

Q&A on birth registration for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Updated in March 2021

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. I heard that there are new procedures for birth registration, what are they?

The **new procedures** are:

1. Since September 2017, Syrian parents no longer need to have legal stay to register the birth of their children with the Foreigner's Registry. For more information on this please see Q7.
2. Normally, the birth of children born in Lebanon has to be registered with the Nofous within one year or the parents have to go to the Court to register the birth. Since March 2018, Syrian parents with **children born in Lebanon between 1st January 2011 and 9th February 2019** who have missed this one-year deadline can now register the birth of their children without going to court.

For more information on how the birth of these children can be registered, see Q3.

Please note that children who are born after 9th of February 2019 still need to have their birth registered within one year otherwise parents will only be able to register the birth of their children through a lengthy and expensive court procedure.

3. Regarding the children who are born after 9th of February 2019 Pursuant to the new laws on the suspension of deadlines during the period from the 18th of October 2019 until the 31st of March 2021, the deadline of one year related to birth registration stops running during the mentioned period and resumes after 31st of March 2021 from the point it reached on 18 October 2019.

Accordingly, all births that passed the one-year mark during the period from 18.10.2019 to 31.3.2021 may still be registered administratively. The period should be calculated as follow: the number of months from the date of birth until 18/10/2019 plus the remaining number of months of the one-year period counted starting 1/4/2021.

2. Will UNHCR help me with this process?

UNHCR and its partners may provide you with further counselling and assistance. Please contact the below numbers to obtain more information.

3. How can I register the birth of my child 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.

If your child is less than one year old or s/he was born between 1st January 2011 and 9 February 2019, you have to follow these four steps to register his/her birth with the Lebanese authorities:

- **Step 1:** Obtain a **birth notification** from the authorized doctor or authorized midwife who attended the birth. In case of the midwife, the birth notification should be registered at the Syndicate of midwives.
- **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/authorized 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.

IMPORTANT: If your child is born before 1st January 2011 or after 9th February 2019, 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. For those born after 9th February 2019, the suspension of deadlines from the 18th of October 2019 until the 31st of March 2021 should be taken into account to count the one year deadline related to birth registration.

- **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.

If you also want to register the birth with the Civil Registry in Syria you will have to certify the original birth certificate obtained by the Foreigners’ Registry at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. You and your spouse do not have to be present at the Ministry and anyone can do this on your behalf.

There is no difference in the cost and documentary requirements if your child is less than one year old or s/he was born between 1st January 2011 and 9 February 2019.

4. How 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, even if the issuing date is not recent

Proof of marriage and a valid legal stay are not required at this stage. If you are asked to present one of them 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).

5. 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.

6. How to register the birth of my child with the Nofous?

To register with the Nofous, you will need to present all the documents mentioned in Q4 together with the birth certificate issued by the Mukhtar in the area of birth. Proof of marriage and a valid legal stay are not required at this stage. If you are asked to present one of them

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 important and has to be completed before the baby is one year old, if your child is born before 1st January 2011 or after 9th February 2019, otherwise you will only be able to register the birth of your child through a court procedure.

7. How 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. Since 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; or
 - Family Civil Extract stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs + valid passports of both parents; or
 - Syrian marriage certificate stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; or
 - Lebanese marriage certificate executed in Lebanon for marriages conducted in Lebanon.
- **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, as part of their normal procedure.

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

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

	Required documents	Fees
Step 1: Birth notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No documents required • Identification documents may be asked 	No cost
Step 2: Mukhtar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth notification • ID card or Passport of both parents, other identification documents may also be accepted 	In practice, between LBP 5,000 to 35,000
Step 3: Nofous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate from the Mukhtar • ID card or Passport of both parents, other identification documents may also be accepted 	LBP 5,000 stamp fees

Step 4: Foreigners' Registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate from the Mukhtar • ID card or Passport of both parents • Family Booklet; or Family Civil Extract stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs + passport of both parents; or Syrian marriage certificate stamped at the Syrian and Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; or Lebanese marriage certificate executed in Lebanon for marriages conducted in Lebanon. • <u>If available</u>, proof of legal stay of you and your spouse • 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. 	Around LBP 3,000 – 6,000 (LBP 1,000 stamp fees for each document presented for the registration)
Step 5: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<p>You will need to take with you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The birth certificate that you registered with the Foreign Registry. 	5000 LBP (stamped fees)

9. 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).

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

Thanks to new procedures introduced in March 2018, it is now easier to register the birth of children who are older than one year. If your child was born between 1st January 2011 and 9th February 2019, his/her birth can now be registered following the steps outlined in Q3. Also, for those born after 9th February 2019, the suspension of deadlines from the 18th of October 2019 until the 31st of March 2021 should be taken into account to count the one year deadline related to birth registration.

If your child was not born within this timeframe and is older than one year, please contact a legal partner or UNHCR who can provide you with more information (see list at the end of this document).

11. 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 up to the Foreigners' Registry. If you do not do so:

- Your child may not be recognized as a Syrian national and would 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 not be able to move freely or to later own property or inherit. This may also result in the child being statelessness.
- You will not be able to prove that you are the parents of the child.
- You will face difficulties to exit Lebanon with your child, either to go back to Syria or travel to another country.
- If your child is born after 9th February 2019 and you do not register his/her birth up to the Nofous level before s/he turns one year old, a long and costly court procedure will be required to complete the birth registration procedure.

However, for children born after 9th February 2019 and before 31st of March 2021, the registration might happen administratively even if the child turns one year old during a period calculated as follows:

The number of months from the date of birth until 18/10/2019 plus the remaining number of months of the one-year period counted starting 1/4/2021.

12. 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 newborn 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.

13. If my child was born in Lebanon, and I did not register his/her birth with the Foreigners' Registry, can I register the birth with the Syrian civil registry?

No. According to Lebanese and Syrian law, 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.

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

No, a child only becomes a Lebanese national at birth if his/her father is a Lebanese citizen. If you do not register the birth of your child s/he could become stateless, i.e. without a nationality. This means that, in the future, s/he would face a lot of difficulties in his/her daily life.

15. Who can I contact for additional information?

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 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 8am- 5pm)

Partner Hotlines

Beirut/ Mount Lebanon

Caritas: 70-326651, 71-080553, 71-801282, 76-467081

NRC Camps (Shatila, Borj El Barajneh..): 71-505242

NRC Beirut, Maten, Jbeil and Kesrouane: 76-666950

NRC Baabda and Aley: 76-749222

NRC Chouf: 76-777236

Legal Action: 81315001

Bekaa

Intersos (Zahle, West Bekaa and Rashaya): 70521542

IRC (North Bekaa): 76784164

NRC (North Bekaa): 76000613

NRC (Baalbek): 76897789

NRC (Zahle): 70992563

NRC (Central Bekaa/ Riyak, Dalhamiyeh and Bar Elias): 76000614

NRC (Central Bekaa/ Saadnayel, Qab Elias and Taalabaya): 78801201

NRC (West Bekaa): 76898121NRC (Arsal): 76171402

CLDH (North Bekaa: Saidi, Bouday, Talia, Deir el Ahmar, Hosh Barada, Hosh Talsafieh, Hor Taala, Jebaa, Btedei and Chlifa): 71980246

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