

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

<b>Bilagsnr.:</b>	<b>830</b>
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	NDIC
Titel:	Lebanon - Issuance procedure of the Lebanese nationality passport
Udgivet:	22. april 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	4. juli 2024



## **Lebanon: Issuance procedure of the Lebanese nationality passport**

22 April 2024

Danish National ID Centre

Birkerød Kongevej 2  
DK-3460 Birkerød  
Denmark

Phone +45 61 98 39 00  
Email [nidc@nidc.dk](mailto:nidc@nidc.dk)  
Website [www.nidc.dk](http://www.nidc.dk)

### *Introduction*

The following note describes the issuance procedure of the Lebanese biometric passport. The note includes information related to verification of identity, modalities for changing name and surname and procedures regarding cases of stolen and lost passports. The note also addresses the issue of corruption and general trustworthiness of Lebanese documents.

The note is based on open source information and interviews conducted in Beirut, Lebanon, in February 2020 and March 2022.

### *Lebanese passports*

From 1990, Lebanon issued a burgundy coloured non-machine readable passport, which was valid up to 25 November 2015 as per the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) decision.<sup>1</sup> Today two types of Lebanese nationality passports are considered valid: the navy blue machine-readable passport from 2003 and the biometric passport from August 2016.<sup>2</sup>

### *Applications for biometric passports*

The authority competent for issuing passports in Lebanon is the General Directorate of General Security (hereinafter GDGS), which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. GDGS is subdivided in a central administration located in Beirut and regional departments.<sup>3</sup> A person's first biometric passport can only be obtained in person from the GDGS in Lebanon.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> ICAO, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Prado, year of issue n/a.

<sup>3</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>4</sup> Embassy of Lebanon in Washington D.C., year of issue n/a; Embassy of Lebanon in the United Kingdom, 30 March 2020.

At a regional level, applications are received by offices under the GDGS.<sup>5</sup> Citizens, who wish to obtain or renew a passport, are asked to complete an application by showing up in person at the competent regional department related to their place of residence.<sup>6</sup> The application form is in A4 format and is obtained at the mayor's office of the applicant's place of residence. Documents to be submitted together with an application are as follows: A Lebanese ID card or/and an extract from the civil registry (called: *extract of civil status*), a recent coloured photo (4.5 cm x 3.5 cm) signed by the competent mayor, the old passport – if there is one, and prove of payment of the fees.<sup>7</sup>

According to the General Directorate of General Security, it is mandatory to submit a copy of a valid ID card in addition to an extract from the civil registry from 1 January 2021. Up until 1 January 2021, applicants, who do not have an ID card, can submit an extract from the civil registry no older than three months.<sup>8</sup> The application and the photo shall be signed by the mayor of place of birth or by the mayor of current residence, depending on whether an ID card is submitted among the required documents. If an ID card is submitted, the mayor of the place of residence can sign the applications. Otherwise, the mayor of the place of birth shall sign the applications.<sup>9</sup> It should be underlined that NIDC has received conflicting information about the exact date of when ID cards became mandatory.

#### *Biometrics*

GDGS collects the following biometrics: applicant's ten fingerprints, a newly issued coloured ID photo and the applicant's signature.<sup>10</sup>

Minors age seven and below are not required to show up at the GDGS for application; hence, biometric capture is not conducted for this age group.<sup>11</sup> NIDC is unaware whether minors above the age of seven submit biometrics. The legal age in Lebanon is 18.<sup>12</sup>

The passport is handed over to the applicant after matching the applicant's fingerprints to the ones collected and stored in the system during the application.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>6</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>7</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>8</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a; General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>9</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>10</sup> General Directorate of General security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>11</sup> General Directorate of General security, Beirut, February 2020; General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>12</sup> Civil Code of Lebanon, 1951.

<sup>13</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

However, according to the GDGS, collection by proxy is possible.<sup>14</sup> See below for information on exceptions.

#### *Issuance of passport to children*

Children have their own passports, where both the name of the father and the name and surname of the mother are mentioned.<sup>15</sup> The surname of the father is identical to the surname of the child. Parents with children up to age three will need to submit an application together with an extract from the civil registry (*extract of civil status*) issued three months ago at the most and a recent coloured photo (4.5 x 3.5 cm) signed by the competent mayor.<sup>16</sup>

Minors aged seven or younger have to appear in person together with their parents at the mayor's office, but do not have to show up at the GDGS office. Both parents shall sign a letter of consent at the mayor's office, and convey their request to the GDGS. It is sufficient that only one parent shows up at the GDGS office, if the other one has signed the letter of consent at the mayor's office.<sup>17</sup>

Minors between aged seven and 15 are requested to appear in person together with their parents at the GDGS office. Both parents shall sign a letter of consent at the mayor's office. Also, in this case only one parent needs to show up at the GDGS office, if the other one has previously signed the letter of consent at the mayor's office.<sup>18</sup>

Minors are not allowed to retrieve their passports without their parents or legal guardians. Minors aged 15 or less are also exempted from showing up during the retrieval of their passport.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Issuance of passport to people unable to leave their place of residence*

Paralysed or sick individuals that are unable to leave their place of residence or hospital are exempted from appearing in person both at the mayor's office and at the GDGS office. However, a written request has to be provided by the concerned citizen. Such a request must be accompanied by a medical report issued by the competent doctor or the concerned hospital. The request shall then be addressed to the general director of GDGS, who can decide whether the person can be exempted from this requirement. People with disabilities or sicknesses that prevent them from showing up, as well as patients in hospitals can draft a written request

---

<sup>14</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>15</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>16</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020; General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>17</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>18</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>19</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

asking that a relative or the director of the institution where they live retrieve their passport. In this case, a medical report must be attached to the request.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Change of personal information*

Passport holders, who wish to change the personal information on the bio-page of their passport, will need to submit a decree adopted by a court showing the correct information. This applies in case one wants to modify substantially name, surname and/or date of birth. However, if the person only wishes to modify the spelling of the name and surname, a document from the municipality that shows a different spelling is sufficient. This may happen due to a different transliteration from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet. GDGS keeps record of all versions and variations of names and surnames used by passport holders.<sup>21</sup>

It is not mandatory for women to change their surname or to add their husbands' surname to their passport after marriage.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Possibility to include the applicant's profession in the passport*

It is optional to include one's profession in the bio-page. Applicants interested in doing so shall submit together with their applications a request to include their profession together with documentation proving the concerned profession.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Validity*

The validity of passports varies according to the fee paid by the applicant. According to the GDGS website, Lebanese citizens above the age of 18 can choose between one, three, five or 10 years' validity.<sup>24</sup>

The validity of a passport cannot, as a rule generally, be extended by adding a sticker/stamp to the passport. Normally, a new passport will be issued. In exceptional cases, it is possible to get a machine-readable (non-biometric) passport issued with three months validity, e.g. if the applicant submits documentation explaining the urgency – i.e. medical conditions.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Lost and stolen passports*

If a passport is lost or stolen, it shall be reported at a regional office of the GDGS, even though they do not intend to apply for a new one. GDGS will assess the identity of the person reporting the passport stolen by means of any other document

---

<sup>20</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>21</sup> General Directorate of General security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>22</sup> General Directorate of General security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>23</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>24</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>25</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

of identification.<sup>26</sup> The GDGS will then cancel the passport and send this information to other GDGS offices in Lebanon. If the document is reported stolen, information will also be sent to Interpol and a formal investigation will be carried out.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Other types of passports*

The GDGS is also responsible for issuing travel documents to Palestinian refugees registered in Lebanon. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants issue diplomatic, service and special passports. However, all passports – also those issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants – are personalised by the GDGS.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Trustworthiness of Lebanese documents*

Lebanon was ranked 149 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2023 (180 being the most corrupt).<sup>29</sup> According to Transparency International, Lebanon suffers from the consequences of a practice known in Arabic as "*wasta*". People use their family or social contacts to skip the line and gain quicker and better access to schools, universities, hospitals or jobs, and to "speed up" government paperwork such as ID renewals or birth certificates issuance. According to a recent study, 65 % of citizens used *wasta* when dealing with the judicial system and 45 % did it in connection with the issuance of identity documents. Out of these 45 %, 37 % admitted to have paid bribes.<sup>30</sup>

It is reportedly very common for official documents of all kinds to contain errors. Most documents are handwritten and usually have no security features. Inconsistencies with spelling and incorrect dates may occur, and may then be reproduced and often compounded in subsequent documents. Transliteration variances from Arabic to English can cause variations in names and many other inconsistencies, which may raise concerns about the integrity of documents.<sup>31</sup>

Allegedly, counterfeit or fraudulent identity documents are rare in Lebanon. Since the end of the civil war, authorities have issued identity and travel documents (including passports, identity cards, registry documents, and birth certificates) in a nationally consistent format. Records have been maintained, although sometimes in a limited capacity. Identity fraud is taken seriously by authorities, and those convicted may be incarcerated for several months.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> General Directorate of General Security, year of issue n/a.

<sup>27</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>28</sup> General Directorate of General Security, Beirut, February 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Transparency International, year of issue n/a.

<sup>30</sup> Transparency International, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> DFAT, June 2023, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> DFAT, June 2023, p. 37.

## References

### *Oral source*

General Directorate of General Security (February 2020): Interviewed in Beirut, Lebanon.

### *Written sources*

Civil Code of Lebanon (1951): Article 4,

[https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/documents/405\\_lebanon.htm](https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/documents/405_lebanon.htm), retrieved 20 April 2020.

DFAT (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) (June 2023):

Country Information Report Lebanon,

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/country-information-report-lebanon.pdf>, retrieved 11 April 2024.

Embassy of Lebanon in the United Kingdom (30 March 2020): Lebanese

Passports, <http://london.mfa.gov.lb/britain/english/passports>, retrieved 26 March 2020.

Embassy of Lebanon in Washington D.C. (2020): Passports and travel

documents, <http://www.lebanonembassyus.org/consular-services/passports/>, retrieved 11 May 2022.

General Directorate of General Security (year of issue not available):

<https://www.general-security.gov.lb/en/posts/11>, retrieved 12 April 2024.

ICAO 2022: Annex 9, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition: Chapter 3.11.1 (July 2022), <https://library.icao.int/reader/256255/&returnUrl%3DaHR0cHM6Ly9lbGlic-mFyeS5pY2FvLmludC9leHBsb3JlO3NIYXJjaFRleHQ9YW5uZ-XglMjA5JTlwJUUYJTgwJTk0JTI-wZmFjaWxpdGF0aW9uO3BocmFzZU1hdGNoPTA7dGhlbWVOYW1lPUJsdWUtVGh1bWU%3D?productType=eBook>, retrieved 25 April

2024.

Prado (consilium.europa.eu): LBN – Libanon, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/prado/da/prado-documents/LBN/A/docs-per-category.html>, retrieved 11 April 2024.

Transparency International (year of issue not available): Index 2023,

<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/lbn>, retrieved 11 April 2024.

Transparency International (2022): CPI 2021, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-middle-east-north-africa-systemic-corruption-endangers-democracy-human-rights>, retrieved 4 April 2024.

Transparency International (December 2019): Wasta: How personnel connections are denying citizens opportunities and basic services,

<https://www.transparency.org/en/news/wasta-how-personal-connections-are-denying-citizens-opportunities-services>, retrieved 11

April 2024.