

Q&A on consequences of irregular (re-)entry to Lebanon based on recent government decisions

July 2019

1. What does the new GSO regulation on Syrians who (re-)entered Lebanon irregularly say?

UNHCR has learned that the Lebanese authorities have decided that any Syrian who enters or re-enters Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019 will be deported and handed over to the Syrian immigrations authorities. This applies both to Syrians arrested at the border and inside Lebanon.

Authorities consider **the last date of (re-)entry**, regardless of whether you had previously entered, legally or not.

2. What should Syrians who (re-)entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019 do?

Syrian who (re-)entered irregularly to Lebanon after 24 April 2019 are advised to contact UNHCR immediately in case of arrest, or if at risk of deportation.

3. Is the decision also affecting the Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019?

Syrians who have entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019 could also be at risk of deportation if they are not able to demonstrate that they entered Lebanon before that date. Please make sure to keep any proof of entry before 24 April with you at all times (see question 4).

4. What should Syrian refugees who entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019 do?

Syrian refugees who entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019 are advised to seek to obtain any document (mentioning at least their name and date of issuance of document) proving that they entered Lebanon and/ or were present in Lebanon prior to 24 April 2019. The following documents, for example, could be presented: exit slip from Syria, UNHCR certificate (for refugees registered prior 2015), UNHCR appointment slip, rental agreement, electricity bill, education certificates, hospital bills, legal residency (even if expired), etc.

Refugees are advised to carry copies of these documents at all times.

Refugees are encouraged to approach UNHCR offices to request documents such as a copy of previously issued appointment slips or a copy of their certificate if they do not have/have lost these documents.

5. What should I do if I am arrested or someone I know is arrested and faces deportation?

If possible, provide the authorities with proof of identity, proof of residence and/ or proof of presence in Lebanon prior 24 April 2019. The following documents, for example, could be presented: exit slip from Syria, UNHCR certificate, UNHCR appointment slip, rental agreement, electricity bill, education certificates, hospital bills, etc.

In case of arrest or threat of deportation, immediately contact UNHCR. Be ready to share as much information as possible on the identity of the person detained, place of detention, reason for detention and time of entry to Lebanon.

Lebanon:

-Over the phone: **01-594250** (Monday to Friday 8:00-17:00)

•Beirut/Mount Lebanon:

- In person: Ramlet El-Baida, Moussa Nammour St., facing Spinney's Supermarket, **Beirut** (Monday to Friday 8:00 - 14:00)

- Over the phone: **01-820848** (Monday to Friday 7:00 - 17:00)

•Bekaa:

- In person: Zahle highway, near Kaysar Ata IceCream, **Zahle** (Monday to Friday 8:00 - 16:00)

- Over the phone: **76-611811** (Monday to Friday 8:30 - 16:00)

•North:

- In person: Next to Rachid Karame Exhibition Centre, **Tripoli** (Monday to Friday 8:00 - 14:00)
or John Abdo Building, facing the municipality, **Qobayat** (Monday to Friday 8:00 – 13:00)

- Over the phone: **06-205003** (Monday to Friday 8:00 - 16:00)

•South:

- In person: Villa Krischt, Al Hosh, Tyre (Monday to Friday 8:30 - 16:00)

- Over the phone: **76-500370** (Monday to Friday 8:30 - 16:00)

6. Can Syrian refugees return/repatriate to Syria if they wish to do so?

You have the right to choose to return/repatriate to Syria at any time. This is your personal decision and it is your right to do so based on the information you have at hand.

Refugees who decide to repatriate to Syria will not be allowed to re-enter Lebanon unless they meet the entry requirements set by Lebanon's regulations. You will not be able to re-enter if you have been issued with a re-entry ban. Previous registration with UNHCR is not considered a ground for re-entry to Lebanon.

7. Can Syrian refugees go back to Syria temporarily?

Syrian refugees who go back to Syria temporarily, even for compelling reasons (e.g. for medical treatment or compelling family reasons), will not be allowed to re-enter Lebanon unless they meet the entry requirements set by Lebanon's regulations. Previous registration with UNHCR is not

considered a ground for re-entry to Lebanon. You will not be able to re-enter if you have been issued with a re-entry ban. Should you have any question regarding (re)entry regulations, please contact UNHCR or a legal aid organization in your area.

Should you re-enter Lebanon irregularly, you risk being deported and handed over to the Syrian authorities.

8. What can the family members of the deportees do?

If a member of your family has been deported, we encourage you to report this situation to UNHCR, in particular if they are facing specific risks in Syria.

If a person is missing in Syria, regardless of the circumstances of disappearance, their close family members can approach ICRC in Lebanon or in Syria to seek their assistance to search for the missing family member. ICRC Lebanon can be reached at: +961 3186 386 (Mon-Fri from 08 am-3 pm) or via bey_tracing@icrc.org.