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Introduction

The following note describes the issuance procedures of the Iranian birth certificate, also known as Shenasnameh, including procedures for reissuing and issuance outside of Iran. The note will include a description of the appearance of the Shenasnameh and the information contained therein.

This note is based on interviews with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran, Iran, in September 2018 and 2022 as well as open source information.

Appearance and details of the Shenasnameh

The current Shenasnameh is issued in the form of a booklet the same size as a passport; it measures approximately 125x176 mm. It has a green cover when the holder is under the age of 15 years, and a brown cover for holders above the age of 15. Only the Shenasnameh with a brown cover contains a picture of the holder.¹ The Shenasnameh includes the holder's nationality number, given- and surname, Shenasnameh number, birth date- and place, name of parents, and their nationality- and Shenasnameh numbers, parents' place of birth- and issuance, and the name of the person, who issued the Shenasnameh.² Furthermore, the brown Shenasnameh also contains information on marriages, divorces, children as well as the holder's voting record.³

It is unclear exactly what year the new version was set in production, but the oldest of the new version available in international databases is from the year 2010. According to Landinfo, the new edition of the Shenasnameh has been in circulation since 2005 at the earliest.⁴ From 1986 and to at the earliest 2005, a previous format of the Shenasnameh was issued, which had a red cover.⁵

¹ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, March 2022; Landinfo, 5 January 2022, p. 11.

² Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 12.

³ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 12.

⁴ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 11.

⁵ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 12.

A representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iran explained that the current edition of the Shenasnameh was printed for the first time approximately 16 years ago and has been used ever since.⁶

The NIDC has access to further information about the technical appearance of the document. In cases of doubt involving the authenticity of Iranian Shenasnameh, please contact the NIDC.

Shenasnameh for persons younger than 15 years of age

The Shenasnameh issued to persons under the age of 15 has a green cover. It has no picture of the owner. There are no pages for marriage, divorce or children.⁷ The green Shenasnameh is only valid until the holder's 15th birthday, when it is replaced with a Shenasnameh with a brown booklet.⁸

Information in the data page of the Shenasnameh:

- The name and family name of the owner of the document
- The Shenasnameh/birth certificate number
- The date of birth
- Place of birth
- Names of parents
- Nationality number or Shenasnameh number of parents
- Place/province of parents
- The personal nationality number

Shenasnameh for persons above 15 years of age

The newest version of the Shenasnameh for persons above 15 years of age has a brown cover. If married, information such as name, date of birth, ID number and registration number of the spouse(s) and the date of the marriage will be integrated into the Shenasnameh as well. If the owner is divorced, it will be registered next to the marriage section. Names and ID numbers of children will also be registered. Finally, there are pages dedicated to the event of the death of the owner and to registering that the owner has cast his/her vote in political elections.⁹

The Shenasnameh issued after a person turns 15, does not have an expiry date. However, the Shenasnameh is to be renewed in the following circumstances:

- at the age of 15 to switch to the brown version with a photo
- at the age of 30 to insert a new photo taken the same year
- in case of wear and tear of the document

⁶ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, March 2022.

⁷ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018 and March 2022.

⁸ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 13-14.

⁹ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018 and 2022; Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 12.

- in case of change of date of birth or name, after a decision has been made by a court, by dispute settlement councils or by commissions for age ascertainment or surname approvals
- when replacing an old model.¹⁰

The personal nationality number

The personal nationality number consists of 10 digits. The first three digits are an area code indicating place of birth. Larger cities/areas such as Tehran have several numbers while less populated areas/cities have fewer or just one.¹¹ The following six digits in the nationality number consists of a serial number and the last 10th digit is a control digit. Based on an algorithm, the control digit is calculated from the nine preceding digits.¹² The personal nationality number is stated in the Shenاسnameh as well as in the national ID card and the passport.¹³

Issuance procedure of the Shenاسnameh

The Shenاسnameh is issued to newborns at birth. As children are typically born in hospitals in Iran, the hospital will notify the National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR), which is the authority that registers births and issues the Shenاسnameh. The hospital will issue a birth certificate that the parents or the guardian will submit to NOCR. If the birth did not take place in a hospital, the parents will register the birth using the certificate issued by the midwife or the physician.¹⁴ The birth certificate stating the event of the birth, including length and weight of the newborn, is only used for obtaining the Shenاسnameh and not returned to the parents/newborn afterwards. If the birth took place outside a hospital or health centre and without the presence of a physician or a midwife, two witnesses will be needed to sign an affidavit certifying the birth.¹⁵

When registering, the parents will have to identify themselves with their own Shenاسnameh.¹⁶ The information on the newborn, such as name and nationality number, will also be registered in the Shenاسnameh of the parents.¹⁷

The registration of the birth with NOCR is mandatory and should be done within 15 days of childbirth.¹⁸

When a Shenاسnameh is issued, the authorities archive an internal document to prove the issuance of that specific Shenاسnameh to a specific individual. That document is for later use, for instance in case of a lost Shenاسnameh and re-issuance.¹⁹

¹⁰ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 14.

¹¹ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018 and March 2022.

¹² Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018 and March 2022.

¹³ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 10.

¹⁴ Iran Civil Registration Law, Chapter 3, Article 12 and Article 15.

¹⁵ Iran Civil Registration Law, Chapter 3, Article 15.

¹⁶ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 10.

¹⁷ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018 and March 2022.

¹⁸ Iran Civil Registration Law, Chapter 3, Article 15.

¹⁹ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018.

Reissuance

In case of reissuance of the Shenasnameh, the applicant will have to prove his/her identity by presenting education papers, passport, ID card or other documents that proves the identity.²⁰ Furthermore, the applicant will have to hand in an affidavit of identity.²¹ The reissued Shenasnameh can be identified by the “...*diagonal printing across the centre of all pages stating ‘duplicate’, and a new date of issuance.*”²² Alternatively, according to Landinfo, by the word “*almosana*”, meaning duplicate, being printed on all pages.²³ According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iran, Shenasnameh reissued from 2020 onward do not state ‘duplicate’ any longer.²⁴

It is not necessary to have the Shenasnameh reissued at the original office of issuance.²⁵

Details such as marriage and spouse can also be left out in the new Shenasnameh, the owner thereby appearing to be “single”.²⁶

Applicants over the age of 18 must apply in person, whereas people under 15 must have a parent, paternal grandfather or a guardian to apply. Applicants must submit a duly filled in application form, an affidavit of losing one’s Shenasnameh, as well as original and copy of other ID documents containing a picture.²⁷

For married applicants it is required to submit original and copy of one’s marriage certificate as well of Shenasnameh belonging to one’s children. For applicants over the age of 15, it is required to submit two passport photos with name, last name, Shenasnameh number, date of birth and place of issuance written on the back. In the event of a lost or stolen Shenasnameh, the price is 200,000 IRR when having the document reissued for the first time and 400,000 IRR, if the document must be reissued a second time.²⁸

Issuance abroad

If a child is born abroad, the issuance of the Shenasnameh will follow the same procedures as within Iran. The only difference is that the birth registration/certificate is from the country of residence and it must be presented to the Iranian representation. The representation will produce and keep the archive document and send a copy to the authorities in Iran for registration, so that both the representation as well as NOCR register that a Shenasnameh has been issued.²⁹

²⁰ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018.

²¹ DFAT, 14 April 2020, p. 71.

²² DFAT, 14 April 2020, p. 71.

²³ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 16.

²⁴ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, March 2022.

²⁵ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 15.

²⁶ Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 5 June 2006.

²⁷ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018.

²⁸ Landinfo, 5 January 2021, p. 15-16.

²⁹ Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, September 2018.

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