false information";
- relationship fraud, whereby the applicant claims a particular relationship, such as a spouse or parent, or the identity of someone else, in order to gain a visa or immigration benefit; and
- employment-based fraud, whereby the applicant provides documents or other information to prove that they meet the qualifications for a position for which they applied (US n.d.).

Further and corroborating information on the specific types and prevalence rates of fraudulent documents could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Reports of Fraudulent Document Use

Sources report that in May 2012, the UK Border Agency and Bangladesh Police arrested 19 Bangladeshi individuals on suspicion of providing forged documentation and false bank statements with their visa applications, when they attempted to travel to London (ITV News 28 May 2012; *bdnews24* 27 May 2012;

EastLondonLines 29 May 2012). Sources further state that the visa applicants admitted paying up to 10,000 pounds [approximately C\$20,297] each for forged documents (ibid.; *bdnews24* 27 May 2012).

According to a report on labour migration issues in Bangladesh by the Dhaka Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in October 2012, three Libyan nationals in possession of "684 fake Bangladeshi passports" were arrested by Bangladesh police (UN 2014, 23). The same source states that the individuals arrested admitted to trafficking people from Bangladesh to Libya (ibid).

Sources report that several individuals of Rohingya origin [a stateless Muslim minority living along the Burma-Bangladesh border (MRG 2 Apr. 2014)], were arrested while attempting to use fake Bangladeshi passports to travel abroad in 2012 (*The Daily Star* 30 Aug. 2012) and 2013 (*Dhaka Tribune* 14 May 2013).

In May 2015, the US Embassy in Dhaka issued a press release warning Bangladeshi visa applicants against using fraudulent documents when applying, stating that they had "noticed a steep increase in the use of fraudulent documents to obtain U.S. visas" (US 5 May 2015). The same source issued a press release in April 2014 stating that, in coordination with the Dhaka Metropolitan's Police Gulshan Division, five applicants were arrested by local police for using fraudulent documents in their US visa applications to the Embassy (ibid. 6 Apr. 2014).

3. Acquisition and Production of Fraudulent Documents

A 2013 report on migration trends in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, produced by the Asia Foundation, a San Francisco-based non-profit international development organization that focuses on development issues in Asia (The Asia Foundation n.d.), states that "informal intermediaries, or *dalals*," play a significant role in both "irregular and regular migration" between these countries (ibid. 2013, 1). Thomson Reuters Foundation, a UK charitable organization funded by media firm Thomson Reuters (Thomson Reuters Foundation n.d.), reported in a 2013 article that Bangladeshi migrant workers pay "unlicensed labour brokers - some linked to organised crime groups - large sums of money for travel documents and employment papers" (ibid. 19 Nov. 2013). The ILO report similarly states that in Bangladesh, some "recruiting agents, illegal sub-agents, and travel agents (also called 'tour operators' in Bangladesh)" are involved in producing "fake passports, job contracts, [and] BMET [Bangladesh Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment] clearance certificates" (UN 2014, 36).

The May 2015 press release by the US Embassy in Dhaka states that consular officials "often encounter legitimate travelers who place their trust in an unscrupulous broker" and who are then denied a US visa and subsequently arrested "for violating Bangladeshi law" (US 5 May 2015). The April 2014 US press release about the arrest of five visa applicants for document fraud [see Section 2] states that they "admitted [to] using the services of a broker who allegedly instructed them to lie about their purpose of travel and manufactured fraudulent documents to aid in the deception" (ibid. 6 Apr. 2014).

A 2012 report produced by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a Bangladeshi civil society think-tank focused on research and policy advocacy concerning economic development (CPD n.d.), states that "[a] anecdotal information suggests that there are more than 50,000 middlemen [*dalals*] currently active in Bangladesh" (ibid. Feb. 2012, 102). Further and corroborating information on the number of *dalals* or other informal brokers in Bangladesh could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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

The Asia Foundation. 2013. *Labour Migration Trends and Patterns: Bangladesh, India, and Nepal 2013*. <<https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/LabourMigrationTrendsandPatternsBangladeshIndiaandNepal2013.pdf>> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015]

_____. N.d. "About the Asia Foundation." <<http://www.asiafoundation.org/about/>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Bdnews24. 27 May 2012. "19 Bangladeshis Arrested for Fraud." <<http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2012/05/27/19-bangladeshis-arrested-for-fraud>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). February 2012. "Chapter 5: Migrant Workers Outflow and Remittance Inflow: Current Trends, Challenges and Future Options for Bangladesh." by Mustafizur Rahman and Syed Saifuddin

Hossain in *State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2010-11 and Outlook for FY2011-12*.
<http://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FY2012_-Migrant-Workers-Outflow-and-Remittance-Inflow-Current-Trends-Challenges-and-Future-Options-for-Bangladesh.pdf> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015]

_____. N.d. "Profile." <<http://cpd.org.bd/index.php/about-us/profile/>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

The Daily Star. 30 August 2012. Shudipta Sharma. "16 Rohingyas with Fake Passports Held at Bangladesh Airport." <<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/30/16-rohingyas-with-fake-passports-held-bangladesh-airport.html>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Dhaka Tribune. 14 May 2013. Ashif Islam Shaon. "Three Rohingyas Arrested." <<http://www.dhakatribune.com/crime/2013/may/14/three-rohingyas-arrested>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

EastLondonLines. 29 May 2012. Masruba Tasnim. "Nineteen Arrested for Brick Lane Visa Fraud." <<http://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2012/05/nineteen-arrested-over-brick-lane-festival-visa-frauds/>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

European Union (EU). 15 December 2014. European Commission and European Migration Network. *Ad-Hoc Query on Assessment of Authenticity of Documents Submitted by Asylum Seekers from Bangladesh*. <[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/ad-hoc-queries/protection/2014.633_emn_ahq_on_authenticity_of_documents_from_bangladesh_\(wider_dissem\).pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/ad-hoc-queries/protection/2014.633_emn_ahq_on_authenticity_of_documents_from_bangladesh_(wider_dissem).pdf)> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

ITV News. 28 May 2012. "Nineteen Visa Applicants Arrested in Bangladesh." <<http://www.itv.com/news/london/update/2012-05-28/nineteen-visa-applicants-arrested-in-bangladesh/>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Minority Rights Group International (MRG). 2 April 2014. "Burma Must Allow Rohingya to Self-Identify in Census: MRG." <<http://www.minorityrights.org/12344/press-releases/burma-must-allow-rohingya-to-selfidentify-in-census-mrg.html>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Thomson Reuters Foundation. 19 November 2013. Mukhtadir Rashid and Dikshya Singh. "Fraudulent Labour Brokers Fleece Migrant Workers in Bangladesh and Nepal." <<http://www.trust.org/item/20131119152327-nx2r1>> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015]

_____. N.d. "About the Foundation." <<http://www.trust.org/about-the-foundation/>> [Accessed 19 Aug. 2015]

United Nations (UN). 2014. International Labour Organization (ILO). Country Office in Bangladesh. 2014. *The Cost: Causes of and Potential Redress for High Recruitment and Migration Costs in Bangladesh*. <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_303633.pdf> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015]

United States (US). 5 May 2015. Embassy of the United States of America, Dhaka. "U.S. Visa Applicants Cautioned Against Use of Fraudulent Documents." <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/bangladesh/621750/Press_Releases_2015/Visa_Fraud_May_5_2015.pdf> [Accessed 7 Aug. 2015]

_____. 6 April 2014. Embassy of the United States of America, Dhaka. "Police Arrest Visa Applicants for Presenting Fraudulent Documents at the U.S. Embassy." <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/bangladesh/621750/Press%20Releases%202014/Consular_Visa_Fraudulence_Apr_6_2014.pdf> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015]

_____. N.d. Embassy of the United States of America, Dhaka. "Immigrant Visas - Providing Accurate Information." <<http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/immigrant-visas-providing-accurate-info.html>> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2015]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Asian Human Rights Commission; Bangladesh – Bangladesh Police, High Commission in Ottawa, Institute of International and Strategic Studies; Centre for Policy Dialogue; Transparency International Bangladesh; United States – Embassy in Dhaka.

Internet sites, including: Arab News; Asian Human Rights Commission; Bangladesh – Bangladesh Police, Department of Immigration and Passports, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment; ecoi.net; European Union – European Anti-Fraud Office; Factiva; Human Rights Watch; International Civil Aviation Organization; International Organization for Migration – Dhaka; INTERPOL; IRIN; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; Transparency International Bangladesh; United Nations – Refworld, UN Bangladesh, UN Development Programme in Bangladesh.

[Tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Date modified: 2015-08-13