

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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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](#).

8 January 2016

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Egypt: Whether a citizen of Egypt who is living abroad can obtain a studentment from military service without a National Identity Card; whether an Egyptian citizen can apply for a National Identity Card from outside of Egypt

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Student Deferment from Military Service

Sources report that military service in Egypt is compulsory for males between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (US 10 Dec. 2015; Egypt n.d.d; *Gulf News* 26 Apr. 2015). Sources indicate that the length of military service varies from a minimum of 12 months (*ibid.*) or 18 months (US 10 Dec. 2015) to a maximum of 36 months (*ibid.*; *Gulf News* 26 Apr. 2015). The website of the Consulate of Egypt in Los Angeles states that military service can be postponed in the following circumstances:

1. Students, [who] are currently [study]ing in coll[e]ges or schools.
2. For the only son of a father less than 60 years old.
3. For the oldest son after immigration of his brothers or obtaining du[a]l citizenship.
4. For the only son of [a] divorced mother. (Egypt n.d.d)

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Director of Student Affairs and International Relations at the Canadian International College (CIC), a Cairo-based post-secondary institution that offers "Canadian-style" programs in partnership with two universities in Canada (CIC n.d.), stated that militaryment for university students will normally only be granted until the age of 28; however, it can be extended until the age of 29 if a student is completing his final year of study (*ibid.* 10 Dec. 2015). According to *Gulf News*, a newspaper based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egyptian students can postpone their military service "until their studies are completed, before they turn 25 years of age" (*Gulf News* 26 Apr. 2015).

According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014*, in Egypt, "[m]en who have not completed compulsory military service may not travel abroad or emigrate" (US 25 June 2015, 25). The *Gulf News* reports that Egyptian students cannot travel abroad without a travel permit from the Ministry of Defence" (26 Apr. 2015). The CIC Director stated that students obtain a military permit in order to travel at any time during their study period; which is given upon an official letter from the university being stamped by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education (CIC 9 Dec. 2015).

1.1 Application for Military Service Deferment from Outside of Egypt

Media sources report that Egyptian authorities have arranged for panels of representatives from the armed forces to travel to different countries in the Middle East, Europe and America in order to regularize the

military service status of Egyptians residing in those countries (The Cairo Post 17 May 2015; Daily News Egypt 4 Nov. 2012).

An article by Khaleej Times Online, a UAE-based news portal of an English-language newspaper circulated in the Gulf states (Khaleej Times Online n.d.) reports that, according to a Military Attaché at the Embassy of Egypt in Abu Dhabi, during a 5-day visit of a special military commission to the UAE in November 2012, Egyptians over 30 years of age would be able to apply for a release from military service before the commission at the Egyptian embassy, after paying a set fine of 2,163 dirhams [C\$795] (ibid. 1 Nov. 2012). The Military Attaché said that the panel would also examine the status of persons below 30 and

[t]hose who have not yet obtained their national ID cards shall be granted temporary military certificate until the final one is issued after the verification process. Youth born in 1993 and above shall be issued 'Below Age' letters so that they can renew their passports and legally stay abroad. (ibid.)

He also indicated that the same services would be provided in Bahrain, Kuwait, Amman and Riyadh (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

An April 2015 article from *Gulf News* reports that, according to a Defence Attaché at the Embassy of Egypt in the UAE, during a visit of the military panel to that country in June 2015, the panel "[would] only handle the issues of Egyptians who have turned 30 or those whose parents have turned 60 and they have no siblings" (*Gulf News* 16 April, 2015).

The May - June 2015 Newsletter published by the Embassy of Egypt in Washington, DC and available on their website, states that a delegation of the "Judicial and Military Service Committee" arrived and would stay until 16 June 2015, in order "to reconcile military service cases for U.S. members of the Egyptian community" (Egypt June 2015, 1).

1.2 Required Documents

Country Reports 2014 states that the status of completion of military service is indicated on a person's national identification card (US 25 June 2015, 25). The website of the Consulate of Egypt in Los Angeles indicates that all Egyptians "must have a military number, which is based on his Egyptian personal ID" (Egypt n.d.d). The website of the Consulate of Egypt in Montreal provides a list of documents required for applications for military exemption, and lists the documents that are required to obtain "the military identification number," which are photocopies of the applicant's birth certificate and of his identity card (ibid.).

The Consulate of Egypt in Montreal states on its website that the documents required for a student to apply for an exemption from military service are handled by the Egyptian Cultural Office in Montreal, for which it provides the website address, telephone number and fax number (Egypt n.d.e). Further information on which documents are required by this office for a student to apply for an exemption could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the Director of Student Affairs and International Relations at CIC, the following documents are required to apply for a studentment at an Egyptian mission abroad:

- Enrollment letter from the university abroad showing that the student is accepted and will or is studying regularly in the university he will be joining abroad and university letter must be accredited from the Cultural Office of the Egyptian Embassy in the country he is travelling to for study.
- A copy of the High School Certificate.
- Bank Statement or HR letter for the student's Guardian.
- A copy of a valid passport.
- A copy of Birth Certificate.
- Valid National ID Card.
- Military form (6) & Military form (2) filled and stamped (in order to postpone the military service).
- For new students travelling for study and who haven't joined any university before (not a transfer) they shouldn't be above 22 years old. (CIC 9 Dec. 2015)

The Director stated that the application for ament would not be accepted without the national ID card (ibid.). Similarly, according to the "Guide for Military Drafting and Mobilization for Egyptians Living Abroad" issued by the Ministry of Defence and available on the website of the Consulate of Egypt in Los Angeles,

[translation]

[t]he data stated in the application for issuing a Personal or Family ID (which is issued for the first time) is the primary source used to issue a military and national service card...and the person will be dealt with according to his military status.

Therefore, any Egyptian living abroad (who has never been issued a Personal ID) must take the initiative and issue these cards from the Egyptian Consulate in the country where he resides...so that he would not face any difficulties in determining his military status from the relevant drafting and mobilization region. (Egypt n.d.c)

2. Application for National Identity Card from Outside of Egypt

According to Egyptian governmental sources, national identity cards are only issued in Egypt; however, the Ministry of Interior sometimes dispatches delegations to Egyptian consulates in order to process applications for national IDs from Egyptians residing abroad (ibid n.d.h; Egypt n.d.g).

On its website, the Consulate of Egypt in Montreal announced of planned visits of the "Civil Status Authorities" to Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa in March 2015 (ibid. 24 Feb. 2015). The same source provides the following instructions in regards to the documents required to issue a national identity card:

[translation]

First Step

1. A valid Egyptian identification document (an expired National ID card, passport, Driver's Licence) or a copy of a Canadian passport sealed and signed by a notary public.
2. To prove the place of residence, submit a receipt from the electrical company in Egypt or the residence will be written as "residing abroad."
3. To prove the marital status, an Egyptian marriage document or a translated marriage certificate, sealed from Canada.
4. To prove the profession, you must submit a letter from your place of work signed by a notary public. If the applicant is a student, a letter from the educational institution is required.

Second Step

- If all of the above documents are available, you must buy the application form to issue the National ID card for CAD 100.00
- If any of the above documents is not available, please speak to a civil affairs official before buying the application form. (ibid. n.d.f)

The Consulate of Egypt in New York announced a visit from "the Civil Registry Office" from 17 to 21 October 2014 and notes on its website that the following documents are required to apply for a national identity card:

1. Computer-generated Egyptian birth certificate.
2. Egyptian passport: machine-readable (new version) or regular (old version) with a copy of pages 2-9, even if expired.
3. Documents proving marital status (i.e. marriage contract, divorce certificate or an affidavit of being single for those who have never been married before). Documents issued in the U.S. must be certified by the Secretary of State where it was issued.
4. Proof of profession or academic qualification "Issued from Egypt ONLY" for those who wish to establish or change profession or qualification.
5. For students: A notarized letter (plus a copy) from the school or university showing proof of enrollment or a VALID school ID.
6. Proof of address in the Arab Republic of Egypt (billing statements for electricity, phone, gas or water; housing lease contract or an Egyptian passport)
7. The old national ID card (plastic or paper) when applying for the renewal of the card. [Emphasis in original] (ibid. n.d.g)

The same source also states that the application fee is US\$75 and that, "citizens from outside the jurisdiction of the Consulate in New York are welcome to apply for a national ID card" (ibid.).

The website of the Embassy of Egypt in Washington, DC includes information on a visit of a delegation from the "Egyptian Civil Affairs Authority" to Washington, DC, Houston, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles in the US in May 2015, where they reportedly accepted applications for renewing and issuing "thousands" of national ID cards (ibid. June 2015).

The Consulate of Egypt in Chicago indicates that, "[the] National ID Card team visits Chicago once a year," (ibid. n.d.a) and an undated announcement on the consulate's website includes information on the arrival of issued identity cards and instructions on how to collect them, either in person or by mail (ibid. n.d.b). Applicants collecting their national IDs in person are required to bring their original national ID application receipt and a photo ID, as well as signed authorization letters and all receipts, if collecting ID cards for other applications (ibid.). Applicants collecting their ID cards by mail are required to send a cover letter including their full Egyptian name, address and phone number, as well the original nation ID application receipt and a return pre-paid envelope (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.

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Internet sites, including: Ahram Canadian University; Al-Monitor; American University in Cairo; BBC; British Council Egypt Office; British University in Egypt; Cairo University; Canada – Embassy in Cairo; Canada Visa Application Centre in Cairo; Cape Breton University; Child Soldiers International; Concordia Egyptian Student Association; Keesing's Documentchecker; ecoi.net; Egypt – Embassies of Egypt in Canada, Germany and Kuwait, Government Services Portal, Middle East News Agency (MENA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Egyptian Canadian Club; Egyptian Canadian League; Egyptian Community in Canada; Egyptian Cultural and Educational Bureaus in Montreal and Washington, DC; Egyptian Students' Association at the University of Toronto; Factiva; German Academic Exchange Service Cairo Office; German University in Cairo; Human Rights Watch; International Organisation for Migration; MENA; Midlands Egyptian Society; Middle East Institute; Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Arab Student Association; St. Mary and St. Antonios Coptic Orthodox Church in New York; University of Ottawa; Voice of Egypt in Canada; Wamda.com; War Resisters' International; United Nations – Refworld; United States – Embassy in Cairo, Library of Congress.

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