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Jordan, Palestine and Israel: Passports issued to stateless Palestinians; procedures; entitlements; differences between Jordanian passports issued to Jordanian nationals and those issued to stateless Palestinians
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

An article about stateless Palestinians in *Forced Migration Review (FMR)*, a journal published by the Refugee Studies Centre of the University of Oxford, indicates that there are more than four million Palestinians who are stateless: some hold temporary Jordanian passports; some hold Palestinian Authority (PA) passports; and some hold Refugee Travel Documents (RTD) from other Middle Eastern countries (Refugee Studies Centre Aug. 2006b). This Response focuses only on Jordanian and PA passports available to stateless Palestinians.

Jordanian passports issued to stateless Palestinians

According to a report published by Al Quds Center for Political Studies, an independent research institute in Amman (Al Quds Center n.d.), Jordan issues passports to three categories of Palestinians: 1) Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin who can obtain five-year passports with national identity numbers; 2) "West Bankers" who live in the West Bank and are granted five-year passports without national identity numbers; and 3) "Gazans" who arrived in Jordan after the 1967 war, and may hold two-year passports without access to the same services as citizens (Al Quds Jan. 2009, 22). However, Palestinians in the first category are not "stateless" since they hold Jordanian citizenship (ibid.).

The United States (US) Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008* and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) indicate that the Jordanian government issues passports to some Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (US 25 Feb. 2009, Sec. 2; USCRI 2008a). According to a report published by the Institut français de Proche Orient (IFPO), a French-language educational and research institute with offices in Beirut, Damascus and Amman, that specializes, among others, in Near Eastern contemporary affairs (IFPO 31 Mar. 2009), some Palestinians who reside in the West Bank or Jerusalem are issued five-year Jordanian passports without

national identity numbers; bearers of these passports are not entitled to Jordanian citizenship or permanent residency, they require work permits to work in Jordan and they can own property in Jordan only with ministry approval (IFPO Oct. 2005, 10-11).

Information on which Palestinians who reside in the West Bank or East Jerusalem qualify for Jordanian passports was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. The BADIL Resource Center, a Palestinian organization which advocates for residency and refugee rights (n.d.), indicates that Palestinian refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) who held Jordanian passports before 1988, when Jordan severed administrative ties with the West Bank (Al Quds Jan. 2009, 21), are eligible for a two or five-year Jordanian passport, which "functions as a travel document" (BADIL June 2007, 122).

Another article published by the Refugee Studies Centre reports that there are approximately 118,000-150,000 Palestinians living as temporary residents in Jordan who were displaced from Gaza in 1967 (Refugee Studies Centre, Aug. 2006a, 17). These "Gazan" Palestinians can hold temporary two-year Jordanian passports that do not have national identity numbers (ibid.). The passport is in effect a kind of temporary residency permit (ibid.). According to a report published by Al Quds Center, these passports act as travel documents, but do not indicate citizenship (Al Quds, Jan. 2009, 22). Al Quds and USCRI indicate that Gazans who hold temporary two-year Jordanian passports have limited rights and access to services in Jordan (ibid., 23; USCRI 2008b).

According to IFPO, Jordan does not permit stateless Palestinians to hold both a Jordanian temporary passport and a Palestinian Authority (PA) passport (IFPO Oct. 2005, 6).

Information on the procedures for stateless Palestinians to obtain Jordanian documents could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Physical differences between the different types of Jordanian passports

In correspondence with the Research Directorate on 27 April 2009, a researcher affiliated with the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies of the University of Geneva stated that two-year and five-year Jordanian passports issued to stateless Palestinians look the same as Jordanian passports issued to Jordanian nationals, except that there is no national number on the first page of the passport for those issued to stateless Palestinians. A sample passport issued to a Jordanian national, provided by the Researcher, demonstrates that the following fields, along with the photograph, are represented on the first page: Sex, Type, Country Code, National No., Full Name, Place of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Issue, Mother's Name, Date of Expiry, and Issued at (Researcher 27 April 2009). When the passport is turned sideways to landscape

direction, the national number appears in the top right-hand corner of page one (ibid.).

Palestinian Authority (PA) passports issued to stateless Palestinians

Sources indicate that the PA issues passports to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (Al Quds Center Jan. 2009, 23-24; Ma'an News Agency 12 Aug. 2008; US 25 Feb. 2009, Sec. 2). According to BADIL, the passports are issued jointly by the PA and the Israeli military administration (BADIL June 2007, 153). According to USCRI, the PA requires applicants to submit Israeli-issued identity cards in order to obtain a PA passport and those who had lived outside the territories for more than three years were not entitled to the passports (USCRI 2008a).

The Ma'an News Agency, an independent Palestinian news agency (Ma'an News Agency n.d.), reports that in 2008 the PA increased the validity period of the PA passport from three years to five years and changed the colour of the passports from green to black (Ma'an News Agency 12 Aug. 2008). By 2008, the PA had issued 1,995,816 passports, granted to nearly 50 percent of the population in the territories (ibid.). The Refugee Studies Centre and IFPO indicate that the PA passport acts as a travel document only, since there is no Palestinian state (Refugee Studies Centre Aug. 2006b, 8; IFPO Oct. 2005, 6). According to the Al Quds Center, PA passports have been recognized by 181 countries (Al Quds Jan. 2009, 24). IFPO reports that many countries require visas for PA passport holders but that these visas can be difficult to obtain since the PA passport is not recognized as proof of citizenship (Oct. 2005, 6).

The Refugee Studies Centre reports that Israel views Palestinians in the occupied territory as "non-citizens and foreign residents" (Aug. 2006b, 8). Palestinians in East Jerusalem were declared permanent residents, but not citizens, of Israel after East Jerusalem was annexed in 1967 (BADIL June 2007, 122; Refugee Studies Centre Aug. 2006b, 8). Information on whether Israel or the Palestinian Authority issues travel documents to Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response. However, USCRI and *Country Reports for 2008* report that Palestinians who reside in Jerusalem require "special documents" to travel abroad (USCRI 2008a; US 25 Feb. 2009, Sec. 2).

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

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Sources: Attempts to reach representatives of the Jordanian embassy in Ottawa, the Jordanian embassy in Washington, DC, the Israeli embassy in Ottawa, and the UNHCR were unsuccessful within time constraints. A representative from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Amman was unable to provide information.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), B'Tselem, *Haaretz*, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations (UN) Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

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