

Information about the Iraqi Passports

Some humanitarian workers of the civil society face a problem of the various types of Iraqi passports; belong to Iraqis coming from Iraq. Therefore, Legal Aid wants to clarify this issue to facilitate dealing with beneficiaries of multi-organizations' programs.

During the previous regime, passports used to have the symbols/characters (N, M and H) were used; the latter contained a phosphoric seal with a picture of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The passport's issued number was preceded by a letter, which did not have a specific indication.

After the fall of the previous regime, the Iraqi transitional government and the American Government have stopped dealing with Iraqi passports bearing the characters (M) or (N), have not allowed its holders to travel using such passport and have kept passports bearing the character (H).

In 2004, the Iraqi transitional government has issued a new version of passports carrying the letter (S).

However, there were many problems with this passport (the S passports) because it was easily be forged. Accordingly, issuance of the said passport was stopped in 2006, which caused problems to the Iraqi communities outside Iraq as many countries refused to deal with the said passport.

In aim of correcting the recent circulated rumors, the Jordanian government did not agree to renew the said passport, which carries the letter (S) until September 2010. From the beginning, The Jordanian government did not accept working inside the Kingdom by this passport, due to security reasons. Accordingly, the issuance of such passport has stopped from the Iraqi embassy in Jordan respecting the government's decision. It is noteworthy mentioning that there are some countries such as Iraq, Syria, Some Arabian Gulf countries and others, which still deal with this passport. Based on the new system and regulations, every person whether inside or outside Iraq must hold the new passport carrying the letter (A), or a diplomatic passport which holds the letter (D) or a senior officials' passports having the letter (E).

A copy of passport (S) can be authenticated to children for purposes of study in Jordan (to be enrolled in public schools) and in some cases it can be used for the purposes of resettlement and immigration.

In 2006, the government issued an electronic passport; carries the letter (G), which has high technical specifications. However, dealing and issuance of such passport has been stopped since 2009, with exception to be used in special humanitarian cases (such as treatment or urgent travel). Such passport shall be considered valid for eight years from the date of issuance. The holder of such passport needs to change it only in case of expiration, or unavailability of spare papers. Accordingly, this passport shall be replaced by a new passport carries the letter (A).

The recent issued Iraqi passport is a passport carries the letter (A), which is an electronic passport with worldwide-approved specifications, and resembles the Jordanian passport with its high quality printing and information. Information in the new passport is written in three languages and they are (Arabic, English and Kurdish).

Dealing of such passport has started since April 2009. After that, many problems in different countries (such as Iran, Turkey and Syria) rose about this passport because the Iraqi Government did not circulate information about this passport in these countries. Currently, the Iraqi Government circulated official information related to this passport.

The advantages of this passport are that it cannot be forged, or obtained without any help or paying a huge amount of money. The citizen needs only to fill the form found in the website of Passport Directorate. Whoever is the applicant or whatever is his/her position or profession, he/she is entitled to visit Passport Directorate to scan his/her fingerprints in front of a passport officer. The passports' Director shall review the application and send it to the headquarters. The passport shall have a computerized numerical reference in avoidance of favoritism. Accordingly, any employee cannot accelerate dealing with an application at the expense of another application. In addition, this passport has confidential information that can not be forged.

The required information and procedures to apply for an Iraqi passport are as follows:

- Civil status Identity card.
- Color photograph for the applicant.

- A photocopy of the old passport.
- The applicant shall attend personally for electronic fingerprint.
- The full address.
- Supporting documents.
- Application form filled in Arabic and English.
- Filling the application according to the information in the personal identification card (Civil Status Identity card) otherwise the application shall be rejected.
- In case of absence of surname in the Identification card, the name of the third grandfather (ancestor) shall be used instead.
- Filling the financial information such as the financial deposit document's number and date, name and number of the banking branch and name of the bank.
- After confirming the accuracy of the information in the application, the applicant shall print the application form.
- After that, the applicant shall go to the Passports sub-department within the geographical area of is residence, according to the schedule set by the above mentioned department, or the Iraqi consulate for Iraqis living abroad, to scan their fingerprint and bring with them the supporting documents (with the original application of the applicant and the guardian approval – if it was requested- along with a colored copy of the following documents, and they are:
 - a. Personal Identification Card (Civil Status Card), issued in 1995 and above, if it was issued before, a new one should be issued.
 - b. Iraqi Nationality Certificate, and there is no specific issuance year, it is acceptable regardless the issuance year.
 - c. Housing Card for Iraqis reside in Iraq, and Residency Card for Iraqis reside outside Iraq, instead of the housing card and the food ration card.
 - d. New Food Ration card.

- e. Two personal photographs with white background and measurement of 45 × 35 mm.
 - f. For Iraqis in Iraq, issuance of a certified financial deposit document with an amount of 25000 Iraqi Dinar (twenty-five thousand Iraqi dinars) equals to \$ 22USD (twenty two American dollars) payable to the General Directorate of Nationality's account number (this procedure applicable to the Iraqis living in Ira only).
 - g. For Iraqis residing outside Iraq, the fee all be paid directly to the Iraqi consulate, the fee as mentioned above an amount of 25000 Iraqi Dinar (twenty-five thousand Iraqi dinars) equals to \$ 22USD (twenty two American dollars), or its equivalent in the local currency of the country of residence, payable to the Iraqi consulate abroad.
 - h. Applicant shall receive a receipt to receive the passport from the headquarters of Passport Directorate in Baghdad if he/she resides in Baghdad; from the district offices of passports for Iraqis reside in districts, or from the Iraqi consulates for Iraqi residing outside Iraq.
- A single Iraqi woman must obtain the consent of her guardian to have a passport, provided that her guardian shall submit the required supporting documents, and attends in person to the Passport's Department Branch to scan his/her fingerprint.
 - A married Iraqi woman must obtain consent of her husband's to have a passport, provided that her husband shall submit the required supporting documents, and attends in person to the Passport Department's Branch to scan his fingerprint.
 - An Iraqi woman under the age of 18 shall obtain the consent of her guardian to have a passport, provided that her guardian shall submit the required supporting documents, and attends in person to the Passport Department's Branch to scan his/her fingerprint.
 - A widowed or divorced Iraqi woman shall obtain the consent of her guardian to have a passport, provided that her guardian shall submit the required supporting documents, and attends in person to the Passport Department's Branch to scan his/her fingerprint.

- Guardian for children under the age of 16 shall submit the above-mentioned supporting documents and attends in person before a passport officer to scan his/her fingerprint.
- For children under the age of 12 and do not have an Iraqi nationality certificate, a consideration can be made to their father's Iraqi nationality Certificate, and if it does not exist a proxy from their father, uncle or grandfather, and if both do not exist, a guardianship certificate or a certified death certificate shall be sufficient to proceed.
- Civil Status Identification Cards issued before ten years from the date of application will not be accepted, nor the one which do not have photos or damaged identification card shall not be considered in processing of application.
- The Guardian or the father who is residing outside Iraq must send via the Iraqi Embassy his/her approval to issue passports to his wife and children residing in Iraq. And this approval shall be ratified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Authentication Department and send it to the Passport Directorate for processing.
- If the applicant had an electronic passport having the letter (G) before this new passport, he/she can not apply for another passport before its expiration of unavailability of additional pages.
- In case the passport become damaged, lost, stolen, the holder shall report to the police station belong to the same place of the incident/Loss in order to obtain legal approvals and a judicial decision by the competent court to issue new passport. If the holder of the passport resides outside Iraq, he/she shall inform the Iraqi consulate to issue him/her a new passing passport.

Previously, Iraqis encountered some common difficulties in obtaining updated passports, therefore, Majority of Iraqis do not have the required type of passports although the clarity of procedures and the minimum fees required. That was because of the below listed reasons and difficulties:

1. Delay in issuance and receiving the new passport from the Iraqi Embassy after submitting the application and required documents, as the embassy sends applications to Iraq for printing them out, and returns it back to the country of request. Such procedure may take some time. In addition of following a system of delivery based on priority of date of submission. In addition, the increased number of asylum seekers in one country contributes in delaying submitting of new passports.
2. Loss of the placation and the required supporting documents or entire application. Many of the Iraqi applicants complain of the embassy reply that the application or some of the supporting documents were lost, and that requires reapplying again, due to loss of file, during the stage of issuance or during sending of application between the Embassy and Baghdad.
3. Difficulty in issuance of passport type (A), if the previous passport holds the letters (M, N, H) which was supposed to be amended to be type (G) first. Delay in amending such passports bearing letters (M, N, H) into letter (G) creates an obstacle in issuance a new passport bears the letter (A). Also some of the Iraqis still think that there is no need to change the passports type (S) into (A), as the (S) passports still used in some of the official transactions and still accepted in some of the countries.

Regarding the use of the updated passports in Jordan, new passports have letters (A) or (G) are required in the following cases:

1. Issuance of a work permit.
2. Obtaining a residency.
3. Obtaining a visa to enter Jordan.
4. Travel outside Jordan.
5. Investment and obtaining licenses for the professions.
6. Marriage Contracts.
7. Studying in schools and universities. (In this particular case, passports bear the letter (S) are accepted).

Concerning the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, it does not require new passports to apply for asylum, and accepts refugees who hold different types of passport. However, some of the resettlement countries require holding the new passports having the letters (A) or (G), while other resettlement countries issue a special travel documents to refugees released from the same resettlement country.

As for the withheld passports (apprehended passports at the police stations), we received some information from the refugees stating the possibility of releasing an old passport to be submitted for renewal, by insuring guarantees of existed safeguards for returning the new passport to be apprehended. Another information received stating the possibility of releasing the apprehended passports as some official authorities in Jordan may request by an official letter obtaining the withheld passport to finalize official procedures and by insuring safeguards to return it within 48 hours. We would like to note that this information are false rumors as these are not official procedures and the withheld passport shall be returned to holder in one case which is travelling outside Jordan for only.

Regardless of the reason, if an Iraqi person exists in Jordan and claims that he does not have a passport, the Iraqi embassy contacts the Jordanian Residence and Border Department and the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to confirm such information of unavailability of an old passport. Such information shall be sent to the Passport Directorate in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior to comment. Then the committee shall review the matter and issue its decision regarding issuing new passport for this person.

In case of absence of confirmation of such information and a decision was issued in this regard, a passing passport shall be issued to deport this person to Iraq. This passport is difficult to be issued sometime as it requires from the relatives of this person who are residing in Iraq and to submit a copy of his Iraqi nationality certificate to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prove that he/she is Iraqi, and enables him/her to enter Iraq using this passport. Some of the cases that might be accepted to issue this passing passport are entering the country by a forged passport or entering the country illegally (by smuggling).

As a final point, on Sunday dated 11/7/2010, a new regulations and instructions was issued regarding the recent passport bears the letter (A), in order to facilitate and speed the process of obtaining this passport by the Iraqis who are living outside Iraq, and these regulations are going to be implemented by the Iraqi Embassy in Jordan first, to be followed by all Iraqi embassies and consulates around the world soon.

This type of passport issued by an electronic system, as it shall be sent by this system to Baghdad for printing in the same day, the required time for the whole process since submitting the application of this new passport, then to be delivered to its owner in Jordan it's a week of submission date. As an envoy from the Iraqi Embassy in Jordan shall go to Iraq every Saturday to submit the applications of last week, and receives completed passports which were submitted in last Thursday to be delivered to its owners on Sunday and so on.

The applicant shall fulfill all the required conditions, required documents and evidences, listed below:

- Filling the form, located in the website of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior - General nationality Directorate : www.iraqinationality.gov.iq
- Passport Directorate/Electronic services: there are two forms for Iraqis reside inside and outside Iraq. The required information is easy and based on the Civil Status Identification Card and the Nationality Card:

[http://www.iraqinationality.gov.iq/eForm/\(S\(dr3p4obbzqwhfh55huz2ve45\)\)/Default.aspx](http://www.iraqinationality.gov.iq/eForm/(S(dr3p4obbzqwhfh55huz2ve45))/Default.aspx)

• **There are four types of applications and they are:**

1. Issuance of a first passport in case of unavailability of a previous passport to the person.
2. Renewal of passports in case of expiration, unavailability of additional papers or occurrence of an error by the directorate.
3. Replacement of a lost or damaged previous passports provided submitting a court order.

- **Types of available passports are:**
 1. An ordinary passport issued to all Iraqi nationals.
 2. A diplomatic, naval or service passport issued to a special category of Iraqi national with consent of a special body approval.
- Passport application filled in English and Arabic or Kurdish.
- Financial information: obligatory to obtain an ordinary passport inside Iraq only.
- Address details: obligatory if residence country is Iraq.
- Information about guardian: obligatory if the applicant is a male under the age of 18 or a female under the age of 40.
- Guardian details permits entering information such as name of father or mother or court decision.
- The applicant shall bring all supporting original documents and original duplicates not forged ones.

For Iraqis in Jordan, the mechanism of submission an application to obtain a new passport is as follows:

- Babylon office for Photocopying and Translation is the only accredited office, located next to the Iraqi embassy, where an Iraqi applicant shall submit the old passport, civil status identification card, original nationality certificate (or a colored photocopy of it) and two personal photos with white background.
- The Office shall take a colored photocopy of the old passport, identification card and Nationality certificate with total cost of JD 1.50 to 2 JD.
- The applicant shall take eight personal photos (with white background), the cost of this procedure at this office is 3 JD. Two photos shall be used for the application.

- The Office shall also fill the application on the website (with amending that place of application is outside Iraq). The office has the required experience in filling such application quickly. Such application shall be filled only electronically with cost of 1 JD only for this service, as there are no printed hard copies available of this form.
- After completion of the application, the office shall print the application, gives it a reference number, attaches it to other documents, submits it before the consulate, pays required fees and scans fingerprints.
- The office also provide another service for the people who have a Civil Status Card issued before 1995, the office can prepare a power of attorney but this depends on the person's relatives in Iraq; which also effects the cost and the time consumed to issue the new card.

Fees must be paid amounted USD 20, which shall be adjusted soon and increased to 22 USD, which is equivalent to 25000 Iraqi dinars exactly.

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