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Information on Afghan ID Taskeras (Tazkeras/Tazkiras)

A report published by the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, in a section headed “Voter Registry Based on Civil Registry (National ID Card)”, states:

“Civil registration in Afghanistan has struggled to evolve from the paper-based taskera system that has existed for some decades. The taskera is a plain paper document that lacks any security features and is considered of limited value as a national identity document.” (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (8 December 2009) *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Presidential and Provincial Council Elections, 20 August 2009*, p.57)

A report from the *Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement*, in a section headed “Legal Protection During Displacement: Civil and Political Rights”, states:

“Legal personality is recognized by the *Civil Code*, which also provides for the registration of Afghan male citizens and the issuance of a *tazkera* or national identity card that contains personal and family information along with place of residency, type of occupation, and status of military service. This document serves as an Afghan citizen's primary form of identification and means of accessing legal entitlements and is typically issued by the local population registration department of the Ministry of Interior.” (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement (November 2010) *Realizing National Responsibility for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Afghanistan: A Review of Relevant Laws, Policies, and Practices*, p.27)

An *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to a request for information on tazkiras, in a section headed “Procedures to Apply for a Tazkira Certificate from Within Afghanistan”, states:

“In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Canadian High Commission in Pakistan and an official at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa stated that the Population Registration Department of the Ministry of Interior issues tazkiras. According to the official at the Embassy of Afghanistan, population registration departments are located inside police headquarters in 34 provincial police departments in the country. In consultation with the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, the official at the Canadian High Commission in Pakistan indicates that ‘not only provinces but also every district in Afghanistan issues the Tazkera’” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (16 December 2011) *AFG103918.E – Afghanistan: Afghanistan: The issuance of tazkira certificates; whether individuals can obtain tazkiras while abroad*)

This response also states:

"In consultation with the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, the official at the Canadian High Commission in Pakistan stated that if a child is born in a hospital in Afghanistan, the hospital will give the parents a yellow card, which the parents will have to take to the population registration office. The population registration office will then 'go through files and...check full identification' after which the parents will have to obtain two signatures from government officials such as a doctor, engineer, teacher or chief of the army (ibid.). The official at the Embassy of Afghanistan stated that 'personal presence' is required to apply for a tazkira. He also indicated that it takes approximately two to three days to obtain a tazkira certificate." (ibid)

See also *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response which, in a section headed "Description of Tazkira Certificates", states:

"According to the High Commission official, Tazkira certificates are only available through the Ministry of Interior, and they have looked the same since 2001. However, the official stated that Tazkira certificates 'are not always fully completed with biographical information and are always completed by hand'. He also noted that 'clerk entries' can vary. The counsellor at the Embassy of Afghanistan indicated that the personal information on the Tazkira certificate includes the bearer's name, father's name, grandfather's name, place and date of birth (Afghanistan 24 Aug. 2011). The United States (US) Department of State indicates that it is the paternal grandfather's name that appears on a Tazkira document. According to the High Commission official, the 'place of birth' field on a Tazkira refers to the birthplace of the applicant's father. The official stated that 'more often than not it is the applicant's father who is applying on behalf of the applicant ... as it is a male member of the applicant's immediate family who must attest to the identity of the applicant'." (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (16 September 2011) *AFG103812.E – Afghanistan: Description and samples of the Tazkira booklet and the Tazkira certificate; information on security features*)

In a section headed "New Electronic National ID System" this response states:

"According to the High Commission official, 'there is no official Tazkira "card" to replace or complement the certificate,' and the Tazkira certificate is the 'only government issued national ID document'. However, the official stated that 'internal ID cards' that 'may contain reference to the owner's Tazkira' may be used by some government offices, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The official also stated that during the Communist era, membership cards from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan 'may have contained information from the Tazkira'. To the knowledge of the Canadian High Commission, Tazkiras 'are not centralized and do not follow any standard pattern of sequencing or identification'. The official explained that 'Afghan systems for the registration of different types of documents is not centralized and not computerized. Oftentimes they are records kept locally and issued and recorded by hand as in the case of police certificates'. The High Commission official stated that Tazkiras are therefore not numbered sequentially according to family members." (ibid)

A report from the *UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)*, in a section headed "Information from provincial networks and programmes", states:

"Very few children (at the age of travelling) will have a birth certificate; it was not usual in the past. Most Afghans have Tazkera (ID) since Tazkera is mandatory for all Afghan

nationals. Without it they will not be enrolled at school and will not be admitted to attend University. Those living in remote areas do not attend school and will not bother to get Tazkera unless they need it. The Tazkera indicates the year of birth, but it does not state day or month.” (UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) (February 2010) *Children on the Move between Afghanistan and Western Countries*, p.16)

An article published on the *US Central Command* website refers to a proposed electronic tazkera as follows:

“The biometrically enabled national identification system, the electronic tazkera, was discussed at length. Current tazkeras contain personally identifying information on a sheet of paper with records kept in handwritten books throughout Afghanistan. The electronic tazkera will have the same data currently on the paper tazkera, plus fingerprints, iris scans and digital images of citizens. The electronic tazkera’s use of fingerprints and iris scans which are unique to each individual makes it a more secure and form of identification. ‘This is good for security because it will not allow an individual to fake their identity,’ said Harward. ‘When you get your electronic tazkera you provide all your personally identifiable information, which will forever be associated with your fingerprint or iris scan.’ In the future, the electronic tazkera may be used to provide Afghans a national basis for voter registration, motor vehicle registration, business registration, trade licensing, school enrollment and future government services.” (US Central Command (31 March 2011) *Afghan governors discuss rule of law priorities*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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