

# Q&A for Syrian refugees on requirements for residency renewal in Lebanon based on UNHCR Certificate

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](http://www.refugees-lebanon.org)
- This Q&A is also to be used for all available humanitarian hotlines in Lebanon.

## 1. What is the General Security Office (GSO) regulations regarding renewal based on UN paper?

On 10 February 2017 and 6 March 2017, the GSO published an announcement stating that Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR before 1 January 2015 are granted a six months residency permit free of charge that is also renewable several times and not subject to late fees.

Currently, the GSO is renewing for a period of one year for Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR before 1 January 2015 and did not renew their residencies previously based on another category than UNHCR registration (e.g. sponsorship, property owner, tenant, etc.)

Please see the exact text of the announcement at the end of this document.

## 2. What do Syrian refugees no longer need to pay?

Following the February and March 2017 decisions, Syrian refugees renewing based on UNHCR certificate are not requested to pay \$200 residency renewal fee and overstay fees.

## 3. Who can benefit?

Syrian registered with UNHCR:

- Who registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015
- Who did not renew their residency based on tourism, sponsorship, property owner, or tenant in previous years. See Q10 for information regarding spouses and minor children of refugees who renewed based on sponsorship.

## 4. How can I prove to the GSO that I am registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015?

The UNHCR Registration Certificate (UN paper) and the housing attestation issued by UNHCR include the date of your registration with UNHCR.

## 5. I entered unofficially and I am registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015, do I benefit from the waiver?

Yes, you benefit from the waiver as long as you did not engage in any form of labor excluding daily workers in construction and agriculture.

**6. What if my UN paper and Housing Attestation do not have a registration date with UNHCR? Does this mean I need to re-approach UNHCR to obtain them?**

Please see Q12

**7. Do I need to renew my residency permit within a specific deadline in order to benefit from the waiver of the renewal and overstay fees?**

No, there is no deadline. If you have already renewed based on UN paper, it is advisable to renew before the end date of your residency permit.

**8. What if I do not have a UN paper?**

If you do not have a UN paper, you cannot benefit from the waiver and you are still required to pay the residency renewal fees to the GSO.

**9. I previously renewed my residency based on sponsorship and have a valid UN paper. Can I benefit for the waived renewal and overstay fees?**

Unfortunately, not at this time. We will inform you should the Government of Lebanon change this rule.

**10. If I previously renewed based on sponsorship but my wife and children did not, do they benefit from the waiver?**

Yes, your wife and minor children do benefit as long as they fulfill the criteria in Q3

**11. What documentation do I need to bring to the GSO if I benefit from the waived renewal and overstay fees?**

You need to have with you all the documentation mentioned below:

- Valid UN paper
- Housing attestation (newly issued by UNHCR)
- National ID or valid passport. The picture on the ID should resemble to his/her current appearance. Otherwise, a new personal civil extract is needed.  
In addition, a person who entered Lebanon with an ID cannot have his/her residency renewed on the Passport, unless a transfer of stamp is done before the GSO.  
For minors, the GSO stated on April 2018 that "Syrian between the age of 15 and 18 who turned 15 while in Lebanon are allowed to apply for residency using an individual civil extract if they do not hold an identity document or a passport, providing that the Syrian individual civil extract is not older than three years, has a photograph and is stamped by the Syrian authorities"
- 2 passport photos
- Pledge to abide by Lebanese laws. You do this at the GSO premises.
- Proof of residency in 2015 or 2016 (if available) such as:
  - Entry coupons (white card) or,
  - Passport stamp or,
  - Expired residency

You have to provide to the GSO only colored copies of the IDs, passports, civil extract, entry and exit cards because the GSO has issued an internal memo instructing all centers not to take the original mentioned documents for Syrians when renewing their residency.

### 12. I have a valid UN paper, but I do not have yet a housing attestation, what do I do?

- If you live in **Bekaa**, you have to call 08 930 468 to obtain an appointment to get a housing attestation.
- If you live in the **South**, you can approach directly the UNHCR Reception Center in Tyre to get a housing attestation.
- If you live in **Beirut/Mnt. Lebanon**, you have to call 01 820 848 (Mon-Fri 7am-5pm) to obtain an appointment to get a housing attestation. You can approach the Reception Center if your UN paper is valid for at least 6 months.
- If you live in the **North**, you can approach the UNHCR Reception Center in Tripoli directly to get a housing attestation.

### 13. Do I need to approach UNHCR with all my family members to get the housing attestation?

No. If you only need to get the housing attestation you do not need to bring all your family to UNHCR. The head of family or spouse will be enough.

### 14. If my UN paper has expired, when can I renew it?

If you benefit from the waiver of the renewal and overstay fees (Q3), but have an expired UN paper, please call UNHCR to book an appointment for the renewal of the UN paper, depending on which area you live, as per the below:

UNHCR Reception Centres

**Akkar:** Appointments given by phone by contacting UNHCR Tripoli Hotline 06-205003, Monday to Friday 8am - 4pm

**Beirut/Mount Lebanon:**

Ramlet El-Baida, Moussa Namour street, Beirut

Appointments are given by phone only at 01 820 848 Monday to Friday 7am - 5pm.

**Bekaa:** Zahle highway, near Kaysar Ata Ice Cream, Zahle. Appointments are given by phone only at 08-930468, Monday to Friday 8am- 4pm.

**South:** Villa Krischt, Al Hosh, Tyre. Appointments are given by phone only at 76-500380, Monday to Friday 8:30am- 4pm.

**Tripoli:** next to Rachid Karame Exhibition Centre in Tripoli, Appointments are given by phone only at 06-205003, Monday to Friday 8am - 4pm.

**Very Important:** Please do not come to UNHCR without having secured the appointment. UNHCR will accelerate the procedure to renew your UN paper.

### **15. When renewing my residency permit, do I need to approach the GSO with all my family members?**

Only the persons that fulfil the criteria mentioned in Q3 need to approach the GSO, not the entire family necessarily.

### **16. Can I exit Lebanon if I have overstayed?**

Since July 2018, the GSO allows Syrians who overstayed their residency based on UN paper to exit the country without paying any fees or receiving a re-entry ban. However, this provision does not extend to refugees who overstayed their residency on any other categories where they still be requested to pay the overstay fees or receive a re-entry ban.

## **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

## Annex

General Security Office (GSO) announcement as appears in the GSO website



### إقامات للسوريين حاملي شهادة تسجيل لدى المفوضية العليا لشؤون اللاجئين

**أولاً:** إستناداً إلى مذكرة التفاهم الموقعة بين وزارة الداخلية والبلديات والمفوضية العليا لشؤون اللاجئين، سوف تقوم كافة المراكز الإقليمية و مراكز السوريين بـ:

11. إستقبال طلبات تجديد إقامات السوريين النازحين في لبنان من حاملي شهادة تسجيل صالحة صادرة عن المفوضية العليا لشؤون اللاجئين وفق الشروط والمستندات المحددة في مذكرة الخدمة رقم 99/2014 وملحقاتها، في حال توفر أحد الشرطين التاليين:

- أن يكونوا قد منحوا سابقاً إقامة مؤقتة خلال العام 2015 أو العام 2016 إستناداً إلى شهادة التسجيل الصادرة عن المفوضية العليا لشؤون اللاجئين.
- إبراز أي مستند يثبت التسجيل لدى المفوضية العليا لشؤون اللاجئين قبل تاريخ 01 / 01 / 2015 (مجدد وصالح لدى تقديم الطلب).

لا يستفيد من أحكام هذه البرقية النازحون السوريون الذين سبق أن إستحصلوا على إقامات عملاً بمذكرة الخدمة رقم 99/2014 ووفق أحكام البنود المتعلقة بتعهد بالمسؤولية عمل شخصي أو بموجب سند ملكية أو عقد إيجار أو الذين إستفادوا من التسوية لدى مركز عرسال المؤقت.

**ثانياً:** يستفيد كل من أحكام هذه البرقية مجاناً كل من:

31. السوريين الداخليين خلسة شرط عدم قيامهم بأي عمل مأجور (من غير العمال اليوميين في الزراعة و البناء)

32. السوريات المتزوجات وأولادهن السوريين القاصرين المستوفين أحد شروطين المذكورين في البند 11/ بغض النظر عن وضع إقامة الزوج (تعهد مسؤولية، خارج لبنان، ...)

### English version (unofficial translation)

Residencies for Syrians holder of the UNHCR certificate:

**First:** based on the MOU signed between MOIM and UNHCR, all GSO regional offices shall:

- Receive the renewal residency requests for displaced Syrians in Lebanon who are holders of valid UNHCR certificates in accordance with the conditions and documents specified in the Memo No. 99/2014 and its amendments, provided one of the following conditions is met:
  - They have previously been granted a temporary residency during the year of 2015 or 2016 based on the UNHCR certificate
  - Presenting documents proving to be registered with UNHCR prior to 01/01/2015 (renewed and valid at the time of submitting the request)

Syrians who have been granted residency based on Memo No. 99/2014 and in accordance with the provisions related to pledge of responsibility, or title deed, or rental contract, or those who have benefited from the regularization at the Arsal temporary renewal center will not benefit from the provision of this memo.

**Second:** Shall benefit from this circular, free of charge:

- Syrians who have entered unofficially provided they did not engage in any form of labor (excluding daily workers, and works in agriculture and construction)