

Q&A on marriage registration for Syrian refugees who marry in Lebanon

Updated in February 2020

Disclaimers:

- This Q&A is for outreach/front line workers as a reference to address questions from refugees.
- This Q&A is not to be distributed to refugees although it is accessible through www.refugees-lebanon.org
- This Q&A is also to be used for all available humanitarian hotlines in Lebanon.

1. Why is marriage registration important?

Under Lebanese law, the marriage celebrated in Lebanon must be registered with the Personal Status Department. Marriage registration will allow you to:

- Obtain a marriage certificate,
- Register the birth of your children,
- In case of death in the family, ensure access to inheritance and in particular the right of ownership and use of your family house and properties back in Syria, and
- Preserve your custody and guardianship rights of your children in case of divorce.

2. What are the procedures to register my marriage with the government authorities in Lebanon?

In Lebanon, marriages have to be contracted by an authorised religious authority and must be registered with the Personal Status Department as soon as possible. Before you get married, you should contact the religious authority closest to where you live to obtain a permission to marry. Marriages contracted by an unauthorized religious authority in Lebanon may not be registered at the PSD. In this case, the marriages need to be first registered at the authorized religious authority.

After the marriage has been celebrated by the authorised religious authority publicly and in front of witnesses, the procedure to register the marriage with the Lebanese authorities foresees the following four steps:

Step 1: Obtainment of a marriage contract signed and stamped by the relevant religious authority.

Step 2: Issuance of a marriage certificate by the Mukhtar nearest to the religious authority that authenticated the marriage contract.

Step 3: Registration of the marriage certificate with the Nofous.

Step 4: Registration of the marriage certificate with the Foreigners' Registry at the Personal Status Department.

If you also want to register your marriage with the Civil Registry in Syria you will have to certify the original marriage certificate obtained by the Foreigners' Registry at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and take it to the Embassy of Syria in Lebanon.

The table below provides a detailed explanation of each four steps of the procedure for marriage registration.

Steps	Where	Documents required	Cost
1- Marriage Contract	A religious marriage is only valid if it is contracted by an authorised religious authority. For further information please see the helpline numbers on the back of this leaflet. After the ceremony you will be provided with a marriage contract signed and stamped (authenticated) by the religious authority.	To get married, you first need to obtain the Permission to Marry from the authorised religious authority. The religious authority can advise you on this procedure. To obtain the Permission to marry you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You and your spouse's individual civil extracts. ▪ Medical certificates issued by an accredited doctor, who is registered with the Lebanese syndicate of doctors. 	The cost of celebrating the marriage at the religious court is around LBP 100,000. The average cost of medical tests is around LBP 150,000.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GSO investigation if the husband is Lebanese. ▪ Personal civil extract for both or one for the spouse upon the practice. ▪ Proof of Islam for the husband. ▪ If the spouse is from another religion a statement from the Mukhtar. ▪ If the husband is Lebanese a GSO investigation. 	
2 - Mukhtar Marriage Certificate	<p>You should visit a Mukhtar working locally to the religious authority that authenticated the marriage contract to obtain the marriage certificate.</p> <p>The marriage certificate will be signed by you and two witnesses, as well as by the religious authority that contracted the marriage. The Mukhtar will then sign and stamp the marriage certificate.</p>	<p>You will need to take with you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The marriage contract authenticated by the religious authority. ▪ The identity documents of you and your spouse, for example Syrian ID cards, passports or individual civil extracts. 	The fee for finalising the marriage certificate varies. However, it should not cost more than LBP 30,000.
3 - Registering the marriage with the Nofous	<p>You should visit the local Nofous in the district where the marriage contract was authenticated to 'transfer' the marriage certificate.</p> <p>Once the marriage certificate is 'transferred', you will be referred to the Foreigners' Registry of the Personal Status Department in the Governorate to register the marriage.</p>	<p>You will need to take with you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mukhtar marriage certificate. ▪ The identity documents of you and your spouse; either Syrian ID, valid passports, Family booklet. 	The fee for registering the marriage is LBP 4,000 (an additional LBP 1,000 after 30 days of the marriage).
4 - Registering the marriage with the Foreigners' Registry	<p>You should visit the Foreigners' Registry of the Personal Status Department at Governorate level to register the marriage.</p>	<p>You will need to take with you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The marriage certificate that you registered with the Nofous. ▪ Evidence of valid stay in Lebanon for you or your spouse. If both of you do not have proof of valid residency, please contact UNHCR. No need for valid stay if one of the spouses is Lebanese. ▪ Either valid passports for both spouses + proof from Syria of civil status of the wife or individual civil extracts for both spouses certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon and of Syria. 	Around LBP 5,000 – 6,000 (LBP 1,000 stamp fees for each document presented for the registration)
5- Ratification at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<p>You and your spouse do not have to be present at the Ministry in order to ratify the marriage certificate.</p>	<p>You will need to take with you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The marriage certificate that you registered with the Foreign Registry. 	LBP 5,000 (stamped fees)

--	--	--	--

3. I do not have all the documents required to register my marriage, what can I do?

Even if you and your spouse do not have all the documents required to complete the registration of your marriage with the Lebanese authorities up to the level of the Foreigners' Registry, it is still important that you start the process. In particular you should make sure to obtain a marriage contract signed and stamped by the relevant religious authority when you celebrate your marriage. If you have the necessary documents it is also important that you obtain a marriage certificate by the Mukhtar and, where possible, register the certificate with the Nofous.

4. How can I know who is an authorised Sheikh?

An authorised Sheikh is the Sheikh that has been authorised by the Sharia Court in Lebanon to celebrate the marriage after you and your future husband/wife obtained a Permission to Marry ('Izen Shar'i) from the same Court. You will not be able to get a marriage certificate from the Lebanese authorities if the marriage contract has been issued by a Syrian Sheikh who has not been authorized by the Lebanese sharia court.

5. What happens if I got married before an unauthorised Sheikh?

In this case, you need to go to the Sharia Court and authorise your marriage, otherwise you will not be able to get a marriage certificate and register your marriage with the Personal Status Department. For more detailed information and assistance kindly contact the helpline numbers on the back of this booklet.

6. Is the marriage contract from a Syrian Sheikh recognized by the Lebanese authorities?

For marriages celebrated in Lebanon, the Sheikh has to be formally recognised and authorized by the Lebanese Sharia Court, independently of his nationality.

Important:

Please do not forget to notify UNHCR of the change in your marital status! It is important for UNHCR and partners to have accurate records of your family composition.

Contacts

UNHCR Hotlines

Beirut/Mount Lebanon: 01-820848 (Monday to Friday 8:30am-4pm)
Bekaa: 76-611811 (Monday to Friday 8am-4pm)
North: 06-205003 (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm)
South: 76-500370 (Monday to Friday 8:30am-4pm)
Lebanon: 01-594250 (Monday to Friday 8:00 - 17:00)

Partner Hotlines

Beirut/ Mount Lebanon

Caritas: 70326651 – 01502550
NRC: 76666950
Legal Action: 81315001

Bekaa

Intersos (Zahle, West Bekaa and Rashaya): 70521542
IRC (North Bekaa): 76784164
NRC (North Bekaa): 76000613
NRC (Central Bekaa): 76000614
NRC (Arsal): 76171402

North

Intersos (Tripoli and Akkar): 81314084
IRC (Akkar): 81646166
IRC (Tripoli): 81707787
NRC (Wadi Khaled): 78801313

NRC (El Minieh): 76700525
NRC (Tal Abbas): 70800626
Tabitha/ MSD (Batroun): 70169265
Legal Action (Akkar, Tripoli): 81315001

South

Caritas: 81312290
NRC (Tyre): 70951978
NRC (Saida): 76888573
NRC (Hasbaya/Marjaayoun/Bent Jbeil): 78885883
NRC (Nabatieh): 76888265