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RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		6 March 2008
About the Board	ISR102749.E	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Israel: Citizenship Law	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy	Citizenship is regulated by the Ministry of the Interior (Israel 17 Apr. 2001).	
References	Laws governing citizenship status and entry and exit include the <i>Law of Return 5710-1950</i> , the <i>Entry to Israel Law 5712-1952</i> , and the <i>Citizenship Law 5712-1952</i> (ibid.), also referred to as the <i>Nationality Law, 5712-1952</i> (Israel 1 Apr. 1952).	
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	The <i>Law of Return 5710-1950</i> confers the "right of aliyah" stating that "every Jew has the right to come to this country as an <i>oleh</i> " (Israel 5 July 1950, 1). The law defines <i>oleh</i> as "a Jew immigrating, into Israel" and <i>aliyah</i> as the "immigration of Jews" into Israel (ibid., Translator's Note). <i>Amendment No. 2, 5730-1970</i> , added in 1970, defines a Jew as "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion" (ibid., 4B).	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics	The 1970 amendment also extends the right of return to the spouse of a Jew and to the child and grandchild of a Jew as well as their spouses, unless a voluntary change of religion has occurred (ibid., 4A; UN 9 Apr. 1998, Para. 47). Provisions are included to exclude persons likely to pose a danger to public welfare and state security (ibid; Israel 5 July 1950, 2 (b)). An <i>oleh</i> obtains Israeli citizenship upon arrival in Israel (Israel 1 Apr. 1952; ibid. 4 Aug. 1998; US Mar. 2001).	
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages	In addition to the <i>Law of Return 5710-1950</i> , there are three other means of acquiring citizenship: birth, residence and naturalization (Israel 4 Aug. 1998; ibid. 1 Apr. 1952, 1). An individual born to an Israeli citizen has Israeli citizenship regardless of whether or not he or she was born in the state of Israel (ibid., 4; US Mar. 2001). Citizenship may also be granted by right of residence to Palestinian citizens of the former British Mandatory Palestine, who chose to remain in Israel between 1948 when the state of Israel was established, and the enactment of the <i>Citizenship Law 5712-1952</i> in 1952 (Israel 4 Aug. 1998), provided that they were registered inhabitants on 1 March 1952 and were living in or present in Israel or future Israeli territory upon entry into force of the law (Israel 1 Apr. 1952). An amendment in 1980 facilitated further means of acquiring citizenship by right of residence, extending citizenship to Arab descendants of former Palestinian citizens who did not remain in Israel during this four-year period but who returned subsequent to Israel statehood, and who had previously been entitled only to permanent resident status (UN 9 Apr. 1998, Para. 49). Citizenship by naturalization is subject to the discretion of the Minister of the Interior and applicants must meet specific residency requirements and renounce their former nationality (Israel 1 Apr. 1952, 5; US Mar. 2001).	
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The Interior Minister may also grant citizenship to a resident if convinced that the individual "identifies with the State of Israel and its goals" and that the said individual or a family member "performed a meaningful act" relevant to an important matter of state, or if the granting of citizenship would be of "special interest" to Israel (Israel 27 July 2005, 3C). Israeli citizens are permitted to hold dual citizenship; however, people who obtain Israeli citizenship through naturalization must give up their previous citizenship (Israel 1 Apr. 1952, 14; US Mar. 2001).

Any Israeli citizen "of full age" not residing in Israel has the right to renounce his or her citizenship with the consent of the Minister of the Interior (Israel 1 Apr. 1952, 10). Naturalized citizens may have their citizenship revoked by the Minister of the Interior for providing false information, acts of disloyalty or for being absent from Israel for several years and being unable to provide proof that ties with the country were not severed by choice (*ibid.*, 11).

Non-Jewish residents of East Jerusalem were offered the opportunity to apply for Israeli citizenship following the Six-Day War of June 1967, and the subsequent passage of the *Administration Ordinance (Amendment No. 11) Law, 1967* providing for the extension of Israeli jurisdiction and administration over East Jerusalem (Israel 30 June 1998). The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states that nationality is not "imposed" and that only "a small number of residents" have applied for it since 1967 (*ibid.*). A 7 November 2007 news article corroborates this, reporting that of some 250,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, only 12,000 had sought Israeli citizenship since 1967 (Ynetnews 7 Nov. 2007; see also *Haaretz* 7 Nov. 2007). However, recent reports indicate that the number of applications for Israeli citizenship has surged among Arab residents of Jerusalem (*Haaretz* 7 Nov. 2007; McClatchy 19 Jan. 2008).

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Ynetnews. 7 November 2007. Ronny Shaked. "Thousands of Palestinians Apply for Israeli Citizenship." <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3468672,00.html>> [Accessed 23 Jan. 2008]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Sources: The Embassy of Israel in Ottawa did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet Sources: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

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