

Responses to Information Requests - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Saudi Arabia: Range of documents and information available to an individual through the Ministry of Interior (MOI) website; information required in order to access personal information through government websites (2015-December 2018)

1. Absher Portal on the MOI Website

According to the English-language newspaper *Saudi Gazette*, the Saudi MOI has an e-portal called "Absher" through which users can access e-services offered by that ministry (*Saudi Gazette* 12 Mar. 2018). Another *Saudi Gazette* article indicates that 93 services are available through the portal (*Saudi Gazette* 24 Nov. 2018). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Registration Procedure

According to the MOI's website, in order to create an account to use its e-services, a person needs to have an ID or an iqama number, a private mobile phone number, a valid email address, and to create a username and a password (Saudi Arabia n.d.a). The website explains that after registration, a new user needs to visit the Civil Affairs Department (for citizens of Saudi Arabia) or Passports Department (for residents) with a proof of ID in order to activate their account and complete the registration process (Saudi Arabia n.d.b). The same source also indicates that the account's activation can be done through financial institutions (Saudi Arabia n.d.b).

2. E-Services Accessible Through Absher

Sections of the MOI website report that the following services are available through Absher:

- "Public Query Health Insurance Validity (for Residents)": Requires identity number; enables residents to check the validity of their health insurance (Saudi Arabia n.d.d).
- "Public Query of Exit/Re-entry Visa Status": Requires the iqama number, the sponsor ID and either visa number or passport number in order to access; allows the user to make an inquiry regarding an exit/re-entry visa and provides information about the visa type, the visa expiry date and "other details" (Saudi Arabia n.d.e).
- "Public Query of Workers Arrivals": Requires the sponsor's ID, the iqama number and iqama expiry date; allows to search for the arrival of workers with an Exit re-entry visa, provides information about the visa type, visa expiry date and lastest port and date of entry (Saudi Arabia n.d.f).
- "Query iqama Expiry Services": Requires the iqama number; provides information about the expiry date of an iqama (Saudi Arabia n.d.g).

- "Query New Labour and Visitors Arrivals": Requires the sponsor ID and their year of birth, either in Hijri or in Gregorian; provides information about sponsored labour and visitors within Saudi Arabia who have not been issued an iqama in the last three months (Saudi Arabia n.d.h).

Without providing further details, the MOI website also includes links to access the following services, all of which require a user name or ID number and a password:

- "Generalization [r]eport [q]uery";
- Travel records information;
- Visa services;
- Iqama issuance and renewal;
- Dependent services;
- Passport information and services;
- Extension of visit visa;
- "Sponsoree absent registration";
- Authorization to receive arrived female workers;
- Extension of exceptionnal Yemeni visit visa;
- Sponsorship transfer;
- Change of occupation [on iqama card];
- "Passport [a]lready [r]egistered for the [s]ame [n]ationality";
- "Receive [a]rrived [f]emale [a]uthorization [i]nquiry";
- Address information;
- Personal information;
- Report missing documents;
- Request replacement documents;
- Renew driving license and other vehicle-related services;
- "Sponsoree absent registration";
- Authorization to receive arrived female workers;
- Passport information and services (Saudi Arabia n.d.c).

Further details on these services could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Muqem System

According to the ELM [1] website, the Muqem portal enables organizations "to explore resident workers[]" data and execute passport[t] procedures online anytime and anywhere without the need to visit [a] passports office" (ELM n.d.a). Similarly, the *Saudi Gazette* explains that Muqem is a web portal that allows the human resources departments of private companies to access e-services from the MOI (*Saudi Gazette* 12 Mar. 2018). ELM provides the following details regarding the services offered through Muqem:

... Interactive Services for Electronic Transactions:

- Issuing the one-time exit and re-entry visa
- Printing the exit and re-entry visa
- Canceling the exit and re-entry visa
- Extending the exit and re-entry visa

- Issuing the final exit visa
- Printing the final exit visa
- Iqama renewal
- Issuing iqama

... Inquiries about[:]

- Resident's data through the residency number
- General data regarding any resident on your sponsorship
- Information regarding driving licenses
- Any fines for any resident on your sponsorship
- About any resident by name
- Exit and re-entry visa by residency number

... Directorate of Passports' Lists Electronic Service [no further details provided]

... Traffic Department's Lists Electronic Services Access [no further details provided]

... Printing iqama [no further details provided, but the website mentions that "[w]hen iqama procedure is completed, it can be collected from the passports office or receive[d] ... through mail."] (ELM n.d.a)

Further information on the Muqem system 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] ELM is a joint-stock company property of the Public Investment Fund (PIF) (ELM n.d.b). The PIF is a "sovereign wealth fund founded for the purpose of investing funds on behalf of the government of the Saudi Arabia" (S&P Global n.d.). ELM activities are related to the development of secure e-Services and "high-profile government support projects"; the organization also aims to "contribute to the build-up of [Saudi] national expertise and localization of IT capacities" (ELM n.d.b).

References

[ELM. N.d.a. "Muqem."](#) [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

[ELM. N.d.b. "About Us."](#) [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

S&P Global. N.d. S&P Global Market Intelligence. "[Company Overview of Public Investment Fund.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.a. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[User Registration.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.b. [Ministry of Interior \(MOI\). "FAQs."](#) [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.c. [Ministry of Interior \(MOI\). "Home."](#) [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.d. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[Public Query Health Insurance Validity \(For Residence\).](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.e. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[Public Query of Exit/Re-entry Visa Status.](#)" [Accessed 11 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.f. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[Public Query of Workers Arrivals.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.g. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[Query Iqama Expiry Services.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Arabia. N.d.f. Ministry of Interior (MOI). "[Public Query of Workers Arrivals.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Gazette. 24 November 2018. Irfan Mohammed. "[ABSHER Services to Expand Further, Says Prince Bandar.](#)" [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Saudi Gazette. 12 March 2018. "About 1.2M Exit Visas Issued Last Year." (Factiva) [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Arab News; Australia – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; eoi.net; EU – European Asylum Support Office; France – Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides; Saudi Arabia – Embassy in Washington; UN – Refworld.