

# Q&A on birth registration for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

December 2017

## Disclaimers and Definitions

- This Q&A is for outreach/front line workers and hotline operators as a reference to address questions from refugees.
- This Q&A is not to be distributed to refugees although it will be available on [www.refugees-lebanon.org](http://www.refugees-lebanon.org)

### 1. Why should I register the birth of my child in Lebanon?

It is very important for you and your child that you register his/her birth in Lebanon with the Lebanese authorities. If you do not do so, you may face the following challenges in the future:

- The child will face high risk that he/she will not be recognized as a Syrian national and will not be able to obtain Syrian identity documents. If this happens, your child may later have problems accessing health care, education and other services. He/she may also face restrictions in his/her freedom of movement and may not be able to own property or inherit.
- You will not be able to prove that you are the parents of the child.
- According to Lebanese law, the General Security Office (GSO) will not allow parents to leave Lebanese territory with the child, if the child has no birth certificate obtained at the Mukhtar level in Lebanon.
- If you didn't register your child within one year of its birth up to the Nofous level, a long and costly court procedure will be required to complete the birth registration procedure.

### 2. If I added my child to my UNHCR file, do I still need to go through the birth registration procedure with the Lebanese authorities?

Yes. Adding new born babies with UNHCR does not substitute birth registration with the Lebanese authorities and it will not provide your child with the same rights and protection as having a birth certificate registered with the Foreigners' Registry.

### 3. If I do not register the birth of my child, will s/he become Lebanese?

No, your child only becomes a Lebanese national at birth if the husband of the mother is a Lebanese citizen. If you do not register the birth of your child you risk that s/he will become stateless. This means that, in the future, s/he may be denied the right to go back to Syria or the right to live legally in Lebanon, as well as to access many services.

### 4. Can I register the birth of my child directly in Syria, if s/he was born in Lebanon?

No. If your child is born in Lebanon, his/her birth must be registered with the Foreigners' Registry before it can be registered with the civil registry in Syria and added to your Family Booklet. Registering your child born in Lebanon in Syria without going through the full registration process in Lebanon is against the Lebanese and Syrian law. It could be considered as an act of fraud and creates problems for you and your child in the future.

### 5. How can I register the birth of my child born in Lebanon?

It is important that you take **immediate action** to register your child's birth with the Lebanese authorities and start the process as soon as possible. According to the Lebanese law, you have one year to register your child with the office of the Nofous at the Personal Status Department. If you fail to do so, you can only obtain the birth registration through a long and costly Court procedure.

To register the birth of your child with the Lebanese authorities, you have to follow these four steps:

- **Step 1:** Obtain a **birth notification** from the authorized doctor or midwife who attended the birth.
- **Step 2:** Obtain the **birth certificate** endorsed and signed by a **Mukhtar** located in the area where the birth occurred. The birth certificate will also have to be signed by the doctor/midwife who delivered the baby.
- **Step 3:** Register the birth certificate at the **Nofous** (District level “Caza”) closest to the place where the birth took place. This must be done before the child is one year old, otherwise you will only be able to register the birth of your child through a court procedure.
- **Step 4:** Register the birth certificate at the **Foreigners’ Registry** of the Governorate where the birth took place. The birth is not considered officially registered by the Lebanese authorities until you complete this step.

#### 6. What documents do I need to obtain a birth certificate from the Mukhtar?

You or your spouse will generally be asked to present to the Mukhtar the following documents:

- Birth Notification;
  - Passports or ID cards of both you and your spouse;
- Alternatively, other identification documents (e.g. individual civil extract or Family Booklet) may also be accepted.

Proof of marriage is not required at this stage. If you are asked to present it and do not have it, please contact UNHCR or one of the legal partners closest to your residence for support in registering the birth of your child (see list below).

#### 7. What documents do I need to register the birth of my child with the Nofous?

To register with the Nofous, you will need to present all the documents mentioned above together with the birth certificate issued by the Mukhtar in the area of birth. Proof of marriage is not required at this stage. If you are asked to present it and do not have it, please contact UNHCR or one of the legal partners closest to your residence for support in registering the birth of your child (see list below).

Registration with the Nofous is not the final step of the birth registration process; however it is an important one that has to be completed before the baby is one year old, otherwise you will only be able to register the birth of your child through a court procedure.

#### 8. What documents do I need to register the birth of my child with the **Foreigners’ Registry**?

Birth registration in Lebanon is only completed after the birth is registered with the Foreigners’ Registry. As of September 2017, a new facilitated procedure for birth registration has been adopted, which foresees that you or your spouse need to present the following documents to register the birth of your child with the Foreigners’ Registry:

- Birth certificate registered with the Nofous;
- Passports or ID cards of both you and your spouse;
- One of these proofs of your marriage:
  - Family Booklet
  - Family Civil Extract stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Syrian marriage certificate stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

If you do not have any of the above, please contact UNHCR or the legal partner closest to you for support.

- As part of this new procedure to facilitate birth registration, **proof of legal stay** for you and your spouse **is no longer a requirement**. However, we encourage you to present it if you have it.

**Please note** that, if you or your spouse do not have legal stay, after the birth is registered, the Foreigners' Registry will share copy of your child's birth certificate with the General Security Office.

#### 9. Summary overview of documentary requirements and fees for each step of the birth registration process.

	Required documents	Fees
<b>Step 1: Birth notification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No documents required</li> <li>Identification documents may be asked</li> </ul>	No cost
<b>Step 2: Mukhtar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birth notification</li> <li>ID card or Passport of both parents, other identification documents may also be accepted</li> </ul>	Between LBP 5,000 to 35,000
<b>Step 3: Nofous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birth certificate from the Mukhtar</li> <li>ID card or Passport of both parents, other identification documents may also be accepted</li> </ul> <p>This must be done <b>before</b> your child is one year old</p>	LBP 5,000 stamp fees + LBP 1,000 stamp fees for each document presented for the registration
<b>Step 4: Foreigners' Registry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birth certificate from the Mukhtar</li> <li>ID card or Passport of both parents</li> <li>Family civil extract or Syrian marriage certificate stamped by the MFAs in Syria and Lebanon, or Family Booklet</li> <li><u>If available</u>, proof of legal stay of you and your spouse</li> <li><b>If you or your spouse do not have legal stay</b>, after the birth is registered, the Foreigners' Registry will share copy of your child's birth certificate with the General Security Office.</li> </ul>	Around LBP 8,000 – 10,000 (LBP 1,000 stamp fees for each document presented for the registration)

#### 10. If my child was born at home how can I get a birth notification?

If the birth is conducted by an authorized doctor or midwife, he/she will give you a birth notification. An authorized midwife has a certificate showing that she is part of the Lebanese order of midwives.

If the person who assisted with the birth delivery is not able to do so, you may still be able to obtain a birth certificate from the Mukhtar in your residential area and register the birth with the Lebanese authorities. Please contact UNHCR or a legal partner who can provide you with more information pertaining to your situation and possible legal assistance (see list below).

### **11. Which Mukhtar do I need to approach: the Mukhtar in the area where I live or in the area where the child was born?**

Please approach a Mukhtar in the area where the child was born only. If you bring a birth certificate from a Mukhtar located in a different area, you will face difficulties in the next step of the birth registration procedure.

### **12. Can I still register the birth of my child if s/he is over 1 year of age?**

- **Scenario 1: the child has reached step 3 (Nofous) before turning 1 year old**

To finalise registration of the birth of your child, you have to register his/her birth certificate with the Foreigners' Registry (refer to Q8 for more information).

- **Scenario 2: the child has only reached step 1 and/or 2 and is older than 1 year**

In this case, the only option to register the birth of your child is to file a court procedure. The court procedures are time consuming (around one year) and complex and you will need the assistance of a Lebanese lawyer.

Please contact a legal partner or UNHCR who can support you with legal assistance (see list at the end of this document).

### **13. Who can I contact for additional information?**

Please contact UNHCR or the legal partner closest to your area of residence for support (see list below) if:

- 1) You wish to have more information on how to register the birth of:
  - a baby born out of wedlock
  - a baby born with an unauthorized midwife
  - a baby born from parents of different nationalities
  - a baby born from one or both parents who are stateless
  - a baby whose father is no longer present (deceased or missing)
  - a baby who is older than 1 year whose birth was not registered with the Nofous
- 2) You or your spouse do not have an ID document nor a passport;
- 3) The hospital/doctor or midwife is not issuing or are not authorised to issue the birth notification;
- 4) The birth notification or birth certificate contains information that is not correct;
- 5) The birth certificate was issued by a Mukhtar not located in the area where the birth occurred;
- 6) You or your spouse gave birth to the baby in a hospital located in a Governorate different from the one of your residence;
- 7) You or your spouse tried and failed to obtain a birth certificate from the Mukhtar or register the birth of the baby with the Nofous or Foreigners' Registry;
- 8) You were asked to obtain a stamp on the birth notification from the Order of midwives in Beirut;
- 9) You do not have the proof of marriage required to register the birth with the Foreigners' Registry;

- 10) You and your spouse cannot leave the house to reach the Mukhtar or Nofous or Foreigners' Registry;
- 11) You completed birth registration in Lebanon and wish to have more information on how to transfer registration of the birth of your child to the civil registry in Syria.

For any additional issue not listed above, please contact UNHCR or the legal partner closest to your area of residence (see list below) for further information and support.

### Contacts

#### UNHCR Hotlines

[Beirut/Mount Lebanon: 01-820848 \(Monday to Friday 7:00 - 17:00\)](tel:01-820848)

[Bekaa: 76-611811 \(Monday to Friday 8:30 - 16:00\)](tel:76-611811)

[North: 71-911496 \(Monday to Friday 8:00 - 16:00\)](tel:71-911496)

[South: 76-500370 \(Monday to Friday 8:30 - 16:00\)](tel:76-500370)

#### Partner Hotlines

##### Beirut/ Mount Lebanon

[INTERSOS : 71172653 - 81384961](tel:71172653)

[IRC: 76020061](tel:76020061)

[NRC: 76666950](tel:76666950)

[CARITAS: 70326651](tel:70326651)

##### Bekaa

[Intersos \(Zahle, West Bekaa, Rachaya\): 70521542](tel:70521542)

[IRC \(North Bekaa\): 76784164](tel:76784164)

[NRC \(North Bekaa\): 76000613](tel:76000613)

[NRC \(Arsal\): 76171402](tel:76171402)

[NRC \(Central Bekaa\): 76000614](tel:76000614)

##### North

[IRC \(Deir Dalloum\): 76064550](tel:76064550)

[NRC \(Wadi Khaled\): 78801313](tel:78801313)

[NRC \(El Minieh\): 76700525](tel:76700525)

[NRC \(Halba\): 70800626](tel:70800626)

##### South

[Caritas: 07221582 and 81312290](tel:07221582)

[IRC: 70999075](tel:70999075)

[NRC \(Tyre and Bent Jbeil\): 70951978](tel:70951978)

[NRC \(Nabatieh\): 70888265](tel:70888265)

[NRC \(Bent Jbeil\): 78885883](tel:78885883)

[NRC \(Saida\): 76888573](tel:76888573)

[NRC \(Zahrani\): 76899112](tel:76899112)

[NRC \(Hasbaya and Marjeouyon\): 78885883](tel:78885883)