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Afghanistan: Requirements and procedures to obtain, renew, and replace a biometric passport, both within and outside the country; validity period of passport; whether the 'place of birth' noted in the passport is the same as the one listed on the tazkira, and whether it refers to the place of birth of the owner of the passport or their father's (2015-January 2017)

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Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Obtaining a Passport within Afghanistan

Sources state that passport applications from within Afghanistan are submitted to the "Passport Department" (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017) or "Passport Office" of the Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan (AHG 19 Jan. 2017). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Senior Associate with the Kabul-based law firm Shajjan & Associates cited Article 19 of the Afghan Law on Passport as indicating that the applicant must provide the following:

- a. Afghan ID card (Tazkira). The Tazkira should be approved by the Population Registration Department.
- b. An application letter drafted by the applicant.
- c. Four passport size photos (4x5).
- d. A duly filled out form given by Passport Department.
- e. Receipt of payment of 5000 AFS (\$USD 80). (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017)

A copy of the Law on Passport could not be found by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. The same source further stated that the applicant must apply in person "except for those below the age of 3 or those who are under treatment in hospitals" and that the "[b]iometric [information] of the passport applicant will be taken by the Passport Department" (ibid.). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of Afghanistan Holding Group (AHG), an Afghanistan-based consulting firm that provides "integrated financial, research, compliance, technology and procurement services" (AHG n.d.a), including "legal advisory services" (ibid. n.d.b), similarly indicated that the applications are filed in person and that the process involves "getting your fingerprints taken, [an] interview, fee payment and more" (ibid. 19 Jan. 2017).

According to the Senior Associate, "regular passports may be valid for a period of 5 or 10 years" (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017). The website of the Consulate General of Afghanistan in Los Angeles states that upon verification of their Afghan citizenship and identity, applicants "can be provided with a valid passport with the validity of 5 years" (Afghanistan N.d.a).

The Senior Associate further cited Article 22 of the Law on Passport as indicating that "if the validity duration of a passport expires, the passport owner may apply for renewal and a new passport will be issued after payment of the required fee" (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017). Further information on renewing a passport from within Afghanistan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Information on replacing a lost or stolen passport from within Afghanistan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Obtaining a Passport Outside of Afghanistan

According to the Senior Associate, "[i]n accordance with Article 14 of the Law on Passport, regular passports may be issued by Afghan Consulates outside of Afghanistan" and applicants must

1. Refer to the Afghan consulate and make an appointment.
2. Fill out the required forms.
3. Provide [their] Tazkira and 3 passport sized photos.

4. Pay the fee of USD 120. (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017)

The same source indicated that it "normally takes around seven days to obtain the passport" (ibid.).

The website of the Consulate General of Afghanistan in Los Angeles similarly states that it is "mandatory to have original Afghan National ID (Taskera) that is registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Afghanistan" and that the applicant's previous Afghan passport, copy of "Green Card (front and back)," "proof of US residency," and passport photos are also required (Afghanistan n.d.a). The applicant's "fingerprints will be taken digitally" and their signature "will be taken on the designated box on the second page of the passport application" in-person at the Consulate of Afghanistan in Los Angeles (ibid.). The processing time is "7 to 15 business days" and the fee is \$USD 120 (ibid.).

According to the website of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa, persons applying for new passports must

- Complete and duly sign the relevant application form
- Provide two passport size photos (2X2 inches) one affixed to the appropriate box in the application form (photos must be fresh, identical, taken directly off the face to show both ears and with a light background)
- Provide original documents verifying their Afghan identity, including any of the following:
 - Tazkira
 - Previous passport (if held)
 - Marriage certificate (if endorsed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul)
 - Educational or professional documents issued by competent authorities in Afghanistan
- If not in possession of any of the above documents, provide two Identity Guarantee Forms duly completed and signed by two Afghan nationals of an established social or professional background. (Afghanistan n.d.b)

The same source further states that "[a]ll applicants, applying for new passports must also"

- Submit documents verifying residency status in Canada, such as PR card, Landed Immigrant document or citizenship document
- Submit a document to verify current address, including driver's license, utility bills, municipal documents, etc.
- Make the necessary payments...
- If applicable, submit a prepaid courier or registered, self-addressed return envelop or include an additional payment of \$CAD 20 postal charge, alongside the necessary fees. (ibid.)

A copy of a passport application form, as provided on the website of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa is attached to this response.

According to the website of the Consulate of Afghanistan in Los Angeles, if the applicant's passport has been lost or stolen, they must "submit an original police report with [their] application and a copy of [their] passport and original afghan National ID (Taskera)" (Afghanistan n.d.a). A 2016

report entitled *Access to Tazkera and Other Civil Documentation in Afghanistan*, researched and written by "Samuel Hall [1] and the Norwegian Refugee Council [NRC]," similarly indicates that

[a]ccording to a provision of the new Passport Law (2015), Afghans whose passports have been lost or have expired while living abroad, as well as Afghans who have never had one, can apply for these at the nearest Afghan consulate or embassy. Applicants must bring their former passport with them if in possession of it - failing this, they should bring a police report describing the loss or the theft. (Samuel Hall and NRC Nov. 2016, 18)

3. Tazkira

According to the Senior Associate, the place of birth noted on the passport "is the same as [the] Tazkira. The place of birth on the passport refer[s] to the place [of birth] of the passport holder, not [their] father" (Shajjan & Associates 28 Jan. 2017). In contrast, the AHG representative stated that Tazkiras are "issued based on where someone is 'from', generally where their father was born" and further explained that in his case, for example, while he possesses a

USA birth certificate, [he] was issued a tazkira that stated [he] was from Faryab, Afghanistan... When [he] applied for a biometric passport, they insisted on the passport matching [his] tazkira and listing [his] birth place as Faryab, Afghanistan. [He] had to go back to the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to have them correct [his] tazkira... by writing in the border that the *place* of birth is the United States. Only then was [he] issued a biometric passport listing my correct "place of birth"... However, this is a long and tedious process, so many Afghans passports simply matches their tazkira regardless of their actual place of birth. (AHG 19 Jan. 2017, italics in original)

According to the 2016 Samuel Hall and NRC report, all Afghans are required to "return to their family's place of residence, or to Kabul, to apply for [a] tazkera" (Samuel Hall and NRC Nov. 2016, 17). For further information on tazkiras, see Response to Information Request AFG103918 of December 2011 and for information e-tazkiras, see Response to Information Request AFG104742 of February 2014.

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.

Note

[1] "Samuel Hall is an independent think tank providing research and strategic services, expert analysis, tailored counsel and access to local knowledge for a diverse array of actors operating in the world's most challenging environments" (Samuel Hall n.d.)

References

Afghanistan. N.d.a. Consulate General of Afghanistan in Los Angeles. "[Requirements for a New Passport](#)." [Accessed 30 Jan. 2017]

Afghanistan. N.d.b. Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa. "[Passport Information](#)." [Accessed 2 Feb. 2017]

Afghanistan Holding Group (AHG). 19 January 2017. Correspondence from a representative to the Research Directorate.

Afghanistan Holding Group (AHG). N.d.a. "[About the Firm](#)." [Accessed 30 Jan. 2017]

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Samuel Hall and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). November 2016. [*Access to Tazkera and Other Civil Documentation in Afghanistan*](#). [Accessed 18 Jan. 2017]

Samuel Hall. N.d. "[Welcome to Samuel Hall](#)." [Accessed 20 Feb. 2017]

Shajjan & Associates. 28 January 2017. Correspondence from a Senior Associate to the Research Directorate.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Afghanistan- Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; ecoi.net; Factiva; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; International Organization for Migration; United Nations - Refworld; United States - Department of State.

Attachment

Afghanistan. N.d. Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa. "[Passport Application Form](#)."

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