



Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 16 January 2018

- 1. Is there evidence of corruption/fraud on the part of applicants or officials in relation to obtaining or the issuing of Nigeria passports in Nigeria?**
- 2. In order to obtain a visa to travel from Nigeria to the UK, does an applicant (including a minor) always have to attend an interview at the UK embassy/consulate in Nigeria? Does an applicant have to provide any biometric data in relation to such visa application, and if so, since when?**
- 3. Is there any evidence of corruption/fraud on the part of applicants or officials in relation to Nigerian nationals obtaining UK visas in Nigeria to visit the UK?**

An article from the Nigerian newspaper This Day states:

“Following allegations of corruption in the issuance of passports in Alausa Passport Office of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) in Lagos, the Service Comptroller General (CG), Muhammad Babandede, has ordered an immediate probe. The CG was responding to recent allegations by passport applicants that officers at the Alausa Passport Office were overcharging them in the process of acquiring their international passports.” (This Day (23 August 2017) *CG Immigration Orders Probe of Corruption Allegations in Passport Issuance*)

This article also states:

“The problem is that Nigerians like to look for shortcut, and so they fall into the hands of people who dupe them. They prefer to do things through the backdoor. They need to know that every office opened by the NIS has a duty to serve them.’ THISDAY gathered that the passport office has allegedly been turned to den for extortion with NIS personnel using accredited agents to charge the applicants above the stipulated fee. However, inquires at the passport office have revealed that the office do not have agents, rather, they allowed cyber cafe operators to set up business within the environment to aid the applicants.” (ibid)

An article from the Nigeria Daily Independent

“The perennial anguish involved in the processing of travelling passport at the offices of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) across Nigeria has assumed an alarming tempo that calls for immediate and lasting remedies. The usual spectacle of unwarranted hassle Nigerians are forced to undergo at the Ikoyi

passport office in Lagos clearly depicts the failure of the Nigerian immigration officials in availing deserving Nigerians prompt and efficient services.

Unfortunately, the processing of passport has been made so cumbersome thereby encouraging touting and wide range of corrupt practices. Nigerians applying for new passport or renewing their passports are made to go through difficult processes which promote middlemen and extortion of unsuspecting or frustrated citizens. Although, there are notices at strategic places in the passport office cautioning applicants not to patronise touts, it is an open secret that touts act as agents of NIS officers. It is a common practice for applicant to rely on the services of touts to overcome the agonising process.” (Nigeria Daily Independent (10 November 2017) *Agonies Of Getting Nigerian Passport*)

This article also states:

“In recent time, Nigerians have been made to go through untold hardship in the quest to have their application for passport processed. Whereas official cost of a standard 32-page passport for Nigerians above the age of 60 is N10,750, while that for applicants aged between 18 and 59 costs N17,000, however it often cost as much as N32,000 to obtain any of these passports going through a tout. Sometimes, the NIS officials create artificial scarcity of passport booklets, thereby compelling applicants to pay far more than N32,000 per passport.” (ibid)

See also editorial published by the Nigerian tabloid newspaper The Sun which states:

“For as far back as one can remember, procuring the Nigerian passport has always been a daunting enterprise. This is due to the artificial bottlenecks the passport officials create all the way for prospective passport holders. The irony, however, is that the passport is a right of every citizen of a country. That means that whoever wants his country’s passport should be able to lay hands on one with minimum effort, provided he does not have issues with the security agencies. But, the experiences of most Nigerians who have reason to apply for passports are the exact opposite. All kinds of delay tactics are deployed, making it inevitable for passport seekers to engage the services of ‘agents’ to facilitate the process. In the process, many unsuspecting and desperate applicants have fallen into the hands of passport touts, who fleece them of their money. The whole thing is a well-organised and well-run racket. (The Sun (11 November 2017) *Easing the procurement of Nigerian passports*)

This editorial also states:

“Acquiring the passport, even under the new regime, is as difficult as ever. Officials, working in concert with agents of corruption rings organised from the top, create artificial scarcities and delays in the way of citizens who want to obtain the passport and force them to part with extra sums outside of the officially prescribed amount, if they really want the passport. Most applicants part with double the official fee, paying as much as N32,000 before they can get their passports.” (ibid)

A document published on the UK government website GOV.UK, in a paragraph headed “Go to your appointment”, states:

“At your appointment you will:

submit your application form and supporting documents
have your photo and fingerprints (known as ‘biometric information’) taken”
(GOV.UK (25 June 2014) *Apply for a UK visa in Nigeria*)

An instruction document published on the TLS Contact Centre - Nigeria website, in a paragraph headed “Step 5: Attend Your Appointment”, states:

“You must check in at the Visa Application Centre’s welcome desk in person at the time and date stated in your confirmation email. If you are late, you may have to rebook your appointment. This will significantly delay the application process.

You will then be redirected to an agent who will review your documents.

Next we will take your photo and fingerprints, known as biometrics. Once this has been done your visa fee is no longer refundable.” (TLS Contact Centre - Nigeria (undated) *UK Visa Application Centre in Nigeria (Abuja)*)

See also TLS Contact Centre – Nigeria document which states:

“Due to global changes in the way visa applications are processed, children under 5 years old are now required to attend the Visa Application Centre to complete the application process. It is now mandatory for them to have their photo taken at the VAC. These changes do not affect applications that have already been submitted.” (TLScontact Centre – Nigeria (undated) *Welcome to the UK Visa Application Centre in Nigeria (Lagos - Ikeja)*)

An article from the Nigerian newspaper Daily Trust states:

“Five persons are being detained at the Special Fraud Unit (SFU) in Ikoyi, Lagos for allegedly being in possession of fake American and British visas. Raji Oluseyi Michael, Adegoke Johnson, Popoola Oladimeji, St. John Ojo Osaghae and Smart Imafidon were said to be members of a syndicate involved in the circulation of forged documents to unsuspecting members of the public seeking to procure genuine visa from embassies. Raji, Adegoke and Popoola were arrested based on a petition from the Regional Security Office of the United States Consulate in Lagos alleging that Raji had in his Nigerian passport No. No. A04910344, a fake UK visa. John Ojo Osaghae and Smart Imafidon were arrested for applying for UK visa with forged income tax clearance certificates from the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue Service. SFU Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Isintume-Agu, said John Ojo Osaghae with Nigerian passport No. A0 3916493 applied for a six months visit visa to UK early in November. She said based on the strength of the petitions, SFU detectives arrested the five suspects.” (Daily Trust (25 November 2015) *5 held over fake US, UK visas*)

An article from the Nigerian newspaper PM News states:

“The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on Monday, November 30, 2015 secured the conviction of one Abraham Adasah before Justice Peter Kekemeke of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory sitting in Apo, Abuja.

Adasah allegedly presented a false Diamond bank statement to the British High Commission with a forged letter from one ‘Honourable Ohenhen Nosakhare’, purported to be the Chairman of Edo State Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission with intent to cause the British High Commission to issue Nosa Ohenhen Ericson a UK visa.” (PM News (1 December 2015) *Court jails man for UK visa scam*)

An article from This Day states:

“Two suspected visa fraudsters, 31-year-old Awolola Segun Sesan and 28-year-old Adebayo Rilwan Ajasa, have been apprehended by the Police Special Fraud Unit (SFU), Milverton, Lagos.

This is just as the unit also arrested one Afolabi Olubunmi, a single mother from Osun State, who procured a fake United Kingdom (UK) visa with passport number A0055907.

The visa fraudsters were arrested for forging visa payment slips, procuring fake visas and editing the fake visas using Corel Draw application in Microsoft word to edit the payment slips.” (This Day (15 June 2017) *Two Visa Fraudsters Nabbed by Police Special Fraud Unit in Lagos*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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