

Q&A on the regularization of Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly before 24 April 2019

September 2022

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 printed and distributed to refugees although it is accessible through www.refugees-lebanon.org
- This Q&A is also to be used for all available UNHCR and legal partners fieldhotlines in Lebanon.
- The information contained in this document is based on details received from GSO on the implementation of the regularization decision. UNHCR may periodically add, change, detail or update this information. The presentation of this information does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNHCR concerning the scope of this regulation or its implementation by national authorities. This document does not represent any advice with regards to its subject matter.

1. Introduction:

On 1 September 2022, the GSO published a decision related to the regularization of the status of **Syrians** who entered Lebanon **irregularly** (meaning, not through official border crossing points) **before 24 April 2019**. This decision is applicable from 31/8/2022 until 30/12/2022.

2. **Who can benefit from this decision?**

Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly (meaning, not through official border crossing points) before 24 April 2019 could benefit from this decision provided that they are able to submit a document that proves their entry to the country before this date, except those who are subject to judicial measures or are otherwise excluded please see question 3

3. **Who is excluded from this decision?**

Individuals in the following circumstances cannot benefit from this decision:

- Syrian whose last irregular entry or reentry to Lebanon was after 24 April 2019, and
- Syrian whose last irregular entry or reentry to Lebanon was before 24 April 2019 however they cannot provide supporting documents, and
- Syrians who are subject to judicial measures (**i.e. criminal court decisions, arrest warrant, search and investigation notice...**), and
- Syrians who entered Lebanon regularly (through official crossing points) but overstayed their visa/residency.

4. **If I entered Lebanon irregularly and was given by GSO a departure order, can I still benefit from this decision?**

Yes, even if you previously received a departure order from GSO as long as you entered Lebanon irregularly **before 24 April 2019** and you are not subject to any judicial measures you can benefit from this decision. Please **see Q 7 para b** on applicable fees.

5. **Do I need to regularize my residency permit by a specific deadline in order to benefit from this decision?**

The regularization applications should be submitted to GSO before 31/12/2022. The regularization application should be submitted exclusively at the GSO regional centers.

6. What are the requirements for regularization?

In addition to the identification document (ID, valid passport, civil extract for minors), you are required to provide any document proving that you entered Lebanon and/ or were present in Lebanon prior to 24 April 2019. By way of example, the following documents could be presented: exit slip from Syria, UNHCR certificate or housing attestation (for refugees registered prior to 2015), UNHCR appointment slip, rental agreement, electricity bill, education certificate, hospital bills, etc.

It is recommended that refugees contact GSO helpline (1717) for advice on their specific documents before approaching them.

7. What fees do I need to pay to the GSO to benefit from the regularization?

You will be required to pay the application fee of LBP 1,050,000. In addition, one of the following fees applies:

- a. LBP 900,000 as regularization fee regardless of your stay in Lebanon, or
- b. In case you received previously from GSO a clearance to exit Lebanon, you will be required to pay the following fees:
 - If no fees were previously collected by GSO, you will be required to pay LBP 600.000 in addition to LBP 300.000 for each year or part of a year since the date of the GSO clearance
 - If the LBP 600.000 fee was previously collected by GSO, you will be required to pay LBP 300.000 for each year or part of a year since the date of the clearance.

Example: I entered the country irregularly in 2018. In June 2020, I approached GSO to regularize my status so I can return to Syria and I received a clearance from GSO that allows me to exit the country legally. However, I remained in Lebanon and did not exit the country. In this case, if I want to benefit from the current regularization, I need to pay LBP 600,000 (unless I already paid it in 2020) in addition to 300,000 x 3 (number of years/ part of a year since June 2020 – 2020/2021/2022) = LBP 900,000.

Which makes it a grand total of 1,500,000 LBP (600,000 + 900,000).

8. What type of residency will I receive and what is its duration?

You will receive a temporary residency permit for 3 months. During these 3 months, and if you wish to remain in the country legally (with a valid residency) you need to apply for a residency permit through regular procedures, based on a sponsor or a work permit.

9. If I cannot secure a sponsor or obtain a work permit during the period of 3 months, what will happen?

The temporary residency issued through regularization for 3 months **is not renewable**. By the end of the 3 months your presence in Lebanon will become irregular and you may be at risk of receiving a departure order.

10. Should I secure a Lebanese sponsor before submitting my regularization application?

No. You can submit the regularization application and pay the fees without securing a sponsor. If you meet the criteria as part of the regularization, you will be given by GSO a temporary residency

permit for 3 months during which time you may apply for residency based on sponsorship or work permit.

11. What happens if I submit the regularization request, however the supporting documents are not accepted by GSO as evidence of entry/stay prior to April 2019?

In such a case, and especially if you have no other proof of evidence for the date of entry, you may be at risk of deportation.

It is extremely important that Syrians ensure that their documents will be accepted as proof of arrival before 24 April 2019 before approaching GSO either **by calling GSO hotline or seeking support from UNHCR and partners.**

12. Do I need to regularize my status based on this new decision if I am otherwise eligible to the fee waiver based on UNHCR certificate?

This decision does not apply to those eligible to the fee waiver based on UNHCR certificate. **If you entered irregularly before 24/4/2019, and you are eligible to obtain a residency based on UNHCR certificate** (registered with UNHCR prior to 2015, have not exited Lebanon regularly after 2015, have not renewed your residency based on sponsorship or other categories) you can apply and obtain an annual residency permit based on UNHCR free of charge.

Annex

General Security Office (GSO) announcement as appears in the GSO website
English version (unofficial translation)

The General Directorate of the General Security announces the resumption of regularizing the status of Syrians who entered Lebanon illegally before 24 April 2019, except those who are subject to judicial measures, exclusively at the regional centers. Requests to regularize the status are accepted until 30 December 2022 inclusive.

Contacts

UNHCR Hotline 01-903014 (Monday to Friday 8am-5 pm)

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