

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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- **Source:**
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- **Title:**
Sri Lanka: Statements by village headmen confirming that a person lives in a certain area; whether these are used as official documents; appearance and contents of these documents (2014-February 2016). [LKA105435.E]
- **Publication date:**
02 March 2016
- **ecoi.net summary:** Query response on statements provided by village headmen to confirm a person is living in a certain area and their use as official documents between 2014 and February 2016 [ID 321550]
- **Countries:**
Sri Lanka
- **Original link** <http://www.irb.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=456406&pls=1>

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Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

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

Sri Lanka: Statements by village headmen confirming that a person lives in a certain area; whether these are used as official documents; appearance and contents of these documents (2014-February 2016). [LKA105435.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Village Headmen [*Grama Niladhari*]

Sources state that the "Village Headman" is called a *Grama Niladhari* [Grama Niladari] (Sri Lanka 16 Aug. 2010; OECD 2009, 1; ODI and The Foundation 2014, 4). Sources describe Grama Niladhari Divisions as falling under the Divisional Secretariats (ibid.; Tissera and Fernando 2014, 235; Sri Lanka n.d.a). According to the webpage of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Public Administration and Management, there are 14,022 Grama Niladhari Divisions under 331 Divisional Secretary's Divisions throughout the country (ibid.). According to sources, issuing a "resident certificate" is one of the duties of a Grama Niladhari (ibid. n.d.b; *The Sunday Times* 11 Oct. 2015; Canada 18 Feb. 2016). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Immigration Section of the High Commission of Canada to Sri Lanka in Colombo stated that these letters are "required by the Sri Lankan authorities when a person needs to provide foundational evidence of their residential address" (ibid.).

For further information on certificates of residence provided by Grama Niladharis, see Response to Information Request LKA105207.

2. Document Appearance and Content

Information on the appearance of a residence certificate produced by a Grama Niladhari was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to the "Services Offered" section of the website of the Medirigiriya Divisional Secretariat, an individual seeking a "residency certificate" must meet with the Grama Niladhari of their Grama Niladhari Division, who will then issue a "certified copy of a regular format or handwritten/typed letter," which the applicant must then send to the Divisional Secretariat for counter signing (Sri Lanka 21 Nov. 2010). According to the Canadian official, the letters are "not reliable or verifiable; they have no security features, standard format or registry of issuance," nor are copies kept by the Grama offices (Canada 18 Feb. 2016). According to the same source, the documents are "generally in the form of letters written by the Grama Niladhari or letters written by the subject and endorsed with a rubber stamp by the Grama Niladhari" (ibid.). The letters are typically

"used as evidence that a person resides in a particular location, and usually mention the length of time the person has resided there" (ibid.).

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

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Law & Society Trust; Sri Lanka – Grama Niladhari Administration Division, High Commission in Ottawa.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; ecoi.net; Factiva; Human Rights Watch; Keesing's Document Checker; Sri Lanka – Government Information Centre; United Nations – Refworld; United States – Department of State.