Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR’s Refworld website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

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Lebanon: Information on national ID cards, individual and family registers, and drivers licenses, including purpose of documents, application and issuance procedures, procedures for correcting errors; whether errors in these documents are common and whether there are issues with fraud (2012 – July 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The information in the following Response to Information Request was provided by an official at the Embassy of Canada to Lebanon in Beirut in correspondence with the Research Directorate.

1. National ID Cards

The issuing authority of the National ID Card is the Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, Directorate of Civil Census (Canada 14 July 2016). The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities started distributing the new model of the Lebanese National ID Card in 1996 (ibid.). The format of the National ID Card is standardized throughout the country (ibid.). Information on the card includes: the holder’s name; surname; father’s name; mother’s name and surname; place of birth; date of birth; cardholder’s signature; photo; sex; marital status; date of issue; registry number; village; province; district; name, signature and seal of registry officer (ibid.). A sample of the document, along with a translation, was provided by the Canadian official and is attached to this Response (Attachment 1).

1.1 Application Procedures for Adults

Applications are available from the Mayor’s office, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and at all district police stations (ibid.). Applicants are required to submit the following documents:

- One passport size photo with a white background
- Old ID or original or copy of the Individual Civil Extract
- Completed application that is available at the [office of the] Mayor. The application must be signed and fingerprinted (only one finger, usually the thumb)
- The application must be submitted at the Ministry by the Mayor of the applicant’s Civil Census location
- The Mayor in turn will submit the application on behalf of the applicant
- The processing time is two months
- The fee is 5000 Lebanese Pounds (LBP) [C$4.25] (ibid.).

1.2 Application Procedures for Minor Children

Applications for minor children require the submission of the same documents as an adult individual with one exception: the minor must be accompanied by the father or guardian when completing the application at
the Mayor’s office as the adult will sign on behalf of the minor and no fingerprints are required (ibid.). Children’s photos can be included on the ID card once the child reaches three years of age (ibid.). It is mandatory to submit a new application along with a fingerprint for all children over the age of 15 years old and a new ID will be issued to the individual (ibid.).

1.3 Whether a Third Party Can Apply for this Document

A third party cannot apply on behalf of an individual: Lebanese citizens must be physically present in Lebanon to complete the application at the Mayor’s office and the individual’s fingerprint must be placed on the application in front of the Mayor (ibid.).

1.4 Photograph Requirements

The photograph for an ID card application is usually taken at any photo studio or shop and the individual must bring it in person to the Mayor’s office in order to complete the application (ibid.). The Mayor then confirms whether the individual completing the application is the same person as featured in the photo (ibid.).

1.5 Purpose for Which the National ID Card Is Issued and Used

The National ID Card is recognised as an official document and is used as legal proof of an individual’s identity (ibid.). It is used for the following purposes:

- healthcare (hospitals/clinics/insurance companies);
- for passport and driving license acquisition;
- financial institutes (banks, credit acquisition);
- educational purposes (schools and universities);
- employment;
- police record;
- travel, when validating the Lebanese traveller’s passport and/or ID, and can be used for entry into the country when a Lebanese traveller has dual citizenship and is only carrying their non-Lebanese passport; the card can also be used to enter Syria and Jordan as there are no visa requirements for Lebanese citizens
- car accidents and insurance claims (ibid.)

1.6 Procedures for Correcting Errors in the Document

In order to correct any information that was incorrectly included on the National ID Card, the individual must complete an application, which is located and must be filed at the Mayor’s office (ibid.). The Mayor, upon receiving the application, indicates on the application both the error and the correction (ibid.). The Mayor then attaches the ID card that requires correction to the application along with the applicant's Individual Civil Extract (ibid.). The application is sent to the individual’s civil census and once the correction has been completed, the new ID will be forwarded to the Mayor’s office and the applicant can collect it there (ibid.).

1.7 Procedures for Updating the Document After Marriage

Following a marriage, women are required by law to update the information on their ID cards to reflect that they are now married, and as such, are required to submit a new ID application to the Mayor’s office, at which time they must indicate that their marital status is now “married” and provide a Family and Individual Civil Extract [see section 2] showing their new Civil Registry number (ibid.). By law, the National ID Card must always reflect the current marital status of the individual (ibid.).

2. Individual and Family Registry Documents

The issuing authority for individual and family registry documents is the Directorate General for the Personal Status, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities (ibid.). Individual and family registry documents [Individual Civil Extracts and Family Civil Extracts] follow a standard format throughout the country (ibid.). However, they are handwritten rather than printed by means of a computer or electronic device, and therefore do not all have the same handwriting (ibid.). Information on the Individual Civil Extract includes the district, quarter or village of residence and register number, as well as the individual’s name and surname, father’s name, mother’s name and surname, place and date of birth, religion [1], family status, and sex (ibid.). Information on the Family Civil Extract includes the district, place of the register, number of the register, and each person in the family’s full name, father, mother, place and date of
birth, religion, sex, marital status and notes (ibid.). A sample of these documents, along with their translations, was provided by the Canadian official and is attached to this Response (Attachments 2 and 3).

2.1 Application Procedures for Adults

Applications for individual and family registry documents are to be completed and submitted to the Civil Census office, along with two passport size photos that are certified and signed by the Mayor (ibid.). The documents may be issued the same day, particularly if the Civil Census offices are not overworked (ibid.). Alternatively, an individual may submit the application at LIBANPOST (the post office) along with two photos that are certified and signed by the Mayor, who will indicate the name of the individual on the back of the photo along with the individual's civil registry number and his religion (ibid.). The processing time through LIBANPOST is one month (ibid.).

Lebanese citizens residing outside Lebanon may apply at a Lebanese embassy abroad, who in turn would send their applications to the Directorate General for the Personal Status to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) via a diplomatic bag (ibid.).

2.2 Application Procedures for Minor Children

The father or guardian of a minor may submit the request on their behalf, using the same application and submitting the same documents as for adults (application and certified photos) (ibid.). The minor is not required to be present in person (ibid.).

2.3 Whether a Third Party Can Apply for this Document

A third party, such as a direct relative, the mayor, or a lawyer may apply to obtain individual and family registry documents (ibid.).

2.4 Photograph Requirements

A photo is required on an Individual Civil Extract, but not on the Family Civil Extract, as the Family Civil Extract contains biographic information on the individual, his wife (or wives in the cases of Muslim marriages where a man may be married to a maximum of four women at the same time), children, and parents of both the husband and his wife (ibid.). Newborn babies may be issued an Individual Civil Extract without a photo, "but the preference is to include a photo" (ibid.).

2.5 Purpose for Which Registry Documents Are Issued and Used

The Individual Civil Extract and Family Civil Extract are documents used as proof of identity and may also be used for processes such as the issuance of Lebanese citizenship, school registration, employment, requests for Police Certificates, university registrations, issuance of driving licenses, marriages, and divorces (ibid.).

2.6 Procedures for Correcting Errors in Registry Documents

Errors are corrected at the Civil Census office in the individual's district (ibid.). The individual must present themselves along with the document that requires correction at the Civil Census office and submit a request for a new Extract (ibid.). The same process can be requested by a third party, however, it is not uncommon for the Civil Census office to "insist on seeing the individual in question" in person (ibid.). As such, it is considered best practice for an individual to go in person to the Civil Census bureau in his/her district (ibid.).

3. Driver's Licenses

The issuing authority for driver's licenses is the Directorate General for the Internal Security Forces (ISF), which operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (ibid.). The format of the driver's license is standard throughout the country (ibid.). A sample of the driver's license was provided by the Canadian official and is attached to this Response (Attachment 4).

Lebanese Driver’s Licenses are divided into 6 categories:

Category “1”: Driving licenses issued for motorbikes

Category “2”: Driving licenses issued for touristic and/or transport vehicles that do not exceed a total weight of 3500 kg.
Category “3”: Driving licenses issued for transport vehicles that exceed the total weight of 3500kg and is less than 10K kilograms and vehicles that are known as buses that carry 20 seats.

Category “4”: Driving licenses issued for transport vehicles that exceed a total weight of 10K kilograms and buses that have more than 20 seats.

Category “5”: Driving licenses issued to drive special equipment/machines, such as agricultural vehicles and general works.

Category “6”: Driving licenses issued for tourist cars and buses, special motorbikes to carry person or those vehicles that are driven by persons of special needs. Note that these special vehicles must be registered under the name of the person of special needs. Note that this category is divided into two sub categories:

- Private: to drive one’s own private car.
- Public/Taxi: the driver in this category may collect remuneration for the service they are providing. (ibid.)

### 3.1 Application Procedures for Adults

Applications are submitted at the “Traffic Administration, Vehicles and Machinery” department at the Directorate General for the ISF, which has offices in the major cities of Lebanon (ibid.). The application consists of completing the personal information of the driver, his or her residential address, the category that the driver wishes to enrol in, and the applicant must indicate whether the license will be used for private or public driving (ibid.).

Drivers must undergo a driving test; the dates of the tests are announced by the Directorate (ibid.). The test consists of two stages: a theory test and a practical test (ibid.). Drivers must provide a police record that shows they have no convictions that may prevent them from driving (ibid.). Applicants must be healthy enough to drive the kind of vehicle noted on their driving license (ibid.). Driving licenses are not issued to non-residents, alcoholics or drug addicts (ibid.). Driving licenses may be taken from the driver by a court order if the driver commits a felony related to dangerous driving or an accident (ibid.). All drivers requesting a driving license under categories 1, 2, 5 and 6 must be 18 years of age or older (ibid.). All drivers requesting a driving license under categories 3 and 4 (private or public) must be 21 years of age or older (ibid.).

### 3.2 Application Procedures for Minor Children

Although not applicable on a regular basis, driver’s licenses may be granted to minors between 14 and 16 years of age (ibid.). The minor needs to submit proof that "he needs to drive to and from home and school due to serious hardship," and has no other means to get back and forth to school (ibid.). All drivers under the age of 18 are required to attend a comprehensive driver’s program either at their high school or at a professional driving institute and must also take in-car driving lessons with a certified instructor (ibid.).

### 3.3 Whether a Third Party Can Apply for this Document

Without providing details, the official indicated that a third party may apply to obtain a driver’s license on an individual’s behalf (ibid.).

### 3.4 Photograph Requirements

A 4.3 X 3.5cm photograph, signed and certified on the back by the mayor, confirming the identity of the driver, is required for the application, which the driver must provide (ibid.).

### 3.5 Procedures for Correcting Errors on a Driver's License

In order to make a correction to the driver’s license, the driver may go in person to the "Traffic Administration, Vehicles, and Machinery" department office that issued the driving licence and complete a form indicating the error (ibid.). In addition, a notarised representative may do so on behalf of the driver, especially from a "driving license certified bureau" (ibid.).

### 4. Issues with Errors and/or Fraud

Regarding errors in identity documents, the Canadian official stated, "[e]rrors are not that common and in case an error occurs, it is the responsibility of the holder to report the error and aim at correcting it with the office in charge" (ibid. 15 July 2016).
Concerning the issue of fraudulent documents, the official indicated that it is possible to find fraudulent identity documents, especially during elections, but that "it is not very common" and "it is extremely rare to find fraud on identification documents on a daily basis" (ibid.). The same source indicated that fraud in employment records was more common (ibid.).

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] In 2009, a decree was issued indicating that every Lebanese citizen is free to "cross out his/her religious identity from all official documents, and replace it with a slash sign (/)" if he/she desires to do so (Canada 14 July 2016).

**References**

Canada. 15 July 2016. Embassy of Canada to Lebanon in Beirut. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

_____. 14 July 2016. Embassy of Canada to Lebanon in Beirut. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

**Additional Sources Consulted**

**Oral sources:** Embassy of Lebanon in Ottawa.

**Internet sites, including:** ecoli.net; Factiva; Lebanon – Embassy of Lebanon in Ottawa, Embassy of Lebanon in Washington, DC, Ministry of Interior and Municipalites; UN – Refworld.

**Attachments**


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