

## Law on Documenting Personal Status

Law – Issued on 7/12/1951

The Parliament enacted  
And the President of the Republic promulgated the following law:

### Part One – General Provisions

**Article 1-** Personal status documents relating to birth, marriage, divorce, nullity of marriage, death, change of the place of residence, change of sect, religious conversion and other updates shall be registered in accordance with the following provisions:

**Article 2-** Personal status documents must be drafted by:

For births: the father, mother or guardian and the doctor or midwife who assisted the birth.

For marriage, divorce and nullity of marriage: the husband or wife and the religious authority which attended to execute the contract.

For deaths: the *mukhtars*, hospital and prison directors, doctors in charge of issuing burial permissions and commanders for the military and gendarmes.

For changes of the place of residence, change of sect, religious conversion and other updates: the concerned parties.

**Article 3-** Personal status documents must include the year, day and time of events for which the documents have been drafted. The names of all mentioned persons shall be registered, as well as their surname, age, profession and place

of residence. It is totally forbidden to cross out any parts, include any commentary on the margins or short explanatory phrases, or use Arabic-Indic numerals. The documents must be signed by the drafters in the presence of two witnesses and ratified by the *mukhtar*.

**Article 4-** Personal status documents' witnesses must be at least 18 years old or over.

**Article 5-** Personal status officers may, upon a written request made by concerned parties, submit copies of the documents and registered records, including identity cards, after affixing the required legal stamps.

**Article 6-** Amended by the Law of 18/12/1956

All events' documents drafted by the local civil registries (Noufous) must be referred to the Directorate of Vital Statistics and Personal Status in order to make microfilm copies thereof before they are returned to the relevant authorities where they are kept based on their serial numbers in special binders.

**Article 7-** Each document entered in registries must have a serial number included in the margin. Each record shall have one serial number until the end of the year.

**Article 8-** Amended by the Law of 18/12/1956

The Directorate of Vital Statistics and Personal Status which is authorized to make copies of vital events' documents may give copies thereof to concerned parties and Personal Status Officers are entitled to give such copies of archived documents.

**Article 9-** The party entrusted with personal status documents and records shall be held civilly responsible for any falsification therein. The party may, where necessary, file a lawsuit against perpetrators of such falsification.

**Article 10-** The head of Vital Statistics and Personal Status or his/her representative shall examine and verify the records to validate the records once a year and prepare a report to be submitted to the Ministry of Interior.

## Part Two – Birth Certificates

**Article 11-** A birth must be declared at the Personal Status Officer within 30 days of the date of birth. The birth certificate shall be drafted and signed by the father, mother, guardian, doctor or midwife who assisted the birth, and the *mukhtar* shall ratify the signature.

The perpetrator of any violation of provisions of this article shall be penalized with an administrative fine in the amount of five Liras paid to the Personal Status Officer registering the document in return of a receipt from a stub-book.

**Article 12-** After one year of the date of birth, the registration of a newborn would only be possible through a court ruling in the deliberations chamber based on a request by the Public Prosecutor or the concerned party.

**Article 13-** The birth certificate must include the year, month, date and time of birth, the gender of the child, the given name and the names, titles, professions, ages, and places of residence of the father, mother and the two witnesses.

**Article 14-** If twins are born, a birth certificate must be drafted for each of them indicating the time of birth of each, the child born first and any distinctive marks on their bodies; the child born first is considered the elder.  
The registration of stillborn children is not required.

**Article 15-** If an illegitimate child is born, the birth certificate is drafted by the caretaker or the doctor or midwife who assisted the birth. The father's name is not mentioned, except in the event of his recognition or if he delegates a personal representative to undertake the recognition; if this does not occur, the child would be registered under the names chosen by the child's caretaker.

The person drafting the birth certificate must not mention the name of the child's mother; the Personal Status Officer must not mention her name except if authorized by her to mention her as the child's mother or based on a legal ruling.

The statement of recognition of an illegitimate child shall be recorded in the registers and dated on that day, referenced in the birth certificates registers, and drafted in the presence of two witnesses.

**Article 16-** Any person finding a newborn child shall deliver it to the *mukhtar* of the village or locality with anything found on the child, such as clothes and other things and indicate the place, time, and conditions under which the child was found. The *mukhtar* shall thus draft a report indicating the apparent age of the child and any special marks on it and deliver the child, along with the report, to one of the institutions designated by the Ministry of Health and General Emergency; the institution shall draft a birth certificate and send it to the Personal Status Department to be recorded in its registries based on previous provisions.

**Article 17-** Children born in prisons shall be registered based on written statements submitted by prison directors or doctors in this regard and such statements shall be included in the birth registers.

**Article 18-** A child born outside the father's actual place of residence, or the mother's in the absence of the father, shall be registered in his parents' actual place of residence; a birth certificate is drafted according to Articles 11 and 13 and handed to the Personal Status Register in the village or locality, to be sent to the Personal Status Officer in the locality of the parents' actual residence.

**Article 19-** If a child is born to a Lebanese national father in foreign lands, proof of birth must occur in the nearest Lebanese consulate to the place of residence as per the father's request; the consul shall provide a temporary certificate, serving as identity documents, then send a photocopy of the birth certificate and copies of the parents' identity cards to Lebanon, to record the child in the registers of the father's place of origin.

**Article 20-** If a child is born on a sea trip, the father, or the mother in case of absence of the father, shall draft a birth certificate through the Personal Status Officer on the ship, including all clarifications provided for in Article 13, in the presence of two witnesses.

If parents' destination is the Lebanese territory, they should submit a copy of the certificate to the Personal Status Register in their locality of origin in Lebanon. If their destination is a foreign country, they should submit the copy along with their identity cards to the nearest Lebanese consulate in order to send them to the Lebanese Government.

If the child is born in flight, the birth certificate shall be submitted to the nearest Lebanese Consulate within the legal deadline.

**Article 21-** If there is no Personal Status Officer in the village or locality where the child is born, the certificate may be submitted through insured mail.

## Part Three – Marriage, Divorce and Nullity of Marriage

### Certificates

**Article 22-** A person must submit a certificate of marriage to the Personal Status Register within a month from the date of his marriage. This certificate must be ratified by the religious authority which performed the marriage and signed by the *mukhtar* and two witnesses.

If the husband refuses to submit this certificate, then the wife is required to submit it; if both refuse, then the Personal Status Register shall accept a written statement made by the religious authority which performed the marriage, while reserving the right of any prejudiced party to resort to the court.

**Article 23-** A marriage certificate shall include the following:

- 1- Name, surname, profession, sect, date of birth, place of birth and place of residence of both spouses.
- 2- Name, surname, profession and place of residence of the father and mother.
- 3- Name, surname, profession and place of residence of each of the witnesses.
- 4- Date of marriage (year, month, day and time).

**Article 24-** If any of the spouses is late to submit the marriage certificate within the deadline, the perpetrator shall be penalized with an administrative fine in the amount of five Liras paid to the Personal Status Officer registering the document in return of a receipt from a stub-book.

**Article 25-** If marriage is contracted in a locality different than the place of residence of the husband, the Personal Status Officer in this locality shall send the marriage certificate to the Personal Status Officer in the place of residence of the husband.

**Article 26-** If marriage is contracted in foreign lands, the husband shall send a marriage certificate, drafted according to the provisions of Articles 22 and 23, to the nearest Lebanese consulate to his place of residence, along with a copy of his and his spouse's identity card. The consul shall ratify and send the certificate and both copies to the Lebanese Government for registration.

**Article 27-** In case of divorce or nullity of marriage, the husband shall draft the relevant certificate as per the provisions of Article 23 and send it along with the religious authority's decision to the Personal Status Officer within the legal deadline. Any failure to do so shall be penalized with an administrative fine as per Article 24.

**Article 28-** If the husband refuses to submit the divorce or nullity of marriage certificate, then the wife is required to submit it; if both refuse or the certificate submission is hindered by any obstacle, then the divorce or nullity of marriage decision issued by the religious authority shall be deemed sufficient.

**Article 29-** The Personal Status Officer registering the marriage, divorce or nullity of marriage certificate, shall send a copy thereof to the Personal Status Register in the place of origin of the married, divorced or the woman whose marriage is declared null.

## Part Four – Death Certificates

**Article 30-** *Mukhtars* shall draft death certificates in the presence of two witnesses, then send them to the Personal Status Register within one month from the date of death. It is recommended for witnesses to be, when feasible, close relatives or neighbors. If a person dies outside his/her place of residence, the owner of the residence where death occurs shall be one of the witnesses, along with a relative of the deceased person or any other person.

**Article 31-** A death certificate drafted by the *mukhtar* in the presence of two witnesses shall include the following:

- 1- Name, surname, age, profession and place of residence of the deceased.
- 2- If the deceased person is married or widower, the name and surname of his wife; if the deceased is a married or widow woman, the name and surname of her husband.
- 3- Name, surname, age, profession and place of residence of each of the witnesses. If the witness is one the deceased's relative, the relationship.
- 4- Date of death (year, month, day and time).
- 5- Cause of death.

**Article 32-** Amended by the Law No. 203, of 2/3/1993

The *mukhtar* shall receive two thousand Liras for each death certificate. This amount is paid from the Lebanese treasury according to a table detailing the number of deaths and their relevant numbers, prepared at the end of each year and ratified by the locality's Personal Status Officer and Financial Officer.

**Article 33-** Amended by the Law of 18/12/1956 and the Law No. 203, of 2/3/1993

The *mukhtar* who fails to submit the death certificate within the legal deadline shall be penalized with an administrative fine in the amount of one thousand Liras paid to the Personal Status Officer in return of a receipt from a stub-book unless a legitimate justification is given; in that case, the fine shall be waived by a decision issued by the Minister of Interior based on the local administrative authority's recommendation, the district commissioner (Qaimaqam) or the Governor. Where the mukhtar refuses to submit the certificate, he/she shall be tried and the Qaimaqam or the Governor shall draft the death certificate in the



presence of two witnesses and then send it to the Personal Status Register to take effect.

**Article 34-** Amended by the Law No. 203, of 2/3/1993 and the Decision No. 222, of 5/7/1993

If death occurs outside the original place of residence of the deceased, the *mukhtar* of the locality where death occurred shall draft and send the death certificate to the Personal Status Register where the deceased is registered. The Register shall notify the *mukhtar* of the deceased's locality of origin.

If the *mukhtar* of the village or locality of origin is not that the death certificate has been drafted within one month as specified in this Law, he/she shall draft the death certificate within the second month following the date of death.

If burial occurs in a different place than the death or than the deceased's locality of origin, the *mukhtar* of the locality where the burial took place shall notify the Personal Status Officer in his/her locality of the death and the latter shall notify the *mukhtar* of the deceased's locality of origin in order to draft the death certificate within one month from the date of notification.

This measure shall apply to deaths that occurred before the date of issuance of this law. *Mukhtars* shall be given a three-month notice following this date to draft and submit death certificates for persons registered in their villages, regardless of the place of death or burial, as long as death occurred on Lebanese territory.

They shall be exempted from the delay penalty provided for in Article 33 of the Law of 7/12/1951 referred to above, as amended, and the Minister of Interior may renew this deadline once, for another three months, within a year from the date of issuance of this law.

The Decision No. 222, of 5/7/1993, provided for the possibility to renew this deadline once, for another three months, within a year from the date of issuance of this law.

If the competent *mukhtar* fails to draft the certificate or notify the deaths in his village, he shall be penalized with a fine in the amount ranging from five thousand to ten thousand Liras paid, as well as imprisonment for one week to one month or either of those. He/she shall be subject to the provisions of Article 21 of the Law on Mukhtars and Mukhtar Councils, issued on 1947/11/27.

**Article 35-** If death occurs in a hospital or in prison, the hospital or prison director or doctor shall notify the locality's *mukhtar* within 24 hours of this death and the latter shall go to the place where it occurred to verify it and draft and send the certificate along with the deceased's identity card to the Personal Status Officer in the same locality.

The perpetrator of any violation of the provisions of this article shall be penalized according to the provisions of Article 33.

**Article 36-** A report issued by the commander shall be sufficient to register the death of military and gendarmes. The report shall be registered in the death register.

**Article 37-** If a person is executed, the Public Prosecutor or his deputy shall draft the death certificate required by this law then send it within one week to the Personal Status Register in the locality where execution took place and the certificate shall be registered in the death register.

Whatever the causes of death are, unnatural causes, in prison or as a result of execution, these circumstances shall not be included in the Personal Status Register.

**Article 38-** If death occurs on a sea trip or in flight, the ship's captain or aircraft's pilot shall draft the death certificate in the presence of two witnesses, then send it along with all the deceased's identification papers to the Lebanese authorities at the nearest port or airport they reach. These authorities shall send it with the identification papers to the Lebanese government for registration.

**Article 39-** If death occurs in foreign lands, the deceased's parents shall draft and send the death certificate, along with the deceased's identity card, to the nearest Lebanese consulate in their place of residence, and the consulate shall send them to the Lebanese government for registration.

## Part Five – Change of the Place of Residence

### Article 40 - Amended by the Law of 11/3/1964

A person who leaves the place of residence where his/her name is registered in the intention of permanent residence in a different place may not transfer his/her name to this new place unless after three years of permanent residence there. He/she shall submit a relevant statement, signed by the *mukhtar* and two witnesses, to the Personal Status Register in the locality or village where he/she wants to move to. An investigation shall be carried out by the police or gendarmerie to verify such residence. The Government may reject this request where there are any factors requiring this.

## Part Six – Special Provisions

Article 41 - Each request relating to a change of sect or religious conversion shall be sent to the Personal Status Register in order to correct the record. Such a request shall be supported by a certificate issued by the religious authority of the newly embraced sect or religion, signed by the claimant. The Personal Status Officer shall send for and ask him/her in the presence of two witnesses whether he/she insists on his/her request. Where the request is approved, this shall be recorded on the request itself and the registry entry shall be corrected. When abroad, this procedure shall be conducted by the consulates which transfer it to the Lebanese Government's Personal Status Department for registration.

Article 42 - Requests relating to registries correction as a result of the change of the place of residence, the profession, the religion or the sect are accepted by the Personal Status Registers where the required relevant procedures are followed.

Article 43 – The Personal Status Officers shall draft at the end of each month a comprehensive statement including all registries conducted during the reported

period and submit it to the Directorate of Vital Statistics and Personal Status within the first week of the following month.  
The head of the Directorate of Vital Statistics and Personal Status shall provide the Ministry of Interior with a brief summarizing these data.

**Article 44** – Any provisions conflicting or incompatible with those set forth in the present Law shall be considered as null.

Beirut, December 7, 1951  
Signature: Bechara Khalil El Khoury  
Issued by the President of the Republic

President of the council of Ministers  
Signature: Abdallah Al Yafi

Minister of Interior  
Signature: Abdallah Al Yafi