

U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[TEXT ONLY](#) [HOME](#) [WHAT'S NEW](#) [FAQs](#) [SEARCH](#) [GLOSSARY](#) [FEEDBACK](#) [TRANSLATE](#) [PRINT/PAGE](#)

Immigration Services and Benefits Programs

Overview

National Customer
Service Center
(NCSC)

Emergency Travel

Naturalization

Citizenship

Green Cards (LPR)

Temporary Visitors

Employer
Information

Inter-Country
Adoptions

Temporary Protected
Status

Trafficking in
Persons

Asylum

Overview

History

Asylum FAQ

Two Paths
to Asylum

Affirmative Asylum
at a Glance

Affirmative Asylum
Process

Types of Asylum
Decisions

Coercive Family
Planning

Palestinian Territory, Occupied

Response to Information Request Number:	PSE02001.ZAR
Date:	May 20, 2002
Subject:	Palestinian Territory, Occupied: Information on Palestinian Authority Passports
From:	INS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	Palestinian Territory, Occupied / Nationality / Right to a passport / Stateless persons

Query:

- 1) Does the U.S. Government recognize passports issued by the Palestinian Authority as proof of citizenship, or does it view them simply as travel documents?;
- 2) Has any country recognized Palestinian Authority passports as proof of citizenship?;
- 3) Would a person born outside of the West Bank or Gaza, but who currently possesses a Palestinian Authority passport, be considered a permanent resident of the West Bank or Gaza?

Response:

The Government of the United States recognizes Palestinian Authority passports as travel documents, but does not view them as proving any type of citizenship, according to a representative of the Israel desk at the U.S. Department of State. This is because Washington does not recognize the Palestinian Authority as a government, and only governments can confer citizenship, the representative said (U.S. DOS Israel Representative 20 May 2002).

When contacted by the Resource Information Center, consular officials of three Middle

Reasonable Fear
Screenings

Asylee Adjustment

Resource
Information Center

Training Materials

Refugees

Humanitarian Parole

SAVE (Verification
Program)

Eastern states were unable to say whether their governments viewed Palestinian Authority passports as conferring any proof of citizenship or residency. U.S.-based diplomats representing the Government of Egypt, the Government of Jordan, and the Government of the United Arab Emirates would say only that Palestinian Authority passports, along with valid visas or other necessary papers, allow the bearers to travel to their countries (Egypt Representative 20 May 2002, Jordan Representative 20 May 2002, UAE Representative 20 May 2002).

For the Government of the United States, Palestinian Authority passports are seen as evidence, but not proof, of residence in the West Bank or Gaza, according to a desk officer for the Palestinian Authority at the U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS PNA Representative 20 May 2002).

An official at the Palestinian Authority's Washington, D.C. office said, "As far as the Palestinian Authority is concerned, anyone who has a Palestinian birth certificate showing that he was born in Palestine can apply for a PA passport" (PNA Representative 20 May 2002). She did not know, however, whether someone born outside of the West Bank or Gaza could receive a Palestinian Authority passport. The official also said that regardless of the Palestinian Authority's eligibility criteria, the Israeli government places additional restrictions on the actual issuance of passports (PNA Representative 20 May 2002).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC 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.

References:

Consular Office, Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Representative (Jordan Representative). Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 20 May 2002).

Consular Office, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates Representative (UAE Representative). Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 20 May 2002).

Consulate of Egypt, New York Representative (Egypt Representative). Telephone interview (New York: 20 May 2002).

Representative, Palestinian National Authority, Washington Office (PNA Representative). Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 20 May 2002).

U.S. Department of State, Israel Desk Officer (U.S. DOS Israel Representative). Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 20 May 2002).

U.S. Department of State, Palestinian National Authority Desk Officer (U.S. DOS PNA Representative). Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 20 May 2002).

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