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Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

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

Nigeria: National Identity Cards, including implementation of the National Identity Card Policy, requirements and procedures, security features, uses, and whether the card is mandatory [NGA105311.E]

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1. National Identity Card Policy

Nigeria's National Identity Management Commission's (NIMC) [1] National Identity Policy provides information on the "objectives, legal framework, rules, guidelines, and principles which form the Card System adopted for the National Identity Management System (NIMS) (Nigeria n.d.a, 2). The policy provides information on eligibility, how to apply for the Nigerian National Identity Card (NNIC), and issuance and usage of the NNIC by the cardholder (ibid.). The policy also provides a reference against which any card that claims to be an NNIC may be measured (ibid.).

The policy indicates that the NIMS consists of five elements: "the National Identity Database or Central Identity Repository, the National Identification Number (NIN) [2], the Identification Card or token, the verification and authentication infrastructure and the harmonization and integration of the existing database" (ibid., iii).

A full copy of the NNIC Policy, including a sample copy of the NNIC, is attached to this Response.

2. Implementation of the National Identity Card

Vanguard, a daily Nigerian newspaper (Vanguard n.d.), reports that Nigeria's President, Goodluck Jonathan, launched the NNIC on 28 August 2014 (3 Nov. 2014). The NIMC stated in March 2015 that all NNICs issued by the Department of National Civic Registration would be invalid as of 1 July 2015, and shall not be used for any identification purposes (Nigeria Mar. 2015, 3). Sources further report that the NIMC postponed the compulsory use of the NNIC and its NIN to 9 January 2016, indicating that it needs more time for implementation due to the President's recent directives that all ministries, departments and agencies (MDA's) are required to harmonise their biometric database (*New Vision* 4 Sept. 2015; Nigeria Daily News 31 Aug. 2015).

The Nation, a daily Nigerian newspaper (n.d.), reports that the NIMC's aim is to issue and manage over 120 million NNICs during the next 5-10 years (3 Nov. 2014). Sources reported in August 2015 that, according to the NIMC's Director General, approximately six million (*Vanguard* 19 Feb. 2015) to seven million (ibid. 25 Aug. 2015; *The Sun* 26 Aug. 2015) Nigerians have registered for the NNIC (ibid.; *Vanguard* 25 Aug. 2015). In

contrast, *the Sun*, a daily Nigerian newspaper (*The Sun* n.d.), reports that according to the Secretary General of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria, the NIMC produced 245,000 NNICs (*The Sun* 6 July 2015).

The Sun also reports that the process and procedures to obtain the NNIC are not as simple as they appear as the local government headquarters that capture the data lack order and "the experience entails endless visits to FRSC [Federal Road Safety Corps] offices for data capturing" (ibid. 5 July 2015). As a result, "many Nigerians ... have not been able to get their biometrics captured unless [they go] through the back door" (ibid.). *The Vanguard* similarly describes the process of issuing NNICs as "cumbersome" (19 Feb. 2015).

The Sun reports that despite the 1 September 2015 deadline for the NIMC's implementation of the NNIC, customers continue to be turned down in Lagos when they attempt to use the card as identification for transactions (*The Sun* 9 July 2015). The same source notes that, according to a bank official, customers using the NNIC were turned down because the Central Bank of Nigeria had not yet released directives regarding the new ID (ibid.). *The Sun* further notes that some customers indicated that Nigeria is an "unorganized country" and some Nigerians have expressed concern over whether or not the NIMC will ensure that citizens have their NNIC on or before 1 September 2015 deadline (ibid.).

3. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain a National Identity Card

According to the NNIC Policy, all eligible persons must register for the NNIC at a designated registration center (Nigeria n.d.a, 13-14). The NIMC's website indicates that there are registration centres in all 36 state capitals including the Federal Capital Territory and in Abuja (ibid. n.d.d). *The Nation* reports that according to the Assistant General Manager and Lagos State Coordinator at NIMC, the commission has 21 enrolment centres (5 Jan. 2015). The same source notes that the centres are located in "Ikeja, Lagos State Univeristy, Ikeja Army Cantonment, Eti-Osa, Ojo, Somolu, Oshodi, Amuwo-Odofin, Ayobo-Ipaja and Agege local governments...FIRS Ikoyi, Lekki Phas I, Bonny Camp, Nigeria Air-force base, Ikeja, Lagos State Polytechnic, Yaba College of Technology and University of Lagos" (*The Nation* 5 Jan. 2015).

The NIMC's website further notes that there are plans to establish centres in all of the 774 local government offices nationwide as well as to establish special enrolment centres (Nigeria n.d.d). Sources report that according to the Director of NIMC, each enrolment centre that has opened shall remain open "forever" and the NIMC is trying to ensure that enrolment centres are opened in each local government (*The Nation* 26 Aug. 2015; *Vanguard* 25 Aug. 2015). The same sources note that in collaboration with MDAs, the NIMC is extending centres to universities, and in the future primary schools and hospitals (ibid.; *The Nation* 26 Aug. 2015).

Sources report that the enrollment process involves the recording of the applicant's demographic and biometric data including their photograph, name, age, NIN, 10 fingerprints and an iris scan (BBC 28 Aug. 2014; *New Vision* 4 Sept. 2015) to authenticate the cardholder and ensure that there are no duplicates on the system (ibid.).

For further information on the requirements and procedures for obtaining the Nigerian National Identity card, please see the Nigerian National Identity Card Policy, attached to this Response.

4. Physical Characteristics and Security Features of the National Identity Card

The Nation reports that the NNIC is a Machine Readable Travel Document, recognized by the Civil Aviation Organisation and that according to the head of NIMC, the NNIC endured "rigorous testing by international testing agencies ensur[ing] that the chip meets or exceeds the standards set by the internationally recognised body" (*The Nation* 9 Oct. 2014). The NIMC head further noted that the first generation of cards has a smartcard chip, but "future generations will be dual-interface (chip and contactless)" (qtd. in *The Nation* 9 Oct. 2014). *Vanguard* reports that Nigeria's President said that the new NNIC has several innovated features and he "expressed optimism that it would enhance security and ease intelligence gathering" (3 Nov. 2014).

Vanguard reports that the "chip-based identity card has over 18 security features" (24 Sept. 2015). *The Nation* reports that the NNIC has 13 "applets" [applications], including the Match on Card (MoC) [3], electronic identity, electronic public key infrastructure (e-PKI), an International Civil Aviation Organization applet and a payment applet (3 Nov. 2014). The same source notes that there are additional applets for "voters register, Health insurance, insurance policy, Tax, Pension, Driver's License, SIM register, Transport and an extra applet for immediate deployment as necessary" (*The Nation* 3 Nov. 2014).

For a sample of the NNIC as well as design and security, please see the Nigerian National Identity Card Policy, attached to this Response.

5. Uses of the National Identity Card

The BBC quotes Nigeria's President as stating that "[t]he card is not only a means of certifying your identity, but also a personal database repository and payment card" (28 Aug. 2014). Sources report that the NNIC is a multi-function card (*The Nation* 3 Nov. 2014; Nigeria n.d.a, 9) "designed to enable citizens and legal residents to prove their identity in Nigeria" (ibid.). Sources further report that the NNIC can also be used for electronic payments and activities (ibid., 10; *New Vision* 4 Sept. 2015; *The Nation* 3 Nov. 2014) and that it is designed to "ensure anti-tampering and counterfeiting" (ibid.). *The Nation* reports that when applicants obtain their NNIC, they must activate the "e-ID" side using their biometrics and if they would like to use the ATM side, they must use their pin (ibid.).

The Nation reports that the head of the NIMC stated that "[i]t is hoped that the document will be used for ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) travel (without the need for a passport), as the data on the chip cannot be forged" (ibid. 9 Oct. 2014).

For further information regarding the NNIC's planned uses, please see the Nigerian National Identity Card Policy, attached to this Response.

5.1 Counterfeit National ID Cards

Sources report that the Nigerian army identified a business centre in Maiduguri responsible for the production of counterfeit national ID cards and other documents for Boko Haram terrorists (*The Daily Post* 19 Sept. 2015; *The Guardian* 17 Sept. 2015). Sources report that the Acting Director of Defence Information released a statement indicating that military authorities have issued an alert against the prevalent incidences of unauthorized circulation of fake national identity cards (*The Nation* 24 Sept. 2015; *Vanguard* 23 Sept. 2015). The same sources note that in his statement, the Acting Director of Defence further noted that "the implication of fake national ID cards in circulation is that Boko Haram terrorists in the North- East also used [a] similar method of identification" (ibid.; *The Nation* 24 Sept. 2015).

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.

Notes:

[1] The NIMC was established by the *National Identity Management Commission Act No. 23, 2007* and is responsible for maintaining the National Identity Database, the registration of "Registrable Persons," issuance of National Identification Numbers, National Electronic (eCards) and other related matters (Nigeria Mar. 2015, 3).

[2] The NIN is a unique 11 digit number assigned to a registered individual by which they will be identified for life (Nigeria n.d.a, 7).

[3] The Match on card "is provided at a point of service ... it is inserted into a card reader/acceptance device (CAD)[,] the individual places his or her finger on the biometric reader and the device checks that the biometrics in the chip of the card matches the sample individual biometric provided by the individual at the point of service" (Nigeria n.d.a, 10).

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Oral sources: Nigeria - High Commission Ottawa, National Identity Management Commission.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Factiva; International Crisis Group; Keesing's Document Checker; Nigeria – High Commission Ottawa, National Identity Management Commission; United Nations – Refworld.

Attachment

Nigeria. N.d. National Identity Management Commission. "The Nigerian National Identity Policy."
<http://www.nimc.gov.ng/sites/default/files/id_card_policy.pdf> [Accessed 30 Sept. 2015]

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