

Federal Law No (17) for 1972
Concerning Nationality, Passports and Amendments thereof.

We, Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, the President of the United Arab Emirates,

Upon reviewing the provisions of the Provisional Constitution,

And Law No (1) for 1972 concerning jurisdictions of ministries and powers granted to of Ministers,

And law No (2) for 1972 concerning organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

And based on the recommendations of the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the approval of the Council of Ministers and the National Federal Council and ratification by the Supreme Council,

Issue the following law:

Part One

Nationality (Citizenship)

Chapter One

Acquisition of Nationality (Citizenship)

Article (1)

Nationality is acquired by law, by Citizenship and by naturalization in accordance with the provisions of the following articles:

Article (2)

A citizens by law is :-

- A. An Arab who was residing in a member Emirate in 1925 or before and who continued to reside therein up to the effective date of this law.

Ancestors' residence shall be deemed complementary descendants residence.

- B. Anyone born in the country or abroad to a father who is a citizen by law.
- C. Anyone born in the country or abroad to a mother who is a citizen by law, whose fatherhood is not substantiated.
- D. Anyone born in the country or abroad to a mother who is a citizen by law, whose father is unknown or without nationality.
- E. Anyone born in the country to unknown parents. A founding shall be deemed to have been born in the country unless proved to be otherwise.

Article (3)

The marriage of an alien woman to a UAE citizen of the country shall not entitle her to acquire the nationality of her husband, unless she informs the Ministry of Interior of her wish to become a national, and the marriage relationship has lasted for three years as of date of expressing of her wish on the condition that she must revoke her original nationality.

- If a woman got married to a citizen before the effective date of this law and marriage was still going or if her husband died and she has got children added, and she holds a passport of one of the Emirates, or her details are in the passport of her husband, she may be granted the nationality of UAE by dependence on the condition that she must revoke her original nationality. However, in all cases husband may not acquire the nationality of his wife.

** Article of law 17 for 1972, No. (10) for 1975 are 2,3,5,6,14,16,17,22,27,28,30,33,34,39.*

Article (4)

With due regard to the provisions of article (17) of this law, a wife who acquires the nationality by dependence to her husband under the previous article shall retain the nationality of the UAE if her husband dies citizenship may not be withdrawn from her except in the two following cases:

- A. If she gets married to a foreign national.
- B. If she restores her original nationality or acquires another nationality.

Article (5)

The nationality of the UAE may be granted to the following categories:

1. An Arab of Omani, Qatari or Bahraini origin if he resides in the UAE legally and continuously for more than three years immediately preceding his application for citizenship, provided that he has a legal means of living, of good conduct and has not been convicted for a crime that impugns integrity.

Article (7)

The UAE citizenship may be granted to any fully competent person if he has been legally & continuously residing in the Emirates since 1940 or before and has maintained his original residence up to the effective date of law has legal means of living, of good conduct, has not been convicted for a crime that impugns integrity, and is conversant with the Arabic language.

Article (8)

Citizenship of the country may be granted to any person other than those mentioned in article (5) and article (6) if that person is:

- a. Of full liability
- b. Has resided in a continuous and statutory manner in the member Emirates for a period not less than thirty years, of which twenty years at least after this law enters into force.
- c. Has a legal source of living.
- d. Of good conduct and has not been convicted for a crime impugns integrity.
- e. Knows Arabic language well.

Article (9)

Any person who renders marvelous deeds for the country may be granted citizenship regardless of the period of residence prescribed in the precedent articles.

Article (10)

A wife of a person who is national by naturalization, is deemed national by naturalization if she renounces her original nationality; and under – aged children of a national by naturalization, are deemed nationals by naturalization and they may select their original nationality during one year after reaching age of maturity.

Article (11)

Nationality by naturalization may not be given to a person unless he renounces his original nationality.

Article (12)

Nationality is granted only once.

Article (13)

A person who has acquired nationality of the country by naturalization shall not have the right of voting, or being a candidate or to be appointed in any parliamentary or public body or any ministerial position. Persons from Omani, Qatari and Bahraini origin are exempted from the provisions of this article after seven years of their acquisition of nationality.

Chapter Two

Loss, termination, withdrawal and restoration of nationality

Article (14)

A national woman by virtue of law or by naturalization who marries a person holding a foreign citizenship, may sustain her nationality and does not lose it unless she enters her husband's nationality.

Article (15)

Nationality of the country shall be lost from any person enjoying such nationality in the following cases:

- A. If he engages in military service for any foreign country without permission and refuses to abandon such service when requested to do so.
- B. If he works for the interest of an enemy country.
- C. If he has adopted, voluntarily, a nationality of another country.

Article (16)

Nationality shall be withdrawn from a person who has acquired the nationality by naturalization in the following cases:

1. If he commits or attempts to commit an action which is deemed dangerous for the security or safety of the country.
2. If he has been punished repeatedly for crimes of dishonor.
3. If the data upon which the nationality has been granted were proofed to be forged, fraud or containing deception.
4. If he resides outside the country without reasons for a period exceeding four years. If nationality is withdrawn from a person, it may be accordingly withdrawn from his wife and under-aged children.

Article (17)

A national by virtue of law who has acquired a foreign nationality may regain his original nationality if he renounces his acquired nationality.

A woman who is national by virtue of law, who has acquired the nationality of her alien husband, may regain her original nationality, if her husband dies, or has deserted or divorced her, on condition that she renounces the nationality of her husband; and her children from this husband may request to have the nationality of the country in case that their ordinary residence has been in the country and they expressed their intention to renounce the nationality of their father.

Article (18)

Under-aged children who have lost nationality may regain this nationality upon their request when they reach maturity age.

Chapter Three

Authorities concerned about Nationality Issues

Article (19)

Applications connected with nationality and naturalization issues, are submitted to the Minister of Interior. These applications will be reviewed by a consulting committee established by a decision of the Minister. In this committee all member Emirates shall be represented by natural citizens of considerable status and good conduct.

Article (20)

Nationality shall be granted by a decree based on the representation of the Minister of Interior and approval of Council of Ministers. Denaturalization and withdrawal of nationality are conducted by the same previous procedure.

Article (21)

Pursuant to the provisions of article (19), the Minister of Interior shall be concerned with taking decisions on applications connected with proving original nationality, acquired nationality, denaturalization and withdrawal of nationality.

Those who are affected with the decisions of the Minister of Interior may appeal to the Council of Minister within one month of the date on which they have been informed of the decision.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers concerning that appeal is final.

Second Part

Passports

Article (22)

Any national, whether by virtue of law, by naturalization or acquiring nationality, shall have a passport in accordance to the provisions of this law.

The passport is the official document, issued by the Government in accordance with the provisions of this law, which entitles its holder to travel from one country to another within the specified conditions in each country.

Article (23)

No citizen is allowed to leave the country or return to it, unless holds a passport in accordance to the provisions of this law. Passport may be substituted by a passing ticket in situations determined by the Minister of Interior.

Article (24)

Entry and exit to the country shall be only through specified places and after marking a passport or a document which act as passport.

The Minister of Interior shall determine, by passing a decision, the places specified for entry and exit of the country.

Article (25)

A national may travel freely within the member Emirates via the specified places after presenting his ID or any official document proving his identity.

Article (26)

Minister of Interior shall issue the following types of passports:

- A. Ordinary passports
- B. Provisional passports.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs shall issue the following types of passports:

- A. Diplomatic passports
- B. Special passports and passports for special missions.

Article (27)

The Minister of Interior may issue provisional passports in special cases for some persons regardless of the necessary conditions in accordance with the provisions of the articles of this law.

These passports are valid for one year, renewable two times consecutively for the same period on condition that the total validity period does not exceed three years.

Diplomatic passports are granted to the following:

- a. Members of the Supreme Council
- b. Deputy Governors of Member Emirates
- c. Ministers
- d. Members of royal family upon a written letter from the Governor
- e. The Chairman of the Federal National Council
- f. Members of diplomatic and consulate missions and members of missions of the state in international organizations.
- g. Technical attachés in diplomatic missions abroad.
- h. Members of delegates of the state in the main organs of the United Nations during performing their duties.
- i. Holders of diplomatic portfolios.
- j. Wives of the mentioned above categories, their unmarried daughters and under –aged children who are accompanying them on travel.

Article (29)

Diplomatic passports may be issued by an order of the President of the state or his Deputy for the following:

- a. Government officials who are delegated for official missions abroad based on the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- b. Persons who are delegated to represent the country in the specialized agencies of the United Nations.
- c. Wives of the mentioned above categories, their unmarried daughters and under – aged children who are accompanying them on travel.

Article (30)

Special passports are issued for the following:

- a. Members of the royal family.
- b. Chairmen of consultative councils and chairmen of directorates in the local governments of the Member Emirates.
- c. Members of the National Federal Council
- d. Government officials from the level of deputy minister and above and those in their level.
- e. Ex – Ministers
- f. Ex – Members of the National Federal Council
- g. Ex Ambassadors and Ex –plenipotentiary ministers on conditions that they have not been fired by disciplinary decision.
- h. Government officials in the Arab League who are considered on the same level with the members of diplomatic missions, during their official travels.
- i. Administrative officers and clerks seconded to diplomatic and consulate missions and government missions in international organizations.
- j. Wives of the above mentioned categories, their unmarried daughters and under – aged children who are accompanying them on travel,

Article (31)

The President of the State and his Deputy may grant, by passing a federal decision, special passports to the persons delegated to represent the state in conferences, meetings, exhibitions and international organizations, others than mentioned those who are before, based on a recommendation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Article (32)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its representative missions abroad shall issue and renew diplomatic passports, special passports and passports for special missions.

The Ministry of Interior and its representative missions abroad shall issue and renew ordinary passports. Ministry of Interior is concerned also with issuance of provisional passports

Article (33)

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Interior shall determine together by passing a decision the format of the five types of passports and the details include therein.

Article (34)

Diplomatic passports, special passports and passports for special missions are issued without fees.

The Minister of Interior shall determine the amount of fees for issuance of ordinary and provisional passports and their renewal, replacement of lost passports and additions of countries or persons to the passport.

In all these cases the due fees shall not exceed Fifty Dirham.

Article (35)

Duration of the validity of a passport is two years and may be renewed for two times. Total validity period of passports is six years from the date of issuance, after which a new passport shall be issued.

Article (36)

Upon issuance of a passport, holder's wife and children under the age of eighteen, if they are accompanying him, may be included in the passport. Name of wife and children under the age of eighteen may be added to the passport after its issuance upon the holder's request.

Article (37)

Upon issuance of a passport, countries which are permissible for the holder shall be stated and other countries may be added later on after its issuance upon request of its holder.

Article (38)

Passports are issued for persons who are nationals of the country in accordance to the provisions of the Act of Nationality which is applicable at the time of issuance.

If necessary and with the approval of the Minister of Interior passports may be granted for persons who are not national of the country, who are working for its interest in case they are appointed for missions abroad and shall be valid for the limits of this missions only.

Article (40)

Applications for passport and their renewal shall be on the prescribed forms and applications are to be submitted to concerned authorities in each case.

Article (41)

Passports may not be granted or may be withdrawn after issuance by a decision of the Minister of Interior on certain reasons.

Article (42)

Passports shall be cancelled and withdrawn from any person whose nationality has been denaturalized, or withdrawn.

Article (43)

Valid Passports issued by the Member Emirates prior to the date on which this law enters into force, shall continue to be in use until the Minister of Interior announces the resolution of the Council of Ministers on otherwise or until the expiry of their validity dates or their withdrawal, whichever earlier and the Minister of Interior shall issue new passports in substitution.

Part Three

Penalties

Article (44)

1. Any person who prints illegally or counterfeits a passport, and any person who assists or urges or interacts or plots with the doer shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years and with a fine not exceeding 20000 Qatari or Dubai Riyals or 2000 Bahraini Dinars or with either of these two punishments.
2. To be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year and a fine not exceeding Five Thousand Qatari or Dubai Riyals , (500) Bahraini Dinars or with either of these two punishments any person who commits:
 - a. Counterfeits a passport or changes its details.
 - b. Holds a passport illegally.
 - c. Claims that he is the real owner of a passport by impersonation others or with false claims.
 - d. Gives such passport to another person so as to be used by that person or by another.
 - e. Gives false statements or false information intending to obtain nationality or passport for himself or for other, and also any person signs a false document for applicant of nationality or passport.
3. To be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one week and a fine not exceeding Two Hundred Qatari or Dubai Riyals, (20) Bahraini Dinars, or with either of the two punishments any person who:
 - a. Finds a passport and commits negligence by not sending to the nearest police center.
 - b. Damages a passport or conceal purposely.

Part Four

General Provisions

Article (45)

The Council of Ministers shall formulate upon a recommendation of the Minister of Interior the necessary regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this law and determining due fees, and the Minister may

formulate formats of applications and stamps connected with the provisions of this law.

Article (46)

This Law shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall come into force one month thereafter.

Zaid Bin Sultan Al Nahayan

President of United Arab Emirates

Issued in the Presidential Palace, Abu Dhabi

On : 13 Shawal 1392 H

Corresponding to 18th November 1972 G.