

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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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 the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

28 July 2017

### LKA105848.E

Sri Lanka: Fraudulent documents, including national identity cards, registers of birth and birth certificates; difference between registers of birth and birth certificates (2015-July 2017)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Fraudulent Documents

A 2017 country information report on Sri Lanka prepared by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) states the following:

[D]ocument fraud is prevalent in Sri Lanka. Most official records in Sri Lanka continue to be kept in hard-copy format: government departments lack computerized information databases. Genuine identity documents can be obtained by submitting fraudulent supporting documents. Counterfeit documents are the primary cause of fraud within the issuance process for the NIC [national identity card], passport or driver's license. (Australia 24 Jan. 2017, 37)

The *Trafficking in Persons Report 2017* by the US Department of State indicates that in Sri Lanka, "[s]ome sub-agents reportedly worked with officials to procure forged or modified documents, or genuine documents with falsified data, to facilitate travel abroad" (US June 2017, 370).

Sources dated May 2016 report that the Sri Lankan police raided a fake Government Agent's office (*kachcheri*) [1] that was producing birth certificates and NICs in Colombo (*Daily News* 17 May 2016; *Sunday Times* 22 May 2016). A 2016 article by the *Daily News*, an English-language newspaper in Sri Lanka, reports that the documents issued by this fake *kachcheri* "bear the signature of the Assistant Registrar with official, authentic original seals affixed to [them]" (*Daily News* 17 May 2016).

An article published on the Sri Lanka Navy's website reports that a raid was carried out in September 2016 by the "naval personnel ... in coordination with [the] Galle police" against a site "producing forged documents close to the Galle [a city located about 100 kilometres south of Colombo (OWHC n.d.)] Lighthouse" (Sri Lanka [2016]). The same source indicates that among the seized material, there were "1 incomplete national identity card [and] 31 birth certificates" (Sri Lanka [2016]).

An article published in October 2016 by the *Daily Mirror*, an English-language newspaper in Sri Lanka, reports that in Borella ["the largest suburb in Colombo" (Lakpura LLC n.d.)], the police seized forged documents, including birth certificates in a house (*Daily Mirror* 21 Oct. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In an article published in November 2015, the same source cites Dr. Sumithra Tissera, "Director (Medical) of the Family Planning Association (FPA) Sri Lanka," as stating that "some parents go so far as to create false birth certificates to show their children have reached the minimum legal age for marriage" (*Daily*

*Mirror* 18 Nov. 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The *Trafficking in Persons Report 2017* indicates that the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Employment "reported it investigated 18 officials for allegedly creating fraudulent documents to provide workers employment abroad and referred six of the cases to the police for further investigations" (US June 2017, 370). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 2. National Identity Card

Security Document World (SDW), a "web-based news portal dedicated to providing [...] information for all those involved in purchasing, designing, manufacturing and integrating security-document and human identity centred solutions" (SDW n.d.) indicates in an article published on its website in 2016 that "Sri Lankan officials confirmed that new National Identity Cards will be issued to all before the end of 2017" (SDW 6 Oct. 2016). According to a 2017 article published by the *Sunday Times*, a weekly newspaper in Sri Lanka, the "issue of new identity cards was delayed" due to "irregularities" in the bidding process (*Sunday Times* 12 Feb. 2017). The same source states that the Department for the Registration of Persons (DRP) is working to issue electronic NICs that will have "modern technological features" (*Sunday Times* 12 Feb. 2017). Similarly, according to an article published on BiometricUpdate.com, a website that "publishes news, analysis and research about the global biometrics market" (BiometricUpdate.com n.d.), the Sri Lankan new electronic ID "will have security features that prevent tampering, counterfeiting and forgery, including the person's photograph, biographical data, fingerprints and blood type" (BiometricUpdate.com 6 Apr. 2017).

## 3. Difference between Registers of Birth and Birth Certificates

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa explained that a register of birth is the same as a birth certificate and that there is one name for that document in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka 17 July 2017). The same source further explained that the name of the document is translated to "register of birth" or "birth certificate" in English (Sri Lanka 17 July 2017).

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.

### Note

[1] A 2007 report entitled *State Structure in Sri Lanka*, published by the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), "the competence centre for global labour mobility in the international cooperation activities of the German Government" (Germany n.d.), indicates that "[a] powerful District Secretary, commonly still referred to as Government Agent, heads the District Secretariat - also called Kachcheri [in Sri Lanka] [and that] District Secretaries thus derive their power directly from the Central Government" (Germany March 2007).

## References

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Sri Lanka. 17 July 2017. High Commission in Ottawa. Telephone interview with a representative.

Sri Lanka. [2016]. Sri Lanka Navy. "[Two Held on Charge of Making Fake Documents](#)." [Accessed July 2017]

*Sunday Times*. 12 February 2017. Bandula Sirimanna. "[Tender Bend Straightens with Issue of Temporary NICs](#)." [Accessed 19 July 2017]

*Sunday Times*. 22 May 2016. "[Busting of Fake Kachcheri at Hulftsdorp Turning out NICs Raises Many Questions](#)." [Accessed 19 July 2017]

United States (US). June 2017. Department of State. "Sri Lanka." [Trafficking in Persons Report 2017](#). [Accessed 19 July 2017]

### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** International Organization for Migration Sri Lanka; Scholar working on human trafficking in Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka – Government Information Center, Sri Lanka Police (Colombo Fraud Investigation Bureau and Public Relations & Media Co-ordination Division).

**Internet sites, including:** *Ceylon Today*; *Colombo Telegraph*; International Organization for Migration Sri Lanka; INTERPOL; IRIN; *The Island*; *The Nation*; Sri Lanka – Government Information Center, Sri Lanka Police; *The Sunday Leader*; *Sunday Observer*; UK – Home Office; UN – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

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