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Pakistan: Requirements and procedures to obtain a Family Registration Certificate (FRC), including from abroad; information contained on the FRC, including whether names of family members who are deceased or reside abroad appear on the document (2016-January 2018) [PAK106044.E]

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1. Issuing Authority

The website of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), a department of Pakistan's Ministry of Interior responsible for identification documents in Pakistan, indicates that the Family Registration Certificate (FRC) allows individuals to be identified with their NADRA record and provides information on the composition of the applicant's family (Pakistan n.d.a). A 2015 study entitled *Identification for Development (ID4D) Integration Approach* by the World Bank explains that NADRA [1] is "the single source of truth" in Pakistan for identification data, through Pakistan's primary form of identity verification, namely the "[c]omputerized [n]ational [i]dentity [c]ard (CNIC)," and that it covers "approximately" 98 percent of the entire population of Pakistan (The World Bank 2015, 113).

According to NADRA's website, the FRC cannot be used for any legal purpose and it is instead of use for Embassy matters (Pakistan n.d.a). Sources explain that the FRC is used for verification purposes when individuals apply for a visa "for higher education, immigration, official visit, or foreign visit" (Infola 8 Sept. 2017; Canada 16 Jan. 2018).

The NADRA website indicates that individuals can apply for an FRC in three categories: by birth, by marriage, or by adoption (Pakistan n.d.a). The same source states that an FRC applied for "[b]y [b]irth" will display the applicant's family, including the applicant's parents and siblings, while those applied for "[b]y [m]arriage" will contain the applicant's family, including the applicant's spouse and children (Pakistan n.d.a). According to the same source, an FRC applied for "[b]y [a]doption ... list[s] the applicant's] family including the details of the [applicant's] guardian" (Pakistan n.d.a).

2. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain an FRC

The NADRA website indicates that individuals can apply for the FRC either by visiting a NADRA registration centre or online, through the "Pak-Identity website" (Pakistan n.d.a).

2.1 At the NADRA Registration Centre: in Pakistan and Abroad

According to the NADRA website, applicants who request an FRC by birth, by marriage or by adoption must go to the nearest NADRA registration centre and will undergo the following procedure:

- a token will be issued to the applicant;
- a picture of the applicant will be taken; and
- "data" about the applicant will be entered and reviewed by the applicant (Pakistan n.d.a).

The NADRA website states that, in addition to the procedure mentioned above, applicants who request an FRC by marriage and who have children who are less than 18 years old must bring their children with them to the NADRA registration centre, and a photograph of the children will be taken (Pakistan n.d.a). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official from the High Commission of Canada in Islamabad indicated that a copy of the Child Registration Certificate (CRC) issued by NADRA must be submitted for any family member that is less than 18 years of age (Canada 16 Jan. 2018). The NADRA website states that if children are 18 years old or older, applicants do not need to take them to the NADRA registration centre (Pakistan n.d.a). Applicants who request an FRC by adoption must also bring their adopted children to the NADRA registration centre, where photographs of the adopted children will be taken (Pakistan n.d.a). According to the same source, given the adoption rules in Pakistan, the adopted children must be less than 21 years old (Pakistan n.d.a). The same source states that the FRC is "[n]ormally" delivered at the time of application at the NADRA registration centre, where the FRC will be printed and given to the applicant (Pakistan n.d.a).

The NADRA website indicates that the FRC application fee is 500 Pakistani Rupees (PKR) (approximately C\$6) for "normal" service and 1,000 PKR for "executive" service (Pakistan n.d.b). Information on the differences between the normal and executive services could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the webpage that allows applicants to locate NADRA registration centres, in addition to Pakistan, NADRA registration centres are located in South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Qatar, and in the United Arab Emirates (Pakistan n.d.c).

2.2 Online: In Pakistan and Abroad

The Pak-Identity website, "NADRA's online ID issuance system," indicates that the Pak-Identity website can be used to apply for a new FRC and to verify an existing FRC, both in Pakistan and abroad (Pakistan n.d.d). According to the same source, when applying online for identity documents, including the FRC, applicants need to register an account on the Pak-Identity website; an SMS and an email with the registration code will be sent to applicants who apply from within Pakistan, while "all required codes" are sent only through email to individuals who apply from abroad (Pakistan n.d.d).

The information in the following paragraph was obtained from the FRC webpage of the Pak-Identity website:

Applicants who apply for an FRC online must prepare a photograph of themselves and of all relatives who are under the age of 18 years old. They must also possess the citizen number of all relatives to be added to the FRC. Applicants who apply for an FRC online must first provide their citizen number and, once the number is verified, they will have a choice of applying for an FRC "[w]ith [p]arents and [s]iblings" or for an FRC "[w]ith [s]pouse and [c]hildren." Applicants must then input the details of all family members, including the family members' citizen numbers, and specify the relationship with the applicant. The system then proceeds to verify the details of the family members, after which the applicants must pay the required fees with a credit or debit card. As an alternative to using a credit or debit card, applicants applying in Pakistan can visit the "nearest E-Sahulat" [2] centre and pay the fees by providing the tracking ID generated by the Pak-Identity website. The details of the family members will be updated on the webpage in both Urdu and English, and applicants can modify any incorrect information. After having uploaded all required photographs, applicants review the application details and submit the application. A portable document format (pdf) of the FRC is then sent through email to the applicant (Pakistan n.d.e).

An informational slideshow, retrieved from the Pak-Identity website, explains in detail the procedure to request an FRC online and indicates that applicants must make the following declaration, among others, before submitting their applications:

I declare and solemnly affirm that I believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of the prophets, and I do not believe in, or recognize as a prophet or religious reformer, any person who claimed or claims to be a prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (peace be upon him), nor do I belong to the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name). (Pakistan n.d.e)

2.2.1 Verification of FRC

The FRC webpage of the Pak-Identity website indicates that applicants can use the website to verify an existing FRC online (Pakistan n.d.e). According to the same source, applicants need to provide the FRC identity number and pay a fee with a credit or debit card, or by visiting an e-Sahulat centre with the tracking ID issued online (Pakistan n.d.e). Information on the fee incurred by the verification of the FRC could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Information Contained in the FRC

A 2016 sample copy of an FRC, provided to the Research Directorate by the High Commission of Canada in Islamabad, is attached to this Response.

The information in the following section was provided by the official at the High Commission:

The FRC "shows the total number of family members, names, identity number (CNIC number), date of birth, mother's name, father's name and relation of each individual with the applicant." At the top right corner of the FRC, there is a barcode that indicates the FRC number, which starts with 2 letters followed by 8 digits; the FRC number is identical to the document number. The citizen number is the applicant's CNIC and it consists of 13 digits. A barcode reflecting the applicant's CNIC appears on the bottom right corner of the certificate. "The barcode at the bottom left corner of the certificate is for NADRA's official records." The FRC also contains the details of all the individuals mentioned, including the relationship to the applicant (Canada 16 Jan. 2018).

A deceased person and one who lives abroad can appear on an applicant's FRC and applicants who wish to add them to their FRC need only provide the CNIC of the concerned persons (Canada 16 Jan. 2018). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The "application process checks all the family members [recorded] in NADRA database" and applicants are required to provide the CNIC of all family members as well as their relationship to the applicant (Canada 16 Jan. 2018). If there was a previous FRC in the system that included an applicant's family members and the same applicant requests another FRC that does not list one or more family members recorded in NADRA's system, then the system will show an error message (Canada 16 Jan. 2018). The FRC webpage of the Pak-Identity website indicates that FRC are not issued for "partial families" (Pakistan n.d.e).

3.1 Appearance of the FRC

A December 2015 article in the *Nation*, an English-language Pakistani newspaper, indicates that the FRC is issued on A4 size paper that lacks any security feature, whereas it was printed on paper with security features prior to 10 November 2015 (*The Nation* 21 Dec. 2015). The same source states that FRC issued before November 2015 are still valid (*The Nation* 21 Dec. 2015). Without providing further details, the same source indicates that security features are "encrypted" in FRCs issued after 10 November 2015 on "simple paper" (*The Nation* 21 Dec. 2015). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Verification of Citizen Data

Sources indicate that, on 1 July 2016, NADRA launched a re-verification process for CNIC holders to check who is registered under their family with NADRA (TechMag 14 July 2016; *The Express Tribune* 27 June 2016; Pakwired 27 June 2016). A 2016 article from the *Express Tribune*, a Pakistani newspaper, explains that the Interior Minister gave NADRA a 6-month deadline to complete the process (*The Express Tribune* 27 June 2016). According to sources, individuals can send their CNIC in a Short Message Service (SMS) to the number "8008" and receive the name of all registered persons in their families (TechMag 14 July 2016; Pakwired 27 June 2016). Sources explain that once individuals send their CNIC through SMS at "8008" and receive a reply with a list of all their family members, they can respond with a "2" if the list is accurate or with a "1" if it is not (Pakwired 27 June 2016; TechMag 14 July 2016). Sources explain that, through the service, "illegal registrations" can be reported to authorities (TechMag 14 July 2016; *The Express Tribune* 27 June 2016). A 2016 article in Pakwired, an online news platform based in Lahore catering to those who have an interest in business, entrepreneurship and technology (Pakwired n.d.), states that "any individual who knows your CNIC can obtain a list of [your] family members and their names" (Pakwired 27 June 2016).

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.

Notes

[1] The World Bank document states that NADRA, while a division of Pakistan's Ministry of Interior, is an independent corporate body (The World Bank 2015, 117). According to the same source, NADRA's data collection is compliant with international standards, such as the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (The World Bank 2015, 113).

[2] The e-Sahulat is "a low cost e-Services collection and disbursement platform," launched by NADRA in 2005 and later franchised as "NADRA e-Sahulat" in 2008, that provide secure payment and collection services to Pakistanis, with 12,000 active franchises across Pakistan (Pakistan n.d.f).

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Legal Advisers specialized in Immigration Law in Toronto and Karachi; Pakistan – Consulate General in Toronto and in Vancouver, High Commission for Pakistan in Ottawa and in London, UK, National Database and Registration Authority.

Internet sites, including: ecoi.net; European Union – European Asylum Support Office, Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online; Factiva; Kessing's Reference System; Norway – Landinfo; Pakistan – Consulate in Toronto, High Commission for Pakistan in Ottawa and in London, UK; UN – Refworld; US – Department of State.

Attachment

Pakistan. 29 July 2016. Ministry of Interior, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "Family Registration Certificate." Sent to the Research Directorate by the High Commission of Canada in Islamabad, 16 January 2018.

ecoi.net summary:

Query response on requirements and procedures to obtain a Family Registration Certificate (FRC) (2016 - January 2018)



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