

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 Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca.

29 October 2015

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Palestine and Jordan: Passports issued to stateless Palestinians by the government of Jordan, including procedures, entitlements, differences between Jordanian passports issued to Jordanian nationals and those issued to stateless Palestinians; passports issued to Palestinians by the Palestinian Authority, including requirements and procedures, and entitlements

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Jordanian Passports Issued to Stateless Palestinians

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Jordan in Ottawa indicated that Jordan issues travel documents to non-Jordanians, commonly referred to as "temporary passports," that are used for travel purposes only (Jordan 22 Oct. 2015). The official noted that Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza who do not hold a passport or citizenship from another country can apply for such a travel document (ibid.).

According to a 2014 report by Al Quds Center for Political Studies, an independent think tank with offices in Amman and Beirut (Al Quds n.d.), the right of Palestinians to hold Jordanian citizenship and the right to hold a Jordanian passport are dependent on "[t]he time and place of residency" in Jordan (Al Quds Jan. 2014, 20). The same source provides the following explanation regarding the "three categories of Palestinians in Jordan":

1. Jordanians of Palestinian origin ([who hold] a five-year passport and a national identity number [1])
2. "West Bankers": holders of two-year passports, not connoting citizenship (this was changed in 1996 to a five-year passport), with no national identity number. They also hold a green border crossing card.
3. "Gazans": holders of two-year passports, a travel document that does not give them access to services as citizens. (ibid., 23-24)

Al Quds explains the historical background of the first two categories as follows:

In 1983 the Jordanian government issued yellow crossing cards, which represented full residency for Palestinian Jordanians (with full citizenship rights in Jordan) for those who had left the West Bank for the East Bank to reside permanently in Jordan before June 1 of that year and had family reunification cards. They also issued green crossing cards for holders of temporary two-year passports who have no right of residence for those who left the West Bank after June 1, 1983. Green card holders can visit Jordan for only up to a month at a time. Thus it is really more of a travel document. ... Jordan in 1996 announced that green card holders can apply again for five-year passports but such a passport does not constitute full citizenship. (Al Quds Jan. 2014, 25)

In 5 May 2014 correspondence with the Research Directorate, a legal officer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) [2] stated that while Jordan declared disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, it has continued to issue Jordanian passports to West Bank Palestinians, but they are "temporary" passports valid for five years, they do not have a national number, and they do not bestow rights of citizenship to the holder (UN 5 May 2014).

Regarding Jordanian passports for Gazans, Al Quds indicates that Palestinians from Gaza are treated separately from other Palestinians in Jordan, they are given two-year passports and they "must identify a guarantor" to enter Jordan (Al Quds Jan. 2014, 26). The UNRWA legal officer indicated that "ex-Gazans" who fled Gaza to Jordan in 1967 during the six-day war hold temporary two-year Jordanian passports that serve only as a travel document with "several legal restrictions that limit their rights" (UN 5 May 2014).

1.1 Requirements and Procedures for Obtaining a Jordanian Temporary Passport

The Jordanian embassy official indicated that people applying for a Jordanian temporary passport are required to prove that "they do not hold any passport or citizenship from a third country" (Jordan 22 Oct. 2015). The official noted that this proof is usually in the form of a signed statement by the applicant (ibid.).

1.1.1 Requirements and Procedures for Palestinians from the West Bank

According to the Jordanian e-government website, the required documents for a Palestinian from the West Bank to apply for a temporary five-year Jordanian passport are:

1. Application Form for a temporary passport.
2. Palestinian proof of nationality and residence, according to the Jordanian Nationality law if the passport is for the first time.
3. Colored Photograph (2 copies)
4. Valid Green bridge card and the originally Palestinian / Israeli card or Details for the department of follow-ups and inspection.
5. Security clearance and approval. (Jordan n.d.a)

The same source lists the application procedures as follows:

1. Submit the application to the passport office of the West Bank or Jordanian embassies and consulates abroad.
2. Proof of nationality and residence, according to the Jordanian Nationality Act (if the passport is for the first time).
3. If the transaction is for the first time then it is accepted from the applicant in person or one of his first-degree relatives and under official representation.
4. Recent colored photographs (2 copies).
5. present the valid green bridge card or Details for the department of follow-ups and inspection and present the Palestinian / Israeli card (original and copy).
6. The approval of the security authorities.
7. If the application is submitted by someone other than the applicant himself then he must be a family member who is organized in the West Bank with an official representation.
8. Minors are required to be added on the card Palestinian / Israeli of the father or mother.
9. Consent of the father / guardian for their minor children under the age of (18) years.
10. The family name must be identical to what is contained in the Palestinian card or passport otherwise, one must apply to correct the name to the correction committee at the department.
11. Data entry to be done by the data entry employee
12. Address the security authorities.
13. After receiving the necessary approvals they are submitted with the application.
14. Payment of the legal fees.
15. The request is sent to the data entry employee to enter the new data.
16. Attach the passport with the request for printing.
17. Forward the ready passports to the delivery employee to be given to their owners. (ibid.)

The Jordanian e-government website states that the estimated application fee is 50 Jordanian dinars (JOD) [approximately C\$92] for first-time applicants and 25 JOD for renewals or extensions, and that applications are made at the "Passports Directorate of the West Bank and Gaza/West Bank passports office" or at Jordanian embassies and consulates (ibid.).

Without providing details, the UNWRA legal officer stated that many West Bank Palestinians with temporary Jordanian passports "face problems having their temporary passports renewed" (UN 5 May 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1.2 Requirements and Procedures for Palestinians from Gaza

According to the Jordanian e-government website, the required documents for a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip to apply for a temporary two-year Jordanian passport are:

1. Application Form for a temporary passport.
2. Submit official proof of residency since 1974 up until the date of submitting the form.
3. No criminal record certificate from the competent court.
4. Details for the department of follow-ups and inspection.
5. Identity proof of the applicant.
6. Personal colored photographs (3 copies). (Jordan n.d.b)

The same source lists the application procedures as follows:

1. The request is submitted to the Admissions Officer in the Gaza passports office to be legally audited as per the terms and conditions.
2. Data entry to be done by the data entry employee
3. Address the security authorities.
4. After receiving the necessary approvals they are submitted with the application.
5. Payment of the legal fees.
6. The request is sent to the data entry employee to enter the new data.
7. Attach passport with the request for printing.
8. Forward the ready passports to the delivery employee to be given to their owners. (ibid.)

The Jordanian e-government website states that the estimated application fee is 50 JOD and that applications are made at the "Passports Directorate of the West Bank and Gaza/Gaza passports office--Jabal Amman" or at Jordanian embassies and consulates (ibid.). The same source notes that if the passport has been expired for more than two years, it cannot be renewed without approval from the Ministry of the Interior (ibid.).

1.2 Entitlements

Sources indicate that Jordanian passports issued to stateless Palestinians do not bestow Jordanian citizenship rights and act only as travel documents (Human Rights Watch Jan. 2010, 3; UN 5 May 2014; Al Quds Jan. 2014, 28-29). Sources state that in order to be recognized as a Jordanian citizen, a person must have a national identity number (ibid.; UN 5 May 2014). According to the UNWRA legal officer, Palestinians from the West Bank who hold a five-year passport without a national ID number do not have a right to permanent residence in Jordan, but can visit for up to 30 days (ibid.).

For information about the rights of Palestinians living in Jordan without Jordanian citizenship, see Response to Information Request JOR104860.

1.3 Differences Between the Appearance of Jordanian Passports Issued to Palestinians and Those Issued to Jordanian Nationals

The Jordanian embassy official indicated that the temporary passports issued to Palestinians "look identical" to passports issued to Jordanian citizens (Jordan 22 Oct. 2015). A sample of a Jordanian passport, as found on the EU's Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online (PRADO) website [3], is attached to this Response (Attachment 1). The sample indicates that there is a field for the "National No." on the biodata page of the passport (Jordan n.d.c). The Jordanian embassy official stated that every Jordanian national has a national number in their passport, with the exception of a few Jordanians who live abroad with

expired passports that were not renewed since the national number was introduced (ibid. 22 Oct. 2015). Sources report that stateless Palestinians who hold temporary Jordanian passports do not have a national identity number (Al Quds Jan. 2014, 29; UN 5 May 2014). In a 2011 report about Jordanian migration trends, Mohamed Olwan, of the Faculty of Law at Yarmouk University, states that Jordanian two-year passports held by former Gazans do not include a national identity number (Olwan 10 Oct. 2011). The UNRWA legal officer indicated that the five-year passports issued to West Bank Palestinians also do not have a national ID number (UN 5 May 2014). Further information about physical differences between Jordanian passports issued to Jordanian nationals and temporary Jordanian passports issued to stateless Palestinians could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Passports Issued by the Palestinian Authority (PA)

A sample of a passport issued by the PA, as found on the EU's PRADO website, is attached to this Response (Attachment 2).

According to the *Jerusalem Post*, since 1995, all Palestinians residing in the area governed by the PA are entitled to a PA passport (7 Apr. 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.1 Requirements and Procedures

The Jerusalem Post states that PA passport applicants need to have a birth certificate showing that they were born in Palestine as well as a current Palestinian identity card (7 Apr. 2013).

According to the website of the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa, the requirements to issue a passport to holders of a Palestinian identity card are:

1. Fill out an application form
2. Copy of the applicant's Palestinian identity card
3. Copy of the applicant's birth certificate
4. Four 4x6 photos of the applicant, with a blue background
5. A certified copy of a "proof of profession." (Palestine 10 Apr. 2015)

The requirements to renew a passport are the same, with the exclusion of the birth certificate requirement (ibid.). The Palestinian General Delegation's website explains that the passport application can be made in person through an appointment, or can be made by sending the required documents by mail, along with a prepaid, registered, self-addressed envelope (ibid.). The applicant is also required to pay a fee of C\$120 by money order (ibid.).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official with the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa stated that the requirements to apply for a passport are the same whether it is done inside or outside of Palestine (Palestine 14 Oct. 2015). He noted that the procedure at the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa requires proof of residency in Canada (ibid. 13 Oct. 2015). He further stated that it takes up to three or four months for Home Affairs to issue or renew the passport and mail it to Ottawa (ibid.).

2.2 Entitlements

The Jerusalem Post notes that the PA passport "is essentially a travel document and does not stipulate that the owner is a citizen of Palestine" (7 Apr. 2013). According to the official of the Palestinian General Delegation in Ottawa, some holders of PA passports are not permitted by Israel to enter occupied Palestine (13 Oct. 2015).

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.

Notes

[1] Human Rights Watch reports that some Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin have had their citizenship revoked based on "vague interpretations of the 1988 severance decision and on new, unwritten conditions that lack a clear legal basis" (Human Rights Watch Feb. 2010, 3). The same source notes that the affected person is not informed of the decision, but finds out when renewing documents or other routine interactions with officials, and that there is "no clear means of administrative redress" (ibid.).

[2] The UNRWA representative, based in Jerusalem, stated that UNRWA is "not an authoritative source" of information, but provided information to the Research Directorate "based on information known to the Agency" (UN 5 May 2014).

[3] The Council of the European Union's PRADO website provides information on the appearance, validity and features of authentic identity and travel documents in a given country (EU n.d.).

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Human Rights Watch. February 2010. Stateless Again: Palestinian-Origin Jordanians Deprived of Their Nationality. <<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0210webwcover.pdf>> [Accessed 15 Oct. 2015]

The Jerusalem Post. 7 April 2013. Diana Atallah. "Palestinian Passports Rejected by Citizens." <<http://www.jpost.com/landedpages/printarticle.aspx?id=318799>> [Accessed 6 Oct. 2015]

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United Nations (UN). 5 May 2014. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Correspondence from a legal officer to the Research Directorate.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Jordan – Civil Status and Passports Department, Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ottawa; Senior Research Fellow, University of London, SOAS.

Internet sites, including: Al-Haq; Al Jazeera; Badil Resource Center; ecoi.net; Edison TD; Factiva; *Haaretz*; Jordan-Civil Status and Passports Department, Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Ottawa; Keesings Document Checker; UN – Refworld.

Attachments

1. Jordan. N.d. Passport Sample. <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/prado/en/3822/index.html#elem-2>> [Accessed 15 Oct. 2015]

2. Palestinian Authority. N.d. Passport Sample. <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/prado/en/4468/index.html>> [Accessed 15 Oct. 2015]

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