



## **Liberia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 31 August 2011**

### **Information on acquiring Liberian citizenship by virtue of marriage to a Liberian citizen. Whether a child has an entitlement to Liberian citizenship by descent. Whether a child born outside Liberia is entitled to Liberian citizenship.**

Article 28 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Liberia* states:

“Any person, at least one of whose parents was a citizen of Liberia at the time of the Person’s birth, shall be a citizen of Liberia; provided that any such person shall upon reaching maturity renounce any other citizenship acquired by virtue of one parent being a citizen of another country. No citizen of the Republic shall be deprived of citizenship or nationality except as provided by law; and no person shall be denied the right to change citizenship or nationality.” (Republic of Liberia (1986) *Constitution of the Republic of Liberia*)

The entry for Liberia in *Citizenship Laws of the World* states:

“CITIZENSHIP: Citizenship laws are based upon the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia. The Liberian Constitution states that, "In order to preserve, foster, and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values, and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia."

- BY BIRTH: Birth within the territory of Liberia does not automatically confer citizenship. The only exception is a child born to unknown parents.
- BY DESCENT: Child, at least one of whose parents is a citizen of Liberia, regardless of the child’s country of birth.

BY NATURALIZATION: *No information provided beyond the stated constitutional requirements.* (United States Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service (March 2001) *Citizenship Laws of the World*, p.119)

A document published by the *American Bar Association*, in Subchapter B. “Naturalization or Restoration to Citizenship of Special Categories of Aliens”. (Paragraph 21.30. “Woman who marries citizen”), states:

“A woman of Negro descent who marries a citizen of the Republic shall not become by virtue of such act of marriage a citizen of Liberia. Such woman may be naturalized if she is qualified in conformity with all of the provisions of section 21.1 of this title and complies with all the procedural requirements for naturalization set forth in this chapter.” (American Bar Association: Rule of Law Initiative (May 2009) *Analysis of the Aliens and Nationality Law of the Republic of Liberia*, p.57)

In paragraph 21.1. “Eligibility for naturalization” this document states:

“1. Race. No person shall be naturalized unless he is a Negro or of Negro descent.

2. Residence. No person except as otherwise provided in this chapter shall be naturalized unless such person (a) immediately preceding the date of filing his petition for naturalization has maintained a Continuous and lawful residence in Liberia, for at least two years; and (b) has resided continuously within Liberia from the date of the petition up to the admission to citizenship. Absence from Liberia of more than six months during the period for which continuous residence is required for admission to citizenship, either immediately preceding the date of filing the petition for naturalization or during the period between the date of filing the petition and the date of final hearing, shall break the continuity of such residence, unless the petitioner shall establish to the satisfaction of the court that he did not in fact abandon his residence in Liberia during such period.

3. Lawful admission. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, no person shall be naturalized unless he has been lawfully admitted to Liberia in accordance with all applicable provisions of this title.

4. Character and belief in Constitution. No person shall be naturalized unless, during the period of residence required under paragraph 2 of this section, he has been, and still is, of good moral character and attached to the principles of the Constitution of Liberia.” (ibid, pp.53-54)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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. Please read in full all documents referred to.

#### **References:**

American Bar Association: Rule of Law Initiative (May 2009) *Analysis of the Aliens and Nationality Law of the Republic of Liberia*  
[http://apps.americanbar.org/rol/publications/liberia\\_analysis\\_of\\_the\\_aliens\\_and\\_nationality\\_law.pdf](http://apps.americanbar.org/rol/publications/liberia_analysis_of_the_aliens_and_nationality_law.pdf)

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Republic of Liberia (1986) *Constitution of the Republic of Liberia*  
<http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/liberia.pdf>

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United States Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service (March 2001) *Citizenship Laws of the World*

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#### **Sources Consulted:**

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European Country of Origin Information Network  
Google  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada  
Landinfo  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
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UK Home Office  
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