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Cameroon: Certificate of Celibacy

Introduction

The certificate of celibacy is a Cameroonian document identifying the person in question as currently unmarried. The certificate is an affidavit signed by two witnesses, the person in question and a mayor or a senior divisional officer.¹ It is printed by private vendors and bought in stalls typically situated close to registration offices.² Two stamps must be included on the document: a fiscal stamp and a council stamp³. Stamps are purchased at the council.⁴

Fiscal and council stamps

The fiscal and council stamps are produced by the Ministry of Finance and are to be used to validate copies of documents. As for the fiscal stamps, they may be added either manually or printed on the document.⁵



Image 1: Example of a fiscal stamp from 2007. (NIDC reference material)

¹ National Civil Status Registration Office, Yaoundé, March 2019; Cameroonian Authorities, 10 June 2020; Secondary center, Yaoundé, March 2019.

² Main Centre Yaoundé 1, March 2019; National Civil Status Registration Office, Yaoundé, March 2019.

³ Main center 1, Yaoundé, March 2019.

⁴ Main center 1, Yaoundé, March 2019.

⁵ Main center 6, Yaoundé, March 2019.



Image 2: Example of a council stamp. (NIDC reference material)

Between 2014 and 2016, the price of the council stamps has been 600 CFR per stamp. Before 2014, the price was 200 CFR. As of March 2019, the price was 500 CFR.⁶

Issuance procedure

Certificate of celibacy is issued by a registration office in the same place as the person in question had his/her birth registered. The information in the document is provided by the person in question and then signed and stamped by the sub-divisional officer, divisional officer or the mayor. This also applies to Cameroonian nationals residing abroad, who wish to prove their unmarried state in connection with entering a marriage.⁷

In these cases, the document will also be signed by two witnesses, who will swear that the person in question has not previously been married in Cameroon. Both witnesses and the person in question will sign the document along with the sub-divisional officer, divisional officer or the mayor.⁸

Marriage registration and verification

A marriage registration is recorded in three books. Each registration book consists of three pieces, totalling nine marriage registration certificates filled in per marriage. Every copy is filled in by hand with the same information at every nine certificates. Two of the certificates from one of the books are issued to the spouses.⁹

⁶ Main center Yaoundé 6, Yaoundé, March 2019.

⁷ Cameroonian Authorities, 10 June 2020.

⁸ Cameroonian Authorities, 10 June 2020.

⁹ Main Centre Yaoundé 1, Yaoundé, March 2019.

The remaining certificate from the first book is kept at the civil status registry's archive. Of the two remaining full books, consisting of six certificates in total, one is archived at BUNEC and one at the court.¹⁰

Information regarding civil registrations is in this way archived by the event and the time it took place, and not by the individual. This means, that it is not possible to extract an overview of all civil registrations concerning an individual. It is thus not possible to look up in a civil register, whether an individual has been married before.

¹⁰ Main Centre Yaoundé 1, Yaoundé, March 2019.

References

Oral sources

Main Centre Yaoundé 1 (March 2019): Interviewed in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Main Centre Yaoundé 6 (March 2019): Interviewed in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

National Civil Status Registration Office (March 2019): Interviewed in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Secondary Centre Yaoundé 6 (March 2019): Interviewed in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Written sources

Cameroonian Authorities, 10 June 2020. Answer to a hearing sent to the Danish National ID Centre.