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Ethiopia: The Ethiopian E-series passports

Introduction

This note describes the issuance procedure of the Ethiopian national E-series passport.

The note is based on information obtained during a fact-finding mission in June 2018 to Ethiopia and open source material.

Issuance procedure within Ethiopia

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the issuing authority of diplomatic and service passports, the Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency (INVEA) is the issuing authority of nationality and alien's passports.¹ Emergency passports can be issued by the Ethiopian representations abroad.²

According to Landinfo, applications for passports can be submitted at INVEA offices in Addis Ababa, Adama, Semera, Jijiga, Hawassa, Dire Dawa, Jimma, Dessie, Bahir Dar and Mekele.³

It is necessary for the applicant to appear in person at the local INVEA office to hand in his/her application and in order to submit fingerprints. INVEA further requires the applicant to present the following supporting documents in order to apply for a passport:

- Completed and signed application form
- Kebele card
- Birth certificate

In case the applicant has not had a kebele card issued, it is possible to present a confirmation from the kebele (local administration), where the applicant resides. Only kebele cards in Amharic are accepted in the application.⁴

¹ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 20.

² Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

³ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, pp. 20-21.

⁴ The World Bank, June 2017, p. 9.

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Upon submission of a passport application, the INVEA office forwards the application to the centralised Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs in Addis Ababa where passports are personalised and printed.⁵ The main department also registers information regarding the passport issuance in a digital database.⁶

When the passport has been personalised, it will be sent back to the local INVEA office, where the applicant can pick it up. Shipment time from Addis Ababa to the local INVEA office generally takes up to five days.⁷

Because all passports are personalised in Addis Ababa, the issuing authority on Ethiopian passports is specified as: “Main Department for Immigration & Nationality Affairs” or “Ethiopia”. The period of validity is five years.⁸

Issuance procedure outside of Ethiopia

According to the Ethiopian embassy in Australia, a first time passport application must contain the following documentation:

- Four recent passport pictures in colour
- Two copies of the completed passport application
- A letter assuring the embassy that the applicant is not a citizen of another country
- Two copies of one original document proving Ethiopian nationality; for example the applicant’s birth certificate legalised by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a copy of parents’ passport or a kebele card
- Fingerprints.⁹

The Ethiopian embassy in Sweden further requires a registration paper attesting nationality from the registration office of the country of residence (Folkeregisteret in Denmark).¹⁰ According to the Ethiopian embassy in Sweden, the embassy only accepts documents that are authenticated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹¹ Birth certificates should be in English, or accompanied by an official translation.¹²

Obtaining a passport for a child under the age of 14 requires the applicant to show the birth certificate of the child. Members of the diaspora must also provide

⁵ Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁶ Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁷ Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

⁸ Landinfo, 31 January 2020, p. 20.

⁹ Ethiopian Embassy in Australia, 2014.

¹⁰ Ethiopian Embassy in Sweden, year of issue n/a.

¹¹ Ethiopian Embassy in Sweden, year of issue n/a.

¹² Ethiopian Embassy in Sweden, year of issue n/a.

residence.¹³

Lost passports

tain the now lost passport.¹⁵

Image 1: Bio-data page. (NIDC specimen)

¹³ Ethiopian Embassy in Sweden, year of issue n/a.

¹⁴ Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

¹⁵ Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs, Addis Ababa, May 2018.

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