

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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19 March 2026

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Democratic Republic of Congo: Biometric passport launched in June 2025, including its content, appearance and security features; sample; requirements and procedure to obtain it in the country and from abroad (2025-March 2026)

1. New Biometric Passport

On 27 May 2025, the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) announced the launch of a new passport (DRC 2025-05-27). The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, Francophonie and the Congolese Diaspora (ministère des Affaires étrangères, Coopération internationale, Francophonie et Diaspora congolaise; Ministry of Foreign Affairs) states that the document is secure and complies [translation] "with the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] standard 39794 which [came] into effect in January 2025"(DRC n.d.a). The new biometric passport [translation] "incorporates the latest security technologies, with the aim of combating document fraud and facilitating citizens' mobility" (DRC 2025-07-30). Its official launch took place on 5 June 2025 (Actualité.cd 2025-06-06; Dermalog 2025-06-05; ACP 2025-06-05).

1.1. Validity

The DRC government announced that holders of the old passports may continue to use them until their expiry date and that the old and new passports will coexist until 2030 (DRC 2025-05-27). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a program officer in the DRC for the Great Lakes Region Human Rights League (Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs, LDGL) [1], speaking on his own behalf, similarly noted that 2 versions of the passport were valid as of February 2026 and that the old passports will be phased out as they reach their expiry date (Program Officer 2026-02-16).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also states, in its press release, that [translation] "all applicants whose passport applications are still pending will automatically be assisted in obtaining the new biometric passport" (DRC 2025-05-27).

The new passport is valid for 5 years (DRC n.d.a).

1.2. Availability

Media articles report difficulties faced by Congolese citizens attempting to obtain a passport (*Le Potentiel* 2025-11-05; DW 2025-09-05).

According to Deutsche Welle (DW), Germany's public international broadcaster, as of September 2025, [translation] "some" Congolese citizens had been waiting 9 months for their passports to be issued; authorities indicated that the delay was due to a change in "the company responsible for making the passports" (2025-09-05). The Congolese newspaper *Le Potentiel* reports that some applicants have been forced by bank officials, or agents of the Directorate General of Taxes (Direction générale des impôts, DGI), the National Intelligence Agency (Agence nationale de renseignement, ANR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to pay [translation] "'file expediting'" and "'facilitation fees'" (2025-11-05).

Regarding passport issuance in Canada, the Embassy of the DRC in Canada released an official statement on 7 November 2025 indicating it had [translation] "received new biometric passports for Congolese citizens" (DRC 2025-11-07). An article from one week later by Troc Radio, a community radio station based in Montreal (Troc Radio n.d.a) that describes itself as [translation] "African radio in Canada" (Troc Radio n.d.b), reports that [translation] "issuance of Congolese passports has resumed," but that this "follows a long wait by Congolese citizens in Canada" (Troc Radio 2025-11-14).

1.3. Content

According to a sample provided to the Research Directorate by the DRC Program Officer for the LDGL, the personal data page of the new passport contains the following information, in both English and French:

- At the top of the page, aligned to the left, the country name appears.
- Below the country name, on the left, is the title of the document in French and English—"Passeport/Passport"—and, to the right of those 2 words, the symbol indicating that the passport is biometric. This symbol is gold in colour and consists of a circle inside a rectangle divided horizontally into 2 parts.
- The entire left portion of the page, below the 2 words and the symbol, is occupied by a photograph of the passport holder.
- The following information is divided into three columns to the right of the photograph:
 - First column: the passport type; the holder's name, post-name, given name, birthplace, and date of birth; the passport's date of issue; and the holder's occupation;
 - Second column: the [country] code; the holder's sex and nationality; the issuing authority and the passport's expiry date;
 - Third column: the passport number; and the [holder's] signature (Attachment 1).

1.4. Appearance

1.4.1. Cover

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Honorary Consul of the DRC in Montreal indicated that the ordinary DRC passport is blue and that the cover displays the country's emblem and text printed in gold (Honorary Consul 2026-02-10). The sample of the new passport cover sent to the Research Directorate by the DRC Program Officer for the LDGL shows a navy blue / dark blue cover bearing the following elements printed in gold, from top to bottom:

- the name of the country in capital letters: "RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO";
- the country's coat of arms;
- the word "PASSEPORT" (passport) in capital letters;
- the symbol indicating that the passport is biometric, namely a circle inside a rectangle that is divided horizontally into two parts (Attachment 2).

According to sources consulted by the Research Directorate, the use of all capital letters for the country name on the cover distinguishes the new passport from the previous version, on which the country name appears in mixed case letters ("République Démocratique du Congo") (Honorary Consul 2026-02-19; Program Officer 2026-02-18). The Program Officer added that the cover is otherwise identical to that of the previous passport (Program Officer 2026-02-18).

1.4.2. Other Pages

Sources indicate that the new passport contains 38 pages (CDH 2026-02-20; Program Officer 2026-02-18; DRC 2025-05-27), compared with 32 pages in the previous passport (CDH 2026-02-20; DRC 2025-05-27).

As seen in a sample of the passport's inside front cover provided to the Research Directorate by a representative of the Centre for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire, CDH), a local DRC NGO, blue and green are the dominant colours inside the passport, appearing in a range of shades (Attachment 3). Decorative borders composed of zigzag lines in various shades of blue and green run along the top and bottom of the page; the DRC's coat of arms appears in the centre and below it is an outline map of the country (Attachment 3).

Sources also note that the personal data page of the new passport is made of polycarbonate (Honorary Consul 2026-02-10; DRC 2025-05-27).

On the right-hand side of the sample of the personal data page (Attachment 1), between the passport number and the signature, there are two ovals [the second of which is not visible in the attachment because it has been redacted]; the Program Officer was not able to formally identify these but described them as [translation] "almost transparent, reflective stickers" (Program Officer 2026-02-20).

According to the website of the Embassy of the DRC in China, the design of the new passport is [translation] "modernized" and incorporates "national visual elements" (DRC 2025-07-30). A sample of the inside back cover of the new passport, provided to the Research Directorate by the CDH representative, shows illustrations including an outline map of the DRC and a leaping leopard (Attachment 4).

1.5. Security Features

The DRC government states that the new passport complies with the requirements of ICAO standard 39794 (DRC 2025-05-27). According to an ICAO document, this standard is the [UN English version] "international standard for encoding biometrics" on machine-readable travel documents (UN 2021, 4). It specifies, among other things, the requirements for capturing and encoding face, finger and iris images (UN 2021, 8, 9).

In its press release, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lists three security features of the new passport:

- a contactless Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) microchip;
- a polycarbonate data page offering improved resistance to tampering; and
- holograms and watermarks designed to make counterfeiting more difficult (DRC 2025-05-27).

In a press release announcing the new Congolese passport, Dermalog, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' [translation] "technical partner" responsible for producing the passports, adds "UV printing" to the above list (Dermalog 2025-06-05). The Congolese Press Agency (Agence congolaise de presse, ACP) similarly reports that, according to a person speaking [translation] "on behalf of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs" at the launch ceremony of the new biometric passport, the document "contains data invisible to the naked eye, but under black light, the emblem and watermark are visible" (ACP 2025-06-05).

2. Requirements and Procedure to Obtain a Passport

Decree No.°09/10 of 30 March 2009 Regulating the Issuance of National Passports in the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Décret n° 09/10 du 30 mars 2009 portant réglementation de l'octroi des passeports nationaux en République Démocratique du Congo*) provides the following:

[translation]

Article 6: Any person of Congolese nationality is entitled to an ordinary passport. (DRC 2009)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates on the official online portal for Congolese passport applications that each individual family member must submit a separate application and that applications for children must be submitted by their parents or legal guardians (DRC n.d.b).

Decree No. 09/10 of 2009 also provides the following:

[translation]

Article 3:

Diplomatic passports, service passports and pilgrim passports are issued only by the central administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ordinary passports are issued both by the central administration mentioned in paragraph 1 and by Democratic Republic of the Congo diplomatic missions abroad. (DRC 2009)

The website of the Embassy of the DRC in Canada states that data collected by the embassy in connection with a passport application is transmitted to Kinshasa, where the passport is printed and then sent back to the embassy (DRC n.d.c).

2.1. In the Country

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates on its website that, to apply for a passport, applicants must go [translation] "to the competent services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," though it does not specify which services (DRC n.d.d).

In its May 2025 press release announcing the launch of the new passport, the Ministry further states that [translation] "new capture centres have been set up in Kinshasa and are gradually being established in provincial capitals" (DRC 2025-05-27). The Congolese news site Actualité.cd states that there are [translation] "capture centres" in the 4 districts of Kinshasa (2025-06-06).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also operates an official online portal to complete the initial steps of an application electronically (DRC n.d.b).

2.1.1. Pre-registration

According to the FAQ on the new passports on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, to apply for a passport, applicants must first obtain a tax identification number (numéro d'identification fiscale, NIF), which can be done through the DGI website (DRC n.d.a).

Applicants must then access the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' official online portal for Congolese passport applications and begin the pre-registration, where they must enter their demographic information (DRC n.d.a). The passport application form available on the portal indicates that the applicant must provide their NIF at this step (DRC n.d.b).

The applicant then receives an email with the pre-registration document in PDF format, as well as a [DRC English version] "payment slip (note de perception), to be used as a reference for payment at the bank" (DRC n.d.b). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' FAQ, the email also contains [translation] "a QR code with encrypted data" (DRC n.d.a).

2.1.2. Payment of Fees

The application fee is US\$75 (DRC n.d.d; Radio Okapi 2025-04-12). Payment may be made online or in person at a branch of the Congolese bank Equity BCDC (DRC n.d.a).

2.1.3. ANR Approval

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' FAQ states that applicants must subsequently appear before the ANR for verification [translation] "with the personal documents required," but does not specify the documents (DRC n.d.a). According to the instructions on the official portal for passport applications, the purpose of this step is to verify the applicant's identity (DRC n.d.b). The ACP article notes that this step is also required for passport renewals (2025-06-05). Corroborating information could not be

found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.1.4. Registration and Capture of Biometric Data

The next step in the application requires applicants to go to [translation] an "enrolment office" or capture centre with their ANR authorization, the QR code they received by email and their personal documentation, for the capture of biometric data (DRC n.d.a). Sources noted that passport applicants must attend the appointment in person (CDH 2026-02-20; Program Officer 2026-02-16; Honorary Consul 2026-02-10). According to some sources, in-person attendance is required for data capture (CDH 2026-02-20; Program Officer 2026-02-16) and to complete [translation] "formalities that only the applicant can complete" (Program Officer 2026-02-16). The Honorary Consul indicated that this is because the applicant must have their photograph taken (Honorary Consul 2026-02-10).

In follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Honorary Consul of the DRC in Montreal stated that, for an ordinary passport, fingerprints and a photograph of the face are taken (Honorary Consul 2026-02-19).

2.1.4.1. Documents Required

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the following documents must be submitted with a passport application:

- a completed passport application form;
- a copy of the biometric data page of the previous passport or, in case of loss, a police report or a copy of the birth certificate;
- 2 identification photographs taken in the past 6 months (DRC n.d.d).

2.1.5. Issuance of the Passport

The passport is then printed, and the applicant must schedule an appointment to collect the new passport at the location where their biometric enrolment took place (DRC n.d.a). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the CDH representative noted that [translation] "the applicant may authorize another person with ... power of attorney and the receipt to collect [the passport]" (CDH 2026-02-20).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

[translation] "Official [processing] times" are 10 business days in Kinshasa and 14 business days in the provinces (DRC n.d.d).

2.2. From Abroad

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates on its website that applicants who are abroad must [translation] "go to one of our embassies or consulates around the world" to apply for a passport (DRC n.d.d).

The website of the Embassy of the DRC in Canada provides the following instructions for applying for a passport from Canada:

- Obtain a NIF through the DGI website.
- Access the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' official online portal for Congolese passport applications [the same site as for applications made from inside the country] and complete the form.
- Receive a statement of fees by email.
- Pay the fees on the dedicated Equity BCDC portal using the fee statement number and obtain payment confirmation by email.
- Submit the following documents to the embassy, either in hard copy or by email (to the address provided):
 - passport application form signed by the applicant, including the QR code received by email once the form is completed;
 - statement of fees;
 - proof of payment from Equity BCDC;
 - certificate of nationality, previous passport, or voter card;
 - for minors: birth certificate or birth attestation and parental authorization legalized by the embassy;
- Wait for the email from the embassy specifying the date of the biometric data capture appointment and attend the appointment.
- Return to the embassy to collect the passport once it is ready (DRC n.d.c).

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the official processing time for passport applications submitted from abroad is 28 business days (DRC n.d.d).

In the Troc Radio article from November 2025, the Ambassador of the DRC to Canada stated that the price of the new DRC passport in Canada is also US\$75 (Troc Radio 2025-11-14). The Embassy of the DRC in Canada notes that a consular card is required before submitting any application to the embassy and that the card costs C\$50 (DRC n.d.c). The Program Officer states, in follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, that payment for passport applications submitted abroad is made at embassies, [translation] "depending on the circumstances" (2026-02-18).

With respect to ANR verification for applicants abroad, the Program Officer indicated the following:

[translation]

For applications submitted from abroad, verification of the applicant's judicial status by the ANR is not required, and some embassies may request a declaration of responsibility. Each embassy may apply its own procedure or requirement to replace ANR formalities, but the issuance of passports abroad is generally more straightforward than within the country. (2026-02-18)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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] The LDGL is a regional NGO headquartered in Kigali, Rwanda, that works to promote and protect human rights in Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC (Irénées.NET 2014-03). [\[back\]](#)

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: DRC – Embassy in Ottawa; lawyer in the DRC.

Internet sites, including: Adiac-Congo; EU – Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online; Keesing Technologies – Documentchecker; Netherlands – EdisonTD; US – Department of State.

Attachments

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). 2025. Sample of the personal data page of the new passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the DRC Program Officer for the Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL), 2026-02-16.
2. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). 2025. Sample of the front cover of the new passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the DRC Program Officer for the Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL), 2026-02-16.
3. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). 2025. Sample of the back cover of the new passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire (CDH), 2026-02-23.
4. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). 2025. Sample of the last page and inside back cover of the new passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire (CDH), 2026-02-23.

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