

Query response a-6815 of 9 July 2009

Iraq: issuance of passports to non-Iraqis during Saddam Hussein's regime

This response was commissioned by the UNHCR Status Determination and Protection Information Section. Views expressed in the response are not necessarily those of UNHCR.

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to ACCORD within time constraints and in accordance with ACCORD's methodological standards and the *Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)*.

This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status, asylum or other form of international protection.

Please read in full all documents referred to.

Non-English language information is comprehensively summarised in English. Original language quotations are provided for reference.

In a query response of June 1994, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) quotes a professor of political science specializing in Middle Eastern affairs at McGill University saying that Iraq issued passports to persons who are not their nationals as rewards for their past or present favours:

"According to a professor of political science specializing in Middle Eastern affairs at McGill University, the treatment of Syrians living in Iraq who supported the right wing of the Syrian Baath Party before its split, depends on their level of importance (16 June 1994). Generally speaking, low-level members of the Syrian Baath Party probably do not face major difficulties, but high-level supporters of that parties might face 'problems' (ibid.). The specifics of each case would determine the type of problem. The professor adds that many Middle Eastern countries including Iraq issue passports to persons who are not their nationals. These persons, who have been in favour of the Iraqi regime, receive passports as rewards for their past or present favours (ibid.)." (IRB, 16 June 1994)

In another query response of April 1992, the IRB quotes a representative of the Arab League in Ottawa on the subject of dual nationality for ethnic Arabs:

"A representative of the Arab League in Ottawa offered the following information on the above subjects during a telephone interview on 29 April 1992.

[...] Ethnic Arabs can acquire Iraqi nationality if they marry an Iraqi national, or live in Iraq as refugees. There are also other circumstances under which ethnic Arabs can acquire Iraqi nationality. However, these ethnic Arabs with recently acquired Iraqi nationality do not enjoy all the rights of nationality as, for instance, new Canadians enjoy. An ethnic Arab who has received Iraqi nationality may receive an Iraqi passport, a residence permit and

a work permit, but he/she cannot vote, for instance. No certificates of Iraqi nationality are issued to these people even though they are considered as Iraqis in practice. The situation is the same for male and female ethnic Arabs." (IRB, 29 April 1992)

Among the sources consulted by ACCORD within time constraints no more information could be found on issuance of passports to non-Iraqis during Saddam Hussein's regime.

References: (all links accessed 9 July 2009)

- IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Iraq: 1) Information on whether Iraqi nationals lose their Iraqi nationality upon acquiring the nationality of another country; 2) Information on whether the Iraqi government permits dual nationality for ethnic Arabs, IRQ10772, 29 April 1992 (available at Refworld; Refworld date: 1 April 1992)
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6aad848.html>
- IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Iraq: Information on the treatment of Syrians living in Iraq before and after the Persian Gulf War, the treatment of Syrians living in Iraq who supported the right wing of the Syrian Baath Party before its split, the legal status of Syrians in Iraq and whether they can obtain Iraqi citizenship, and whether Iraq issues passports to Syrians who reside in that country but who are not Iraqi citizens, IRQ17666.E, 16 June 1994 (available at Refworld; Refworld date: 1 June 1994)
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6acf964.html>