

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	570
Land:	Etiopien
Kilde:	Danish National ID Centre
Titel:	Ethiopia – Civil certificates issued by the Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA)
Udgivet:	7. november 2023
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. juli 2024



Ethiopia – Civil certificates issued by the Vital Events Registration Agency

7 November 2023

Danish National ID Centre

Birkerød Kongevej 2-4
3460 Birkerød
Denmark

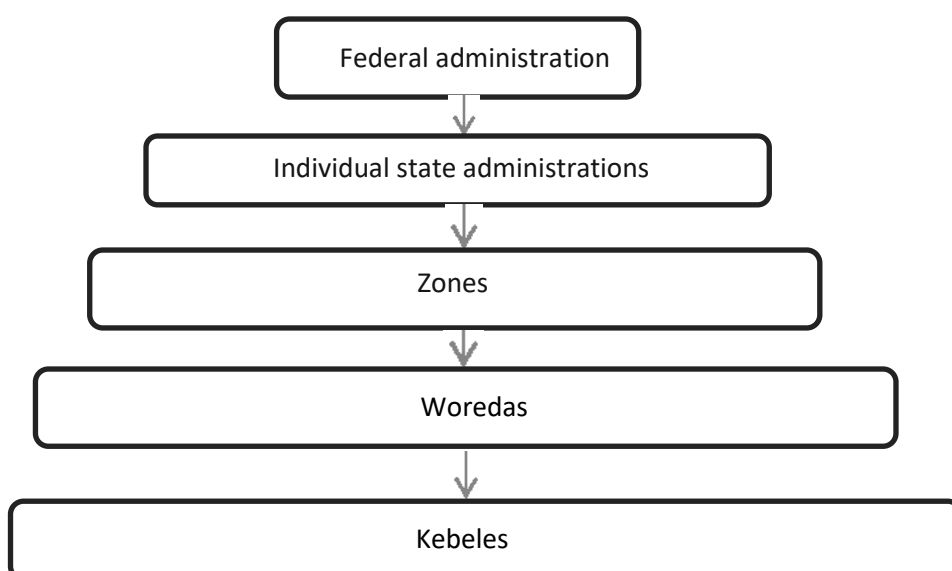
Phone +45 61 98 39 00
Email nidc@nidc.dk
Website www.nidc.dk

Introduction

The following note describes the certificates issued by the Ethiopian Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA), including the process of obtaining the certificates for Ethiopian nationals and non-nationals, respectively.

Background

The Ethiopian administrative system consists of a federal government divided into nine regional states and two city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) with individual administrations. The regional states are divided into a number of administrative units called zones, which are again divided into woredas. The woredas are divided into kebele offices.¹



¹ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 7.

Vital Events Registration Agency and civil registration in Ethiopia

In August 2012, a proclamation of law was passed stating that civil registration was to be systematised.² The general point was to have a federal, regional and local organ in charge of civil registration and the issuance of civil documents:³

- The federal organ is established by the authority of the Council of Ministers and their mandates is to direct, coordinate and support the civil registration of vital events on a national basis as well as organise and keep records of vital events. VERA at the federal level is responsible for creating awareness of the need for national registration of vital events.⁴
- The regional organ is appointed by the specific region to direct, coordinate and structure the registering of vital events on a regional basis. The regional organ is also responsible for transferring the regional vital events records to the federal organ.
- The local organ consists of officers of civil status appointed by the regional organ and stationed in each local administrative Kebele office. The officer of civil status registers vital events, distribute copies of the records to relevant organs, issue certificates of registration, maintain and preserve the records of vital events registrations and create awareness of civil registration in the local community.⁵

The proclamation from 2012 established the legal and organisational framework of the vital events registration, but VERA was not established until August 2016. VERA was merged with the Main Department for Immigration and National Affairs in 2018, and hereafter named INVEA (Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency). However, VERA still exists as a separate agency within INVEA. VERA covers every region in Ethiopia and is established in 87 % of the country's Kebele offices.⁶

General appearance of the certificates

VERA has made the appearance of the civil certificates uniform throughout Ethiopia. The frame of the various certificates has different colours; blue in the birth certificate (Image 1), pink in the certificate of adoption, (Image 2), green in the marriage certificate (Image 3), grey in the divorce certificate (Image 4) and brown in the death certificate (Image 5). The appearance of the documents is almost identical whether they are issued for refugees or Ethiopian nationals. The documents are personalised by hand. In Addis Ababa, however, registration has been digitised and the personal information is printed on the certificates.⁷

² Federal Negarit Gazeta, 22 August 2012, p. 6,497.

³ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 22 August 2012, p. 6,499; Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 8.

⁴ Federal VERA Branch, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁵ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 22 August 2012, p. 6,499.

⁶ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 7 August 2017, p. 9,811; Landinfo, 31 January 2020, pp. 6 & 8.

⁷ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 10.

Birth certificate

According to the Federal Negarit Gazeta, the law establishing VERA and defining its responsibilities, the staff should automatically prepare a notification paper following a childbirth at a hospital or clinic. If the birth has not taken place at a health institution, the parents/guardian must seek out a lower level government official to prepare the notification paper and deliver it to the local administrative office to ensure birth registration.⁸

The notification paper states the full name and place of birth of the parents, their principal residence, marital status, citizenship, religion and ethnic origin as well as signature or thumb print of the person who witnessed the birth.⁹

Information about the child includes the child's name, date of birth, gender, weight at the time of birth, the place of birth, place of birth (hospital, home etc.), date and place of registration, attendant at birth and type of birth (single, twin, triplets etc.).¹⁰

It is possible to get a print-out of the registration. This registration must be provided when a citizen wants a birth certificate issued from VERA. Along with the registration, a valid Kebele card is required; if the applicant does not hold a Kebele card, an affidavit from the parents can be provided instead.¹¹

As the only vital event, births are required by law to be registered within 90 days of the event. Marriage, divorce and deaths must be registered within 30 days following the event.¹² Failure to do so can be punished with prison for up to six months or a fine of up to 5.000 Birr.¹³ However, since most children in Ethiopia are born at home many of them are not registered within the required timeframe. It is worth noting, however, that not all registered children receive a birth certificate upon registration.¹⁴

⁸ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 7 August 2017, p. 9,814.

⁹ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 7 August 2017, p. 9,813.

¹⁰ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

¹¹ Local lawyer, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

¹² Federal Negarit Gazeta, 22 August 2012, p. 6,502.

¹³ United Kingdom: Home Office, October 2017.

¹⁴ Landinfo 31 January 2020, p. 13.



የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ የወሰኝ ኩነት ምዝገባ
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Vital Event Registration
የልደት ምስክር ወረቀት
Birth Certificate

የልደት ክስር ምዝገባ ቁጥር _____
 Birth Register Form Number _____

የልደት ምዝገባ ልዩ ምልያ ቁጥር _____
 Birth Registration Unique Identification Number _____

ስም _____ የአባት ስም _____ የእያት ስም _____
 Name _____ Father's Name _____ Grandfather's Name _____

ፆታ _____ የተወለደበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____
 Sex _____ Date of Birth: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

የተወለደበት ቦታ/ ሀገር _____ ክልል /ከተማ አስተዳደር/ _____ ዞን /ከተማ አስተዳደር/ _____
 Place/Country of Birth _____ Region/City Administration/ _____ Zone/City Administration/ _____

ወረዳ/ልዩ ወረዳ/ _____ ዚግነት _____
 Woreda/Special Woreda/ _____ Nationality _____

የእናት ሙሉ ስም _____ የእናት ዚግነት _____
 Mother's Full Name _____ Mother's Nationality _____

የአባት ሙሉ ስም _____ የአባት ዚግነት _____
 Father's Full Name _____ Father's Nationality _____

ልደት የተመዘገበበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____ የምስክር ወረቀት የተሰጠበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____
 Date of Birth Registration: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____ Date of Certificate Issued: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

የክስር ምዝገባ ስም _____ የአባት ስም _____ እያት ስም _____
 Name of Civil Registrar _____ Father's Name _____ Grandfather's Name _____

ረረዳ _____ ማህተም _____
 Signature _____ Seal _____

Image 1. Birth certificate.¹⁵

Certificate of adoption

In order to register an adoption the adoptive parents must go to the judicial office of the permanent residence of the adoptive parents and get an approval.¹⁶ The approval from the judicial office must be shown to VERA, when applying for a certificate of adoption. Adoption should be registered within 30 days following the event.¹⁷



የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ የወሰኝ ኩነት ምዝገባ
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Vital Event Registration
የትዕዛዝ ምስክር ወረቀት
Adoption Certificate

የትዕዛዝ ክስር ምዝገባ ቁጥር _____
 Adoption Register Form Number _____

የትዕዛዝ ምዝገባ ልዩ ምልያ ቁጥር _____
 Birth Registration Unique Identification Number _____

ስም _____ የአባት ስም _____ የእያት ስም _____
 Name _____ Father's Name _____ Grandfather's Name _____

ፆታ _____ የተወለደበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____
 Sex _____ Date of Birth: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

የተወለደበት ቦታ/ ሀገር _____ ክልል /ከተማ አስተዳደር/ _____ ዞን /ከተማ አስተዳደር/ _____
 Place/Country of Birth _____ Region/City Administration/ _____ Zone/City Administration/ _____

የእናት ሙሉ ስም _____ የእናት ዚግነት _____
 Mother's Full Name _____ Mother's Nationality _____

የአባት ሙሉ ስም _____ የአባት ዚግነት _____
 Father's Full Name _____ Father's Nationality _____

የትዕዛዝ የተመዘገበበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____ የምስክር ወረቀት የተሰጠበት ወር _____ ቀን _____ ዓ.ም _____
 Date of Adoption Registration: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____ Certificate Issued Date: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

የክስር ምዝገባ ስም _____ የአባት ስም _____ እያት ስም _____
 Name of Civil Registrar _____ Father's Name _____ Grandfather's Name _____

ረረዳ _____ ማህተም _____
 Signature _____ Seal _____

Image 2. Adoption certificate.¹⁸

¹⁵ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

¹⁶ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 7 August 2017, p. 9,813.

¹⁷ Federal Negarit Gazeta, 22 August 2012, p. 6,502.

¹⁸ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

Marriage certificate

A registration of the event of marriage is required to obtain a marriage certificate. To get the initial registration of one's marriage, proof of both the husband and wife being present at the time of the event as well as proof of age for both parties is required. Both parties must be over 18 years of age at the time of the marriage, but dispensation can be granted from the age of 16. The officer of civil status who witnessed the wedding ceremony can be the legal informant when registering the marriage.¹⁹ Marriages must be registered within 30 days of the wedding, but according to Landinfo, most couples are married in a religious or customary wedding and there is reason to believe that a majority of marriages are not registered.²⁰

The marriage certificates issued to refugees display the refugee camp where the holders are registered, but are otherwise identical to the ones issued to nationals.

Image 3. Marriage certificate.²¹

Certificate of divorce

When spouses want to get a divorce, they first have to submit a request to the court and receive the court's approval. In order to obtain a certificate of divorce from VERA, a letter of approval from the court is required. The court decision must be presented to an officer of civil status for registration of the divorce within 30 days.²² The certificates issued to refugees and nationals are identical.

¹⁹ The Revised Family Code, 4 July 2000, article 7 & 12; UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

²⁰ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 15.

²¹ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

²² Federal Negarit Gazette, 7 August 2017, p. 9,814; Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6507; Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 15.

የፍቺ ሰነድ ምዝገባ ቅጽ ቁጥር _____ Divorce Register Form Number		የተፋጭ ልዩነት ምዝገባ ልዩ ሙያ ቁጥር _____ Divorce Birth Registration Unique Identification No
የፍቺ ምዝገባ ልዩ ሙያ ቁጥር _____ Divorce Registration Unique Identification Number		የተፋጭ ልዩነት ምዝገባ ልዩ ሙያ ቁጥር _____ Divorce Birth Registration Unique Identification Number

የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዴሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ የወላጅ ጉነት ምዝገባ
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Vital Events Registration

የፍቺ ምስክር ወረቀት
Divorce Certificate

የተፋጭ ስም _____	የአባት ስም _____	አያት ስም _____	የተፋጭ ስም _____
Divorcée Name _____	Father's name _____	Grand Father's name _____	Divorced Name _____
የትውልድ ወር _____	ቀን _____	ዓ.ም _____	የትውልድ ወር _____
Date of Birth: Month _____	Date _____	Year _____	Date of Birth: Month _____
የትውልድ ቦታ/ ሀገር _____	ክልል/ባህር ዳር _____	ክልል/ባህር ዳር _____	የትውልድ ቦታ/ ሀገር _____
Place/Country of Birth _____	Region/City Administration _____	Region/City Administration _____	Place/Country of Birth _____
ዞን/ባህር ዳር _____	ዞን/ባህር ዳር _____	ዞን/ባህር ዳር _____	ዞን/ባህር ዳር _____
Zone/City Administration _____	Nationality _____	Nationality _____	Zone/City Administration _____
ፍቺው የተፈጸመበት ወር _____	ቀን _____	ዓ.ም _____	ፍቺው የተፈጸመበት ቦታ _____
Date of Divorce: Month _____	Date _____	Year _____	Place of Divorce Dissolved _____
ፍቺው የተመዘገበበት ወር _____	ቀን _____	ዓ.ም _____	የምስክር ወረቀት የተሰጠበት ወር _____
Date of the Divorce Registered: Month _____	Date _____	Year _____	Date of Certificate Issued: Month _____
የትብብር ሙዝገባ ጉም ስም _____	የአባት ስም _____	የአያት ስም _____	
Name of Civil Registrar _____	Father's name _____	Grand Father's name _____	
ፊርማ _____	ግልታዎች _____		
Signature _____	Seal _____		

Image 4. Divorce certificate.²³

Death certificates

When a death occurs at a health institution the staff must produce a notification paper, which must include the name and gender of the deceased as well as the date, place and the cause of death. The staff must then deliver the notification to the officer of civil status enabling him to register the death. Fetal death is not registered.²⁴

If a death does not occur at a health institution, the relatives must contact a local government official to prepare the notification and have it delivered to the nearest administrative office to the place of death and have it registered. When requesting a death certificate from VERA, one must provide this registration.²⁵ According to the law from 2012, the cause of death must always be registered, but currently this is only the case for deaths occurring at a health institution.²⁶

The death certificates issued to refugees display the holder's refugee ID number or passport number as well as the refugee camp the holder is registered in, but is otherwise identical to the certificate issued to nationals.

²³ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

²⁴ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

²⁵ Federal Negarit Gazette, 7 August 2017, p. 9,815.

²⁶ Landinfo 31 January 2020, p. 14.

የሞት ኩነት ምዝገባ ቁጥር
Death Register Form Number

የሞት ምዝገባ ልዩ መለያ ቁጥር
Death Registration Unique Identification Number

የልደት ምዝገባ ልዩ መለያ ቁጥር
Birth Registration Unique Identification Number

የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዴሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ የወሰኝ ኩነት ምዝገባ
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Vital Event Registration

የሞት ምስክር ወረቀት
Death Certificate

የሞት ስም የአባት ስም የእያት ስም
Deceased's Name Father's Name Grandfather's Name

ጾታ የትውልድ ወር ቀን ዓ.ም
Sex Date of Birth : Month Date Year

ዜግነት የሞት ቦታ
Nationality Place of Death

የሞት ቀን ዓ.ም የሞት ቀን ዓ.ም
Date of Death: Month Date Year Date of Death Registration: Month Date Year

የሞት ወረቀት የተሰጠበት ወር ቀን ዓ.ም
Date of Certificate Issued: Month Date Year

የሞት ስም የአባት ስም የእያት ስም
Name of Civil Registrar Father's Name Grand Father's Name

ፊርማ ማህተም
Signature Seal

Image 5. Death certificate.²⁷

Registration of refugees and issuance of documents

Upon arrival, asylum seekers are transported to one of four Reception & Registration Centres in Ethiopia to get registered as a refugee.²⁸ The registration is conducted by the Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs (ARRA) in collaboration with UNHCR. ARRA is a control unit under the National Intelligence and Security Service and is responsible for granting the refugee status and for establishing identity of the arriving refugees.²⁹

UNHCR runs the Reception & Registrations Centres located near the 18 official border crossings into Ethiopia.³⁰ The Danish National ID Centre visited the Registration Centre in the region of Tigray, Endabaguna, where ARRA informed that the initial registration of newcomers can last from three days to one month.³¹ The registration process is twofold:

- ARRA conducts a screening for nationality resulting in the applicant being granted or denied refugee status. If the status is granted the refugee is issued a ration card.
- UNHCR conducts a registration where the refugee's biometrics and personal information is obtained.³²

²⁷ UNICEF, December 2016 - November 2017.

²⁸ ARRA, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

²⁹ ARRA, Addis Ababa, May 2018; ARRA, Shire, May 2018.

³⁰ UNHCR, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

³¹ ARRA, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

³² ARRA, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

After being granted the refugee status the individual can get his/her vital events registered at the VERA office in the refugee camp that he/she is assigned to.³³ To have civil certificates is not mandatory, and many only get them, when they need them.³⁴ VERA has registered vital events for refugees since October 2017.³⁵ There is no issuance fee for refugees.³⁶

Within 30 days after registering a refugee, ARRA sends two copies of the registration form to ARRA's headquarters in Addis Ababa.³⁷

Since 2016, personal information obtained by ARRA and UNHCR when registering has been stored in a database accessible to both ARRA and UNHCR. Only UNHCR can edit information in the database.³⁸

To secure stable issuance procedures in the refugee camps more than one VERA officer with authority to issue certificates is employed in each camp.³⁹ VERA registers vital events taking place before and after a refugee's arrival in Ethiopia.⁴⁰

It is most common for refugees to bring documents such as school registrations and ID-cards. They rarely bring national passports. Thus the refugees are not required to provide ID documents from their country of origin when requesting a civil certificate.⁴¹ If the refugees do not possess an ID document, VERA accepts the identity established in the registration conducted by ARRA and UNHCR.⁴²

Error correction

When a clerical error is pointed out by an interested party, a civil registration officer is obligated to correct it. Correction in a specific document must be conducted so the original text remains visible in the document. If the clerical error is on all copies of the civil registration the officer of civil status must inform all bodies who have a copy of the document of the error.⁴³ Errors of other nature than clerical cannot be corrected without the consent of a court.⁴⁴

To alter information in the civil records one must file an application of correction to the courts. On this background the court decides whether the existing record

³³ ARRA, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

³⁴ ARRA, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

³⁵ ARRA, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

³⁶ VERA officer, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

³⁷ Federal Negarit Gazette, 7 August 2017, p. 9,815.

³⁸ UNHCR, 3 June 2018.

³⁹ ARRA, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

⁴⁰ ARRA, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

⁴¹ Administration for Refugee-Returnee Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁴² VERA officer, Hitsats Refugee Camp, May 2018.

⁴³ Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6,511.

⁴⁴ Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6,512.

should be corrected or a new record should be produced.⁴⁵ If a court rules to annul the existing record the judgment must be stored together with the new record. The reason for the correction must be written on the back of the registration form. The officer of civil status shall inform all official organs already in possession of a registration about the change.⁴⁶ When the new registration form has been sent to all official bodies a new certificate of registration is issued to the interested party.⁴⁷

Lost documents

Ethiopian nationals are entitled to get a lost, damaged or invalid certificate reissued.⁴⁸

The Woreda offices keep a physical archive of the documents that they have issued at district level and the federal VERA office keeps a nationwide record of all issued documents. Thus, it is only possible to get a new document issued if the citizen applies at the original Woreda office and proves his/her identity with the same Kebele card as presented when the certificate was originally issued.⁴⁹ The federal VERA office is currently in the process of digitalising their records.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6,512.

⁴⁶ Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6,512.

⁴⁷ Federal Negarit Gazette, 22 August 2012, p. 6,512.

⁴⁸ Federal Negarit Gazette, 7 August 2017, p. 9,816.

⁴⁹ Local lawyer, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁵⁰ VERA, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

References

Oral sources

ARRA (May 2018): Interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ARRA (May 2018): Interviewed in Hitsats Refugee Camp, Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (May 2018): Interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Local Lawyer (May 2018): Interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

UNHCR (May 2018): Interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

UNHCR (3 June 2018): E-mail correspondence.

UNHCR (May 2018): Interviewed at Endabaguna Reception and Registration Centre, Ethiopia.

VERA (May 2018): Interviewed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

VERA (May 2018): Interviewed in Hitsats Refugee Camp, Ethiopia.

Written sources

Central Statistical Agency (2016): Demographic and Health Survey, page 13, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR328/FR328.pdf>, retrieved 4 December 2020.

Federal Negarit Gazette (August 22, 2012): Registration of Vital Events and National Identity Card Proclamation No. 760/2012, <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/proclamation-no-760-2012-registration-of-vital-events-and-national-identity-card-proclamation.pdf>, retrieved 4 December 2020.

Federal Negarit Gazette (August 7, 2017): Vital Events Registration and National Identity Card Proclamation (amendment) No. 1049/2017, <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Proclamation-no.-1049-of-2017.pdf>, retrieved 4 December 2020.

Landinfo (31 January 2020): Temanotat Etiopia: Folkeregistrering og ID-dokumenter, <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Etiopia-temanotat-Folkeregistrering-og-ID-dokumenter-31012020.pdf>, retrieved 2 November 2023.

The Revised Family Code Proclamation No. 213/2000, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4c0ccc052.pdf>, retrieved 7 December 2020.

UNICEF (December 2016 – November 2017), Ethiopia, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/crvs/ethiopia/>, retrieved 7 November 2023.

United Kingdom: Home Office (October 2017): Country Policy and Information Note - Ethiopia: Background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/59ef3b954.html>, retrieved 7 December 2020.