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Palestine: ID numbers and issuance of ID cards

Introduction

The following note describes the Palestinian national ID numbers and the procedure for issuance of the ID card in the West Bank and Gaza. The note is primarily based on interviews conducted in Ramallah and Jerusalem in September 2019, and is one out of several notes published by the Danish National ID Centre focusing on Palestine.

The note includes a short description of the administrative structure in Palestine and the Palestinian civil registry. The note also includes a description of the national ID number and ID card, including the document layout and the issuance procedure. Lastly, it describes the ID card issued to persons without a Palestinian national ID number.

The Palestinian civil registry

Palestinians are either registered as residents in the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza. Registrations cannot be moved without Israeli approval.¹

In connection with the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian National Authorities (PA) took over the administration of the Palestinian civil registry. In the beginning, the PA could make changes in the registry, but since 2000, the PA is merely allowed to register births and deaths and issue ID documents to Palestinians who are registered in the civil registry. Israel keeps a copy of the Palestinian registry and has to approve all new registrations and changes, before they become effective. The PA cannot approve family reunifications or issue ID documents to persons who are not in the Palestinian civil registry.²

¹ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 22.

² Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 22-33.

A Palestinian citizen receives an ID number when he/she is registered at birth (or later), and this number is provided by Israel. The ID number must be written on the ID card and on all other ID documents issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Interior.³

The Palestinian civil registry contains personal information such as: first name, last name, name of father, name of mother, name of grandfather on the father's side, date of birth, sex, religion, place and date of issuance of ID card, address, civil status, name and ID number of spouse and children.⁴

Civil law in the West Bank and Gaza

Due to the Egyptian control of Gaza in the period 1948-1967, the Egyptian Law of Family Rights (1954) is applied in cases regarding matters of family law for the Muslim population in Gaza. Similarly, due to Jordanian control of the West Bank in the period 1948-1967, the Jordanian Law of Personal Status (1976) is applied in cases regarding matters of family law for the Muslim population in the West Bank. Recognised ecclesiastical societies have their own set of family law.⁵

The civil status law from 1999, amended in 2009, regulates civil law. The civil status law regulates registration of residents and the issuance of identity cards, registration of births and the issuance of birth certificates, registration of deaths and the issuance of death certificates, change of marital status and the issuance of marriage or divorce certificates and much more.⁶

Administrative structure in the West Bank and Gaza

There are 14 local directorates in the West Bank plus a central civil registration unit at the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah.⁷ Hence, in Ramallah exist both the central civil registration unit and the local directorate of Ramallah. There are five local directorates in Gaza. Every local directorate is divided into six departments: civil status affairs, passports, administrative affairs, NGO and public affairs, policy and tribal law.⁸

All of the local civil status departments in the West Bank and Gaza have access to a digital database. Before 2007, there was one database, but after the administrative split between the Fatah and Hamas in 2007, the database was separated into two separate systems; one in Gaza and one in the West Bank. There is no link between the two systems. Information stored in the database before 2007 appears

³ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

⁴ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 22.

⁵ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 11 November 2009, p. 19.

⁶ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

⁷ The 14 directorates in the West Bank are: Jenin, Qalqilya, Tulkarm, Nablus, Tubas, Salfit, Ramallah, Ram, Jericho, Abu Dis, Bethlehem, North Hebron/Halhoul, Hebron, South Hebron/Dora.

⁸ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019.

in both databases, but information stored after 2007 is only stored locally in either the West Bank or Gaza.⁹

Introduction of the national ID number and ID card

The ID number was introduced in 1967 after a census done by Israel, where ID numbers were issued to the permanent residents of the West Bank and Gaza.¹⁰ About one million Palestinians who were present at the time of the census were registered and had an ID number issued, while 250,000 to 400,000 persons who resided abroad at the time were excluded from being registered. These persons lost the right to be registered as Palestinians and to live in the West Bank or Gaza and consequently they cannot have an ID number issued.¹¹

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, displaced Palestinians that were already registered in the manual birth registers were considered as non-citizens and lost their right to be registered and have a Palestinian ID number issued.¹²

The only way to have an ID number issued is if one of your parents is registered as Palestinian or to apply for family reunification with a Palestinian.¹³

The ID card is required in order to cross Israeli checkpoints. The ID card is not issued to children under the age of 16, thus a child below the age of 16 can cross the checkpoints without an ID card.¹⁴

National ID number

When Palestinians are registered at birth, they are given a national ID number. If the child is born at a hospital, the hospital issues the ID number. If the child was not granted an ID number at birth, the ID number is issued when the birth is registered at a local directorate under the Ministry of Interior.¹⁵ The ID number is a unique number that follows the person for life. The number can never be changed.¹⁶

According to the Ministry of Interior, the ID number does not bear any reference to sex, religion, address or region in which this number was issued.¹⁷

⁹ Ministry of Interior, December 2019.

¹⁰ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019.

¹¹ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 20.

¹² Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

¹³ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 20.

¹⁴ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

¹⁵ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019; Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah September 2019.

¹⁶ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

¹⁷ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

Preprinted ID numbers at the birth notification forms

Before a child is registered, a birth notification form is filled out. The birth notification form is issued in three copies: a yellow copy, which is for the parents, a pink copy for the hospital or licensed doctor and a white copy for the Ministry of Interior. Each birth notification carries a pre-printed identification number that follows the person for life. The same unique pre-printed ID number appears on all three birth notification forms.¹⁸

The image displays three birth notification forms, each with a different background color: yellow, pink, and green. Each form has a header section with three boxes. The left box contains the text 'تبلغ عن مولود حي' (Birth notification) and '(نسخة وزارة الداخلية)' (Ministry of Interior copy). The middle box features the coat of arms of the State of Palestine. The right box contains the text 'دولة فلسطين' (State of Palestine) and 'وزارة الداخلية' (Ministry of Interior). Below the header, there is a row of ten boxes containing the pre-printed ID number '437778012'. To the right of these boxes is the text 'رقم هوية المولود' (Child's ID number). Below the ID number boxes is the text 'تفاصيل المولود' (Child's details). The forms are identical in layout and content, differing only in color.

Image 1: Top section of the three birth notification forms equalising one birth registration. Sample issued by the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

The books with birth notification forms each contain 25 x 3 forms in respectively white, pink and yellow, equalising 25 birth registrations.¹⁹ The ID number increases by one per three following forms.²⁰

¹⁸ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019.

¹⁹ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019.

²⁰ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019; Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.



Image 2: Sticker on the cover of a book with birth notifications forms. Picture taken at a meeting at the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

The ID number is printed at the birth certificate and at every official document issued by the Ministry of Interior also including but not limited to ID cards, official letters, identity attachment, marriage certificate and death certificate.²¹

A birth certificate without an identification number is issued in cases of births to non-nationals.²² It is only required that one of the parents is registered as a Palestinian citizen in order for a child to be registered and thus receive an ID number.²³

Issuance of the ID card

According to representatives from the Ministry of Interior and the Palestinian Population Registry, it is required to obtain an ID card from the age of 16. It is not possible to have an ID card issued before.²⁴

Before 1998, the ID card was printed in Israel in Hebrew and afterwards translated into Arabic.²⁵ As of October 2019, the ID card is issued by the Palestinian authorities from all departments of civil affairs or in the General Directorate of Civil Status at the headquarters in Ramallah. It is not required that the person applies for an ID card in the department where he lives, meaning that the applicant can apply for an ID card from any local office he chooses.²⁶

The ID card can only be issued from inside of Palestine and not by proxy.²⁷ When the ID card is issued, a picture of the person is recorded in a central database.²⁸ There is no biometrics linked to the ID cards.²⁹

²¹ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²² Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ramallah, September 2019.

²⁴ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019; Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²⁵ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²⁶ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²⁷ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²⁸ Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

²⁹ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

Document layout

The ID card is pre-printed at a regular A4 size piece of paper. The actual card, as well as the following slip, is rip-cutted at the paper in order for the card and the slip to be removed from the paper. The preprinted text at the ID card is written in both Arabic and Hebrew.

The image shows the front side of a document. At the top, there is a header with text in Arabic and Hebrew. Below this, there is a table with multiple rows and columns, containing various data points. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the center of the page. The bottom section of the page contains more text and a small table.

Image 3: Front side of the page holding the pre-printed ID card and slip. Sample from the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

The image shows the backside of a document. It features a large table with multiple rows and columns, containing various data points. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the center of the page. At the bottom right, there is a small table with four columns and four rows.

Image 4: Backside of the page holding the pre-printed ID card and slip. Sample from the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

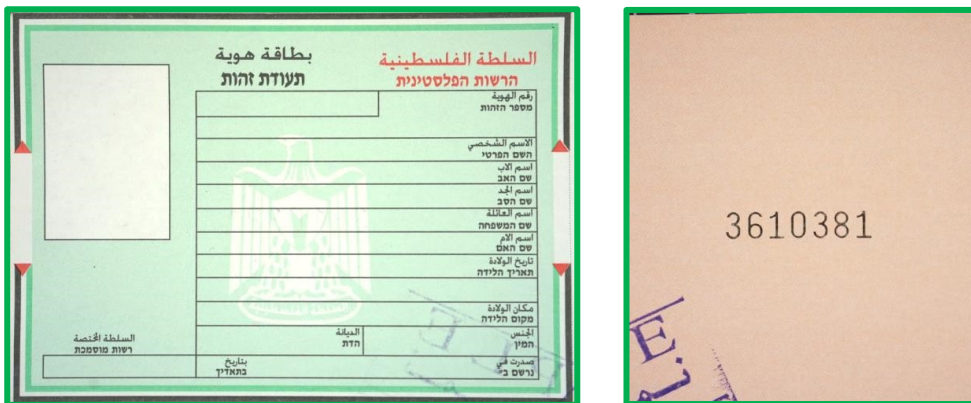


Image 5: ID card front and back, sample issued by the Ministry of Interior, September 2019, Ramallah (NIDC reference material).

The separate paper slip is printed with black ink at the front side and orange ink at the backside.

Image 6: Front side of the pre-printed slip. Sample from the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

Image 7: Backside of the pre-printed slip. Sample from the Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019 (NIDC reference material).

The paper slip

The slip holds information about the person's family, civil status and children. When a person changes his/hers information at the central database at the Ministry of Interior, the information at the slip should also be updated. A child under the age of 16 is written on the parents' slips. When a person turns 16 and get his/her own ID card, and thus his/her own slip, that person is removed from the parents' slip the next time the parents update it.³⁰

³⁰ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

If only one of the parents is present when a birth certificate for a child is issued, that person can bring the other parents' slip in order for it to be updated.³¹

If a person loses his/her slip, it does not make the ID card invalid, but the person should apply for a new at a registration office.³²

Reissuance of the ID card

A person can have a new ID card issued if the information at the ID card needs to be updated, the card has been issued longer than 10 years ago or the card is lost.³³

If the ID card needs to be updated or is more than 10 years old the person is required to submit his/hers current ID card together with photos of the person in order for a new ID card to be issued. The fee is seven Jordanian Dinars.³⁴

If the card is lost, the applicant is required to submit a police report stating that the card is lost. The person is also required to make a public note in an official newspaper stating the loss of the ID card. In this case, the fee for a new ID card is 24 Jordanian Dinars.³⁵

ID card issued to persons without a national ID number

It is also possible to have an ID card issued for Palestinians without an ID number. This ID card is often referred to as the "temporary ID card".

According to Lifos, the ID card was issued by the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza in the period from 2006 to 2007 to persons without a resident permit approved by Israel. The ID number on the card begins with the digit "7". The ID card is not recognised by Israel, so the owner cannot use it to pass Israeli border controls, but it can be used for identification to Palestinian authorities, to the bank and for school registration. The background of the card is orange instead of green.³⁶

³¹ Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

³² Palestinian Population Registry, Ramallah, September 2019.

³³ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019; Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

³⁴ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019; Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

³⁵ Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, September 2019; Ministry of Interior, October 2019.

³⁶ Migrationsverket, Lifos, 15 October 2019, p. 26.

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