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.

**JOR104333.E**

Jordan: Whether a female citizen who wears a veil is required to remove the veil for passport photos

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an employee at the Government of Jordan National Call Centre, which provides information about Jordanian government services, including the Department of Civil Status and Passports, provided information about the requirements for women’s passport photographs in Jordan (Jordan 28 Feb. 2013). He stated that it is the woman’s choice whether to remove her hijab (hair covering) for the passport photograph (ibid.). Regarding the removal of a niqab (a hair and face covering), he stated that a woman must reveal her face for the photograph (ibid.). This information was corroborated by a team of lawyers from Legal Aid, a human rights organization and registered charity that provides pro bono legal services to vulnerable individuals in Jordan (Legal Aid 3 Mar. 2013), who explained that women do not have to remove a head covering to show their hair, ears, or neck in passport photos, but are required to have their face "clear and visible" (ibid. 1 Mar. 2013).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Jordan in Ottawa stated that the general requirements for Jordanian passport photos call for a "recent coloured photo with white background" and do not mention head scarves (covering a woman's hair, ears and neck below the chin) or veils (covering either all or the lower part of a woman's face) (Jordan 27 Feb. 2012). The official indicated that, in practice, the embassy has received and accepted passport photographs of women wearing head scarves or with no covering, but they have never received photos of veiled women (ibid.). Instructions for obtaining Jordanian passports, as found on the website of the Embassy of Jordan in Washington, DC (Jordan n.d.a), and the website of the Jordanian government (Jordan n.d.b), indicate that photos are required, but do not make reference to whether head scarves or veils are allowed.

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.

**References**

Jordan. 28 February 2013. National Call Centre. Telephone interview with a representative.


Legal Aid. 3 March 2013. Correspondence sent by lawyers to the Research Directorate.
Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact a lawyer in Amman was unsuccessful. An official at the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Washington, DC, was unable to provide information.

**Internet sites, including:** Jordan – Department of Civil Status and Passport.

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