

MARRIAGE REGISTRATION IN LEBANON

A Guide to Procedures and Practices

Marriage registration in Lebanon: A guide to procedure and practices

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Researched by Frontiers-Ruwad Association
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Glossary of key selected terms

- akhraj qaid** Extract from individual civil status records
- batqa awda** Syrian issued return card/re-entry visa
- 'izen shar'i** Religious permission to marry
- da'wa jensiya** Nationality lawsuit
- da'wa qaid/ da'wa noufous** Civil status lawsuit
- ishara Reference** (to a marriage), registered on civil status records
- qaid al dars** Category of individuals defined as 'Under Study'
- maqtoom al qaid** Category of individuals who have no personal civil status records
- mukhtar** Local mayor
- mutabaqa** Conformation of civil status records
- Ma'amour Noufous** Civil status officer
- qada'** Administrative district in a Governorate
- tanfiz** Execution of a marriage, thereby giving it legal force - the final stage in the registration process
- tashih qaid** Correction to a civil status record

FORWARD AND INTRODUCTION

Forward and Introduction

About Frontiers-Ruwad

Frontiers-Ruwad is a Lebanese non-governmental, non-political non-profit human rights organization, which began its work on forced migration in 1999. Frontiers works to enhance and consolidate the culture of human rights and the rule of law in Lebanon, according to international laws and the Lebanese constitution; to protect and defend the fundamental rights and universal freedoms of individuals and groups without discrimination; and most importantly to create an environment of protection for refugees and stateless persons in Lebanon.

Frontiers' Refugee and Stateless Program is based on the principle that refugees and the stateless deserve to live in dignity with protection of their fundamental human rights. The program benefits non-Palestinian refugees and those Palestinian refugees who are neither registered with the Lebanese government nor with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency - UNRWA (known as non-IDs), as well as other groups of stateless persons (maqtoum al qaid, qaid al dars and others) in Lebanon.

About This Manual

This manual deals with the complex issue of marriage registration in Lebanon. It details the procedures involved to ensure proper registration of marriages in the civil registry with the General Directorate of Civil Status in the Ministry of Interior (the executive branch in charge of civil status affairs).

The focus of the manual is the declaration and registration of the marriage certificate once a marriage is concluded, for those living in Lebanon and those Lebanese living abroad.

Justification for this Manual

Following publication of its legal study entitled 'Invisible Citizens' (2011), in 2012 Frontiers surveyed 1,000 households with at least one stateless family member to better understand the causes of statelessness in Lebanon. It also organized roundtables with relevant government officials and local authorities, and in 2013 submitted a number of individual civil status cases to the Civil Status authorities. The results of these efforts indicated that a significant cause of statelessness is the failure of parents who hold civil status records to register the birth of their children due to non-registration of their marriages.

Proof that a marriage has been registered is a requirement for registration of births in Lebanon (unless the child is illegitimate, in which case the birth can be registered without an official marriage certificate). Parents who fail to register their marriage are not able to register the birth of their child. This results in statelessness for the child of a Lebanese father; increases the risk of statelessness for a child born of foreign parents in Lebanon, and can result in the loss of qaid al dars status for the child of a qaid al dars father.

As there is no civil status register for stateless persons (maqtoum al qaid), they are unable to register their marriage or the birth of children, and therefore they and their children remain stateless from generation to generation.

The reasons for non-registration of marriages are multiple and complex. They include:

- Lack of awareness about marriage registration. Religious and civil authorities do not stress the importance of marriage registration and provide little or no advice on how it is done.
- Complicating factors such as polygamy, religious conversion or mixed faith marriages.
- The numerous actors involved in registering marriages and the lengthy bureaucratic procedures that can become a heavy burden, particularly for

- vulnerable and underprivileged populations.
- The cost of marriage registration. Although there is a statutory guide to the fees required for marriage registration, in practice the cost is much higher, due to informal commissions and discretionary fees charged at various stages. This is a major hindrance for those of low income, who may remain satisfied with the basic religious marriage contract.
- Referral to the courts for late registration of marriages (after one year) to obtain a judge's decision in order to register a marriage creates an additional burden, as court proceedings are lengthy and legal representation can be expensive.
- The same additional burden for Lebanese men married to stateless women, who are often referred to a court for a decision on marriage registration by the General Directorate of Civil Status, despite the fact that this is not required by law.
- The unaffordable high cost for annual renewal of the qaid al dars residency permit is, for many, another reason for not registering their marriage.
- These factors lead to new cases of statelessness in Lebanon and to the unacceptable perpetuation of this phenomenon from one generation to another.

• Methodology

The information in this manual is derived for the most part from primary sources, such as the 1951 Personal Status Law regulating all aspects of civil registration of marriages, Decision no. 60 of 1936 related to the organization of the personal status of the different confessions; and the Law of Contracts for registration of civil marriages concluded in Lebanon. The manual also relies on the opinions of the Legislation and Advisory Committee at the Ministry of Justice, informal interviews with local mayors (mukhtar), Civil Status and General Security officers, as well as practical information obtained from individual test cases of failed marriage registration that were submitted by Frontiers-Ruwad to the Civil Status authorities.

• Approach

The layout of the manual follows the patriarchal structure of the civil status records in Lebanon: all records relating to civil status, including marriage, are listed under the name of the male.* A woman seeking information from the manual relating to registration of her marriage must consult the section that deals with her husband's status (for example, "Lebanese man married to a foreign woman").

*The only exception is in the case of a child born out of wedlock, who can be added to a mother's civil record.

The scope of the manual

This manual covers registration of marriage of Lebanese nationals (including those marrying outside Lebanon), foreign nationals and stateless persons whose nationality is under study (qaid al dars), as well as registered and non-registered Palestinians. It also looks at the issue of lack of marriage registration of stateless persons with no records (maqtoumi al qaid), as well as those whose marriage registration is refused by the Civil Status Division.

For practical purposes, the manual covers the registration of religious marriages of the largest confessions - Christian and Muslim - as well as civil marriage. It does not deal with the marriage of members of other religions (such as the Jewish faith), who have their own personal status laws (see Annex No.4), or religions that are not provided for in Lebanese law (such as Buddhists, Sikhs etc.). For these it is necessary to refer to the laws of their country of origin.

This manual is intended as a guide primarily for organizations and institutions providing advice on marriage registration or involved in contracting and registering marriages. Nevertheless, it is written and organized to allow ease of access to the information in it for all concerned, especially those individuals who intend to marry in Lebanon, regardless of their nationality, as well as those already married who have failed to register their marriage in the civil registry to date.

It is hoped the use of this manual will facilitate access to marriage registration, and that the Lebanese authorities will adopt it, distribute it widely and participate in enhancing it with additional information.

The framework of the manual

The manual is divided into the following nine sections, with relevant annexes and charts.

- **Section One:** Conditions for Contracting a Marriage in Lebanon
 - * *Basic information on the general conditions for contracting a valid marriage, including restrictions; the cost and the religious and civil authorities involved.*
- **Section Two:** Steps to be Taken Prior to the Declaration of a Marriage with the Civil Authorities
 - * *Includes the marriage contract and its documentation, fees and time limits for marriage registration, as well as details of the competent civil authorities.*
- **Section Three:** Procedures for Declaration and Registration of a Marriage with the Civil Authorities
 - * *The procedures for registration of a marriage contracted in Lebanon, from declaration of the marriage to final execution of the marriage certificate and change of civil status records.*

- **Section Four:** Declaration and Execution of Marriage of a Lebanese Husband
- **Section Five:** Declaration and execution of the Marriage Certificate for Qaid al Dars, Syrian, and Foreign Husbands
- **Section Six:** Declaration and execution of the Marriage Certificate of a Palestinian Refugee Husband Registered with the Ministry of Interior
- **Section Seven:** Registering the Marriage of Lebanese Nationals, Qaid al Dars and Registered Palestinian Refugees Concluded outside of Lebanon
- **Section Eight:** Marriages that cannot be Administratively Registered
- **Section Nine:** Solutions for Marriages that cannot be Administratively Registered

The manual ends with an Afterword on what to do if the Lebanese authorities refuse to register a marriage.

List of authorities involved in the procedure of contracting and registering a marriage in Lebanon

The competent authorities for issuing the 'izen shar'i (Permission to marry)

- **For Muslims**
 - The Ja'fari Shari'a Court for the Shi'a
 - The Sunni Shari'a Court for the Sunni
 - The Sheikh 'Akl or a religious judge for the Druze
- **For Christians**
 - The Archbishopric for the different denominations of the Catholic and Orthodox churches
 - The Head ('Omda) of the different denominations of the Protestant church'
- **For Secularists**
Permission to marry is not required for civil marriages.

The competent authorities for authentication of the marriage certificate

- Higher religious authorities according to confession
- The mukhtar (mayor) of the locality where the marriage took place
- The public notary in cases of civil marriages

The competent civil authorities responsible for marriage registration and execution (tanfiz)

The Civil Status Officer (Ma'amour Noufous) – subordinate to the Head of the Civil Status Division under the General Directorate of Civil Status in the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities - is the authority that registers the marriage certificate for Lebanese citizens and executes it in the individual's civil status records. There might be more than one Civil Status Officer in a district (qada').

The Head of the Civil Status Division - is the higher authority above the Civil Status Officer at the General Directorate of Civil Status in the Ministry of Interior. There is a Head of Civil Status Division in each of the six Governorates in Lebanon. The Head of the Civil Status Division has two main responsibilities regarding marriage registration:

- To decide on cases in which the Civil Status Officer is not able to make a decision;
- To register the marriages of foreigners resident outside Beirut (e.g. in any of the five other Governorates) whether a marriage is between two foreigners or between a foreigner and a Lebanese national.

The Foreigners' Events Division is a division of the General Directorate of Civil Status. It is responsible for (i) receiving, verifying and registering the civil status events of foreigners residing in the Governorate of Beirut (including qaid al dars individuals holding residence permits, who are technically considered as foreigners), (ii) notifying the competent authorities accordingly, and (iii) providing the individuals concerned with a copy of the marriage certificate once it is registered. It also keeps the archives of such documents.

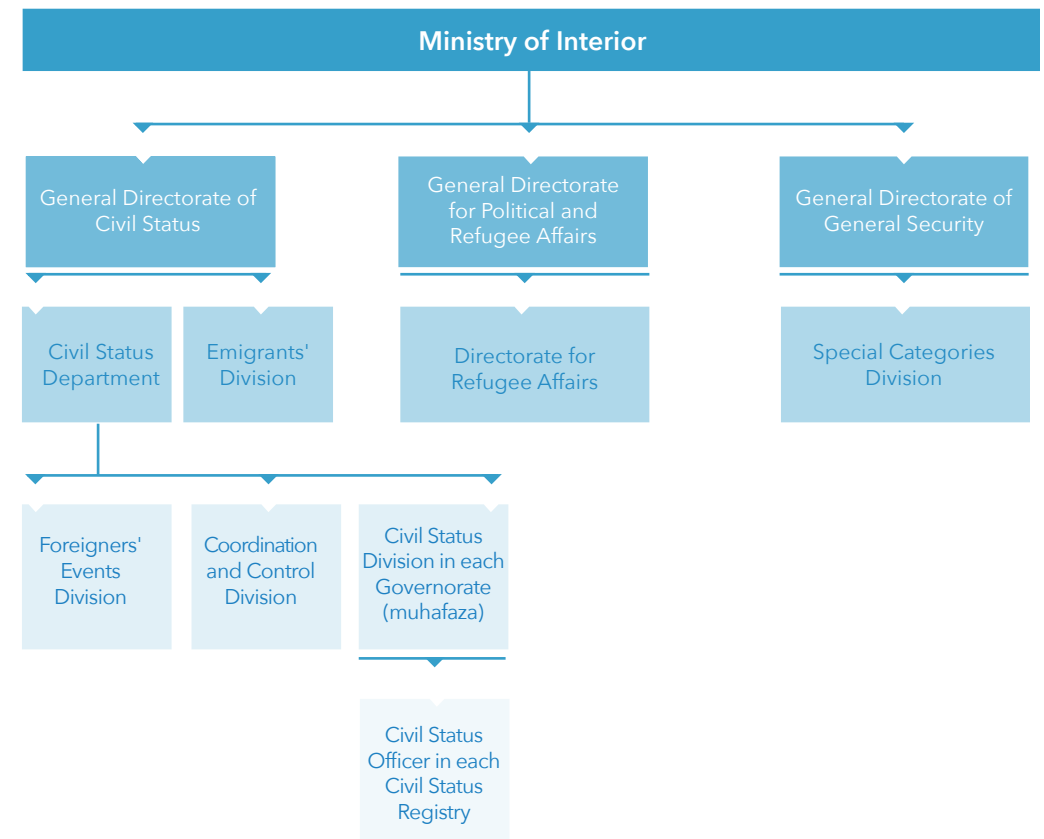
The Emigrants' Division is a division of the General Directorate of Civil Status, responsible for receiving and verifying the documents related to personal status events of emigrants (including marriage certificates) that are sent by Lebanese diplomatic missions via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Emigrants' Division ensures that civil status documents are complete before these are transferred to the competent and relevant Civil Status units for execution.

The Coordination and Control Division coordinates between the Civil Status Divisions in the Governorates and the districts (qada'). It transfers marriage certificates from one Governorate to another and from the General Directorate of Civil Status to the General Directorate of General Security.

The General Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs is responsible for legal and administrative affairs relating to Palestinian refugees. It holds Palestinian civil status registers and issues Palestinian refugee cards. A marriage certificate is registered with this Directorate whether it is concluded inside or outside Lebanon.

The General Directorate of General Security is responsible for regulating the residency of foreigners in Lebanon and persons with qaid al dars status. An application for marriage registration involving an individual with qaid al dars status is submitted to the Civil Status Division, which then sends it to General Security - Special Categories Division for verification (mutabaqa or 'confirmation') of legal and marital status and execution of the marriage certificate.

Chart No. 1: The competent authorities for marriage registration within the ministry of interior



1

SECTION ONE

Conditions for contracting a marriage in Lebanon

SECTION ONE

Conditions For Contracting A Marriage In Lebanon

Basic information on the general conditions for contracting a valid marriage, including restrictions; the cost and the religious and civil authorities involved.

Importance of the Marriage Contract for Registration of Marriage

The act of marriage (the formal union of a man and woman as recognized by law) is not officially recognized until it is correctly registered with the competent authorities - the specific divisions of the General Directorate of Civil Status at the Ministry of Interior (see List of Authorities; specific divisions are indicated in the relevant sections of the manual). Any marriage that is not documented cannot be registered with the relevant authorities. The marriage certificate, received, filled and authenticated after a marriage has been concluded, is executed (tanfiz) by its declaration to the competent authorities at the General Directorate of Civil Status in the Ministry of Interior. Registration of a marriage with the religious authorities alone does not make it official.

The first legal consequence of the official registration of a marriage contract is that **the person's civil status changes from single to married in his/her civil status record.**

In addition, children born to married parents whose marriage is officially registered can:

- be registered under the couple's civil record.
- obtain the legal status of the father.

The Conditions for a Valid Marriage

● **Consent:**

Like any contract, the marriage contract should be concluded with the consent of the two parties, without any deception, coercion, or injustice.

● **Public Announcement (a’lan) and Marriage Ceremony:**

The marriage should be concluded publicly and have witnesses. The conditions for publicity vary from one religion to another.

For some confessions, a public announcement (a’lan) of the intention to marry should be made before the marriage ceremony, and varies according to confession.

Restrictions on Marriage

● **Sex:**

The laws on marriage in Lebanon expressly state that:

- A marriage can only be contracted between persons of the opposite gender, for both religious and civil marriages.
- In the case of transsexuals, all necessary surgery must be completed and the change of gender recorded in the civil register before contracting the marriage.

● **Kinship:**

The requirements regarding degrees of kinship, affinity or breastfeeding relationship vary from one religion or sect to another.

● **Age:**

Each religious confession specifies the age at which persons can marry automatically (without authorization), and the minimum age at which it is necessary to secure authorization to marry from parents and the competent religious authority (see Table below).

Table # 1: The recognized marrying age by confession

Confession	Minimum Age of Marriage without Authorization		Minimum Age of Marriage (Requires Authorization)		The Competent Authority that Gives Authorization
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Sunni	17	18	9	17	The judge
Shi’a	9	Puberty	9	15	The judge
Druze	17	18	15	16	The judge
Catholic	14	16	12	14	The Patriarch
Greek Orthodox	18	18	15	17	Head of the Parish
Syriac Orthodox	14	18	-	-	-
Anglican	16	18	Puberty	Puberty	Religious Court

● **Marital Status**

Women

All confessions, as well as civil law, forbid women from marrying more than one man. The woman must be single, a divorcee or a widow. The authority contracting the marriage will ask for a certificate confirming a woman’s marital status, as well as an individual extract (akhraj qaid) from the civil record. The certificate of marital status is issued by the competent religious authority in the case of a religious marriage for Christians, and by the Civil Status Officer of the region where the individual resides in the case of a civil marriage or for Muslims.

The format of the certificate of marital status differs depending on confession. The certificate issued by the Civil Status Officer is standardized and takes the form of an individual extract (akhraj qaid) .

Men

Polygamy is allowed for Muslim men. It is forbidden for Christian and Druze men, as well as in civil marriages. In these cases, the man must be single, a divorcee or a widower.

As for those who have changed their confession, the laws regulating the religion they converted to apply.

A recently issued personal civil extract (akhraj qaid) should indicate if an individual is married. This will not be the case if the marriage has not been registered or if he/ she is divorced or widowed and the divorce or death certificate has not been executed (tanfiz). The requirement for the certificate of marital status highlights the importance of ensuring that the relevant and appropriate authorities are notified of previous marriages, divorces or the death of a spouse.

There is no standard cost for concluding a marriage, whether religious or civil. It is advisable that the cost is agreed in advance with the authority concluding the marriage.

2

SECTION TWO

Steps to be taken prior to the declaration of a marriage with the civil authorities

SECTION TWO

Steps to be taken prior to the declaration of a marriage with the civil authorities

The procedures outlined in this section apply to all individuals wishing to marry in Lebanon regardless of nationality.

A Lebanese man wishing to marry a foreign woman should obtain prior authorization from the General Directorate of General Security, although there is no law stating this. The application for the authorization is submitted with the following documents:

- An individual and family civil status extract for the Lebanese husband
- A copy of the passport of the foreign woman
- A copy of the valid residency permit of the foreign woman
- An attestation of marital status showing that the woman is single

It may take between one to two months to obtain this authorization. It is not required if the marriage is concluded outside Lebanon.

1 Contracting a Marriage

For full details of how to contract a marriage, individuals should consult their local competent religious or civil authorities.

For details of the documents required for contracting a marriage, see *Annexes 1, 2*.

● **Competent authorities**

To be able to register a marriage, it must have been properly contracted and meet all the legal requirements. The authorities involved vary according to confession, and if the marriage is a civil one.

● **Religious marriage**

A religious marriage is only valid if it is concluded by an authorized cleric, as stipulated in the Civil Status laws. The authorized religious authorities are:

- **For Sunni and Shi'a** – an authorized sheikh in any locality for Sunni and a sheikh in any locality for Shi'a.
- **For Druze** - only a clergyman in the place of residence, authorized by the Sheikh 'Akl or a judge of the confession.
- **For Catholics and Orthodox Christians** - The authorized clergyman resides in the same area as one of the persons wishing to marry. The marriage can be concluded outside the area of residence of the parties to be married if permission is obtained from the Archbishopric of one party.
- **For Protestants** - a clergyman in any locality.

● Civil marriage

In the absence of a comprehensive legal framework for civil marriage in Lebanon, such marriages are treated as civil contracts under the Law of Contracts and Obligation. The Public Notary is the competent authority to conclude a civil marriage contract.

The 'izen shar'i

The first step towards contracting a religious marriage is to obtain an 'izen shar'i, or religious permission to marry, from the relevant authorities.

Individuals should ask the local mayor (mukhtar) or a clergyman in the area where they live for the competent authority to which they must address the request for the 'izen shar'i.

The 'izen shar'i is issued by the higher religious authority of a confession. It confirms that the religious authority has no objection to the marriage, i.e. that the conditions and eligibility criteria to conclude the marriage are met. It should be dated on or before the date the marriage is contracted.

The documents needed to obtain the 'izen shar'i (religious permission to marry) are:

- A certificate of marital status proving that an individual can marry. Women of all confessions are required to present this certificate. In the case of men, it is required for confessions that forbid polygamy. For confessions that allow polygamy, the certificate should state the number of wives.
- A medical certificate confirming that there are no medical impediments to the conclusion of the marriage. An authorized doctor or laboratory can usually issue this certificate. For Sunni and Shi'a the medical certificate should be issued by an accredited doctor of the Shari'a Court.
- If one of the individuals wishing to marry is a foreigner, the religious authority

will require prior approval from the General Directorate of General Security before issuing the permission to marry. It may take up to two months to obtain this approval.

The Shi'a are not obliged to always obtain the 'izen shar'i, since their clergy are all authorized to conduct marriages.

For a civil marriage, the document stating that there is no objection to a marriage is a recently issued civil status extract (akhraj qaid).

The Marriage Contract

Following the marriage ceremony, the authority that contracted the marriage provides **a marriage contract/attestation of marriage**, which indicates the agreement between the two parties made in the presence of the marrying authority and witnesses. It contains:

- The signature of the two parties, proving their consent.
- The signatures of two witnesses.

The marriage contract is the primary document, among others, required for registering a marriage (see Annex 2 for details of all other documents required).

2 Filling the marriage certificate

In order to proceed with the registration of the marriage the spouses must obtain a duly filled and signed marriage certificate from the authority that concluded the marriage. This is a standardized form and different from the marriage attestation or contract. It is required by the Civil Status Registration Law, and is submitted along with supporting documents to the Ministry of Interior.

The marriage certificate consists of a number of boxes. It must be filled, signed and endorsed as follows:

Religious marriages

- The clergyman who issued the 'izen shar'i fills both spouses' details in the marriage certificate on the basis of identity documents provided (Boxes 1 to 14).

- The same clergymen a) signs and stamps the marriage certificate, b) enters the number and date of the 'izen shar'i (Box 15), c) registers the marriage certificate in the marriages ledger, and d) gives it a serial number.
- If there is no 'izen shar'i, confirmation of the marriage by the religious court is accepted (Box 18).
- The marriage certificate is then taken to the religious authority that concluded the marriage, who adds the number and date of the marriage contract and signs it (Box 16).

NOTE: In general, for Christian marriages, the Archbishopric asks the mukhtar to fill boxes 1-14 of the marriage certificate before endorsing it. In all cases, once the certificate is endorsed by the higher religious authority it must be taken to the mukhtar for his signature. It is important that the date of the signature of the mukhtar is after the signature of the religious authority.

Civil Marriages

There is no marriage certificate in cases of civil marriage. The marriage contract concluded before the Public Notary is considered as a marriage certificate. The marriage contract should contain:

- The date, place, and number of the marriage contract
- The authentication of the Public Notary
- The signature of two witnesses

3 Authentication of the Marriage Certificate

There are various authorities involved in authentication of the marriage certificate.

Religious marriages

After completing Step 2, the marriage certificate, with all other required documents (Annex 2) should be sent to:

- The religious authority (Shari'a Court or Archbishopric) for authentication. This authority is the same as the one who issued the 'izen shar'i or conducted the act of marriage. This authority a) authenticates the marriage certificate, b) gives it a serial number in the marriage register, and c) adds this serial

number to the marriage certificate and signs it (Box 18).

- The mukhtar of the locality where the marriage took place. The following sections of the marriage certificate will be completed in front of the mukhtar:
 - The signature of the spouses (Box 17)
 - The signature of two witnesses, who must know the spouses (Box 19 & 20)

The *mukhtar* signs and stamps the marriage certificate and gives it a serial number (Box 21).

The date of the mukhtar's authentication should be after the authentication by the religious authority.

The cost of completing the marriage certificate by the mukhtar is not defined by law. It is left to the discretion of the mukhtar. It may vary from 10,000LL up to 100,000LL.

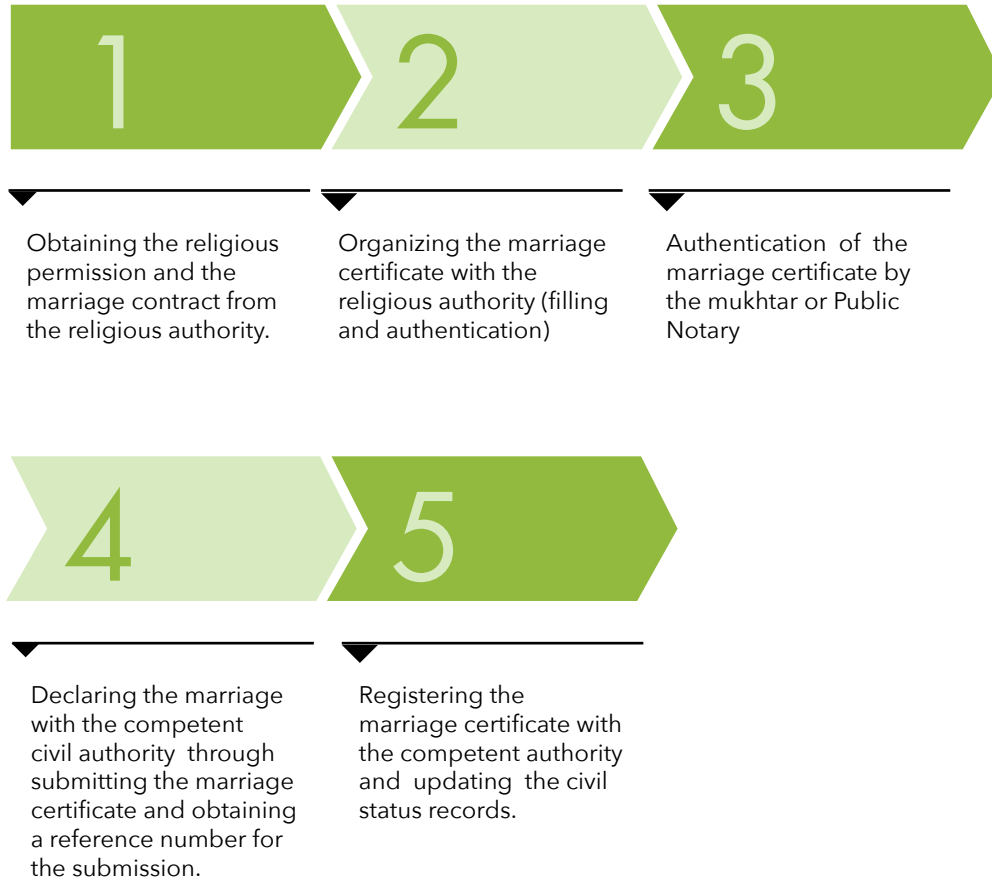
Civil Marriage

There is no marriage certificate. The marriage contract is authenticated by the Public Notary concluding the marriage.

Documents required for contracting and registering a marriage

A number of identification documents - both original and copies - must be provided during all the stages of contracting, authenticating and registering a marriage. (See Annex 1, 2)

Chart No. 2: The steps involved in registering a marriage in Lebanon



3

SECTION THREE

Procedures for declaration and registration of a marriage with the civil authorities

SECTION THREE

Procedures for declaration and registration of a marriage with the civil authorities

The law prescribes that a marriage should be registered with the Civil Status Division within one month of the date it was concluded. After one month, a fine of 1,000LL must be paid for administrative registration of the marriage, at whatever time it is eventually registered. However, any delay in registering the marriage may cause difficulties at a later date. The Ma'amour Noufous (Civil Status Officer) may refuse to register the marriage and ask for a court decision. This practice seems common, particularly if there is a child from the marriage who is more than one year old. (The law prescribes that the birth of a child should be registered within one year).

Required Marriage Registration Stamp Fees:

- For the marriage certificate - 4,000LL
- To the Civil Status Division - 1,000LL (for Lebanese nationals registering their marriage)
- To the Refugee Directorate - 2,000LL
- Persons with qaid al dars status registering with the General Directorate of General Security - 1,000LL
- To the Foreigners' Events Division - 1,000LL
- For the mukhtar's signature/authentication of the marriage certificate - 250LL

In addition to the stamp fee of 250LL, there is also a fee payable to the mukhtar. This fee is dependent on the discretion of the mukhtar and can range from 10,000LL to 100,000LL.

Declaration and Execution of Marriage Certificate

To be officially recognized, the marriage certificate, which has been filled, signed, authenticated and stamped by the religious and local authorities mentioned in Section 2, must be declared to the competent Civil Status authorities to begin the process of registration and execution. The procedures involved are the same for religious and civil marriages concluded in Lebanon.

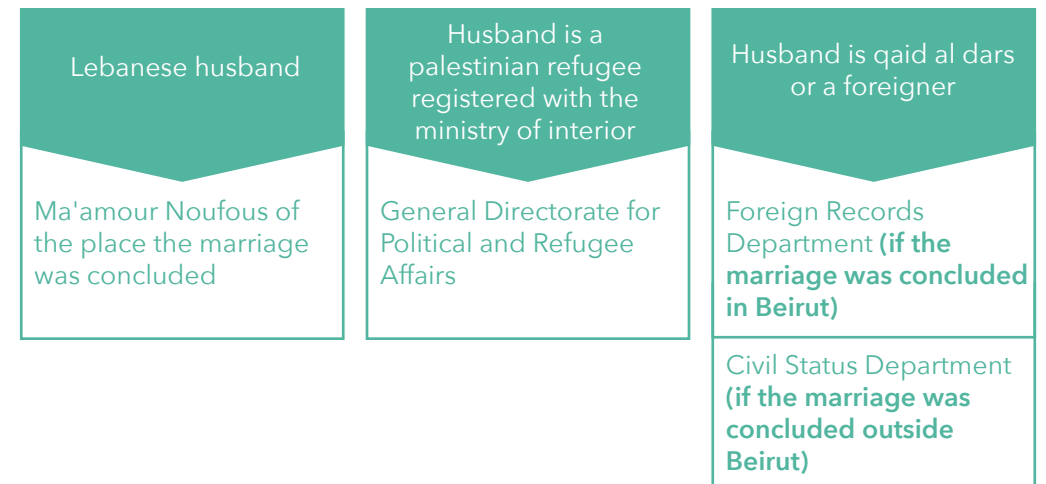
The law allows the cleric who concluded the marriage to make the declaration to the Civil Status Officer (Ma'amour Noufous). In practice this is not done in a systematic manner.

The general procedures are as follows:

- **Registration of the declaration of** the marriage with the competent authority. This is recorded on Boxes 22 and 23 of the marriage certificate, or the civil marriage contract.
- **Conformation (mutabaqa)**, where necessary, **of the wife's civil status records** by the authority holding her records to ensure that the details in the marriage certificate are in conformity with the details in her civil status records (See Chart # 5 below for the competent authority).
- **Execution (tanfiz)** of the marriage certificate in the spouses' civil status records by the authority that is holding their civil status register. This operation is marked in Box 24 of the marriage certificate, or on the civil marriage contract.

If you have concluded a civil and a religious marriage, you must decide in advance which one you want registered with the Civil Status Division. This is important in order to avoid conflict in case you decide to register the civil marriage and the religious authority declares your religious marriage directly to the civil authority. It is advisable that you yourself submit your marriage certificate to the Civil Status Division in person.

Chart No 3: The competent authorities for declaration of a marriage



4

SECTION FOUR

Declaration and execution of the marriage of a Lebanese husband

SECTION FOUR

Declaration and execution of the marriage of a Lebanese husband

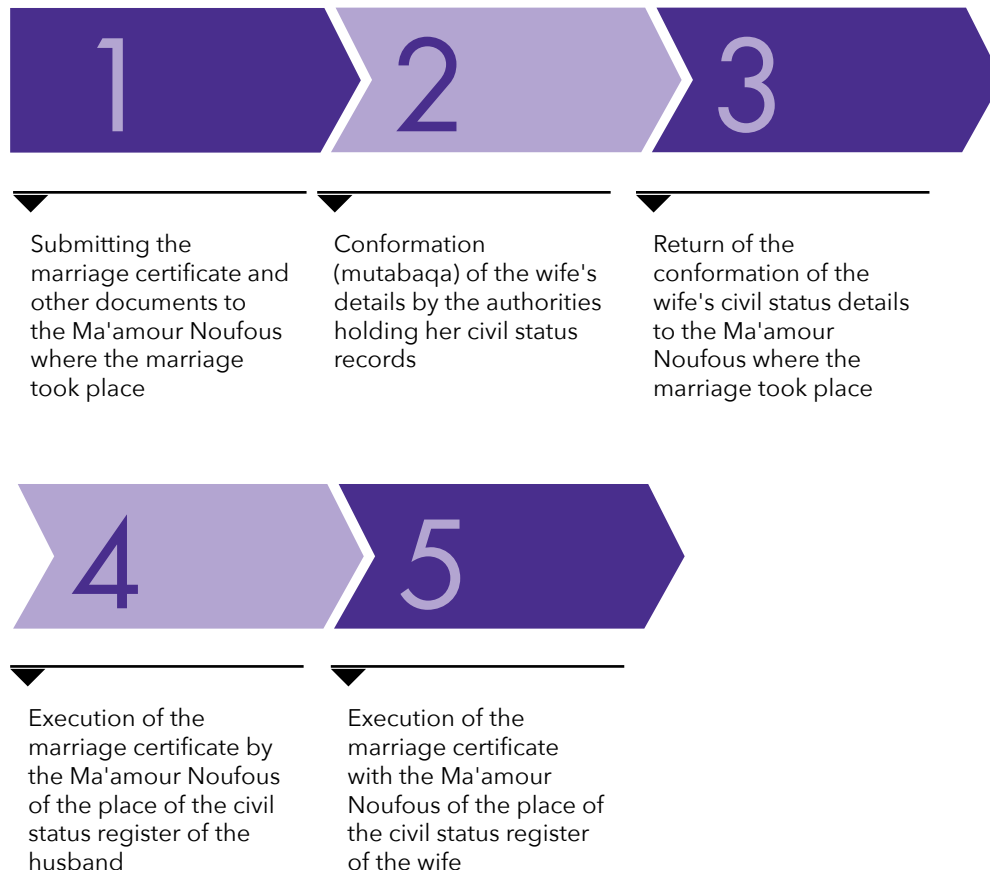
- The marriage certificate and all necessary documents (please refer to list of documents in Annex 2) must be submitted to the Civil Status Officer (Ma'amour Noufous) where the marriage was concluded.
- The Ma'amour Noufous a) registers the marriage certificate, b) gives it an incoming mail number, and c) records this number on the certificate (Boxes 22 and 23).
- If the place of marriage is different from the place of civil status records of the spouses, the Ma'amour Noufous transfers the marriage certificate to the place of the spouses' civil status records.
- If the place of civil status records of the husband is different from that of the wife, the Ma'amour Noufous first sends the marriage certificate to the wife's civil status authorities for conformation of civil status. If the wife is Lebanese it is the Ma'amour Noufous of her place of civil status records; for a qaid al dars wife it is the General Security - Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division, and for registered Palestinian refugees it is the Directorate of Refugee Affairs - Division of Registration of Events.
- The authority to whom the marriage certificate is sent for conformation of the information registered in the wife's civil status records, verifies the information contained in the marriage certificate with the wife's civil status records, and resends it to the Ma'amour Noufous of the place where the marriage was concluded.
- The Ma'amour Noufous of the place where the marriage was concluded transfers the marriage certificate to the Ma'amour Noufous of the place of the husband's civil status records. The latter executes the marriage certificate. He notes this operation on the marriage certificate (Box 24).
- The Ma'amour Noufous records the change of marital status on the husband's family civil status.

After the marriage certificate has been executed in the husband's civil status record, the wife's civil status records are updated.

Once this has been done, the wife's name is automatically taken off her parents' civil status records and added to her husband's.

At this stage, Lebanese spouses may ask their mukhtar for a new ID that shows that their marital status has been changed.

Chart No. 4: Steps for the declaration and execution of the marriage of a Lebanese husband



1 Conformation of Civil Status (Mutabaqa)

Once the marriage certificate has been completed and submitted to the competent authorities (see Chart 5), they will proceed to check conformity (mutabaqa) of the records of both spouses. The conformation of civil status records is one step prior to the final registration.

Conformation of wife's civil status records (according to the nationality of the wife)

• Lebanese wife

Conformation is done automatically if her civil status records fall under the competence of the husband's Ma'amour Noufous or where the marriage took place. If not, the Ma'amour Noufous transfers the marriage certificate to the Civil Status Division in the area where the wife has her civil status records for conformation of her civil status details.

• Qaid al Dars wife

The marriage certificate is transferred for conformation of civil status records to the General Directorate of General Security via the Coordination and Control Division of the Ministry of Interior. After conformation, the General Security returns the marriage certificate to the Foreigners' Events Division in Beirut or the Civil Status Division in the Governorate.

• Registered Palestinian refugee wife

The marriage certificate is transferred for conformation to the General Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs through the Coordination and Control Division.

• Syrian or foreign wife

Conformation is done by the Ma'amour Noufous who receives the marriage certificate. The wife's details and civil status are verified on the basis of the documents presented by the wife. These documents are:

● Syrian wife

- An individual civil status extract recently issued by the Syrian authorities and endorsed by both the Syrian and Lebanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and the Syrian Embassy in Lebanon.
- If the wife does not have a recently issued individual civil status extract, she can provide a valid passport and other documents that confirm her marital status and complete details of her civil status record.

● Foreign wife (other than Syrian, Qaid al Dars, or Maqtoum al Qaid)

Here also the conformation is conducted automatically by the Ma'amour Noufous, who verifies the personal details of the wife based on a valid passport and birth certificate and other documents that confirm her marital status.

Chart No. 5: The competent authorities for conformation (mutabaqa) of the wife's civil status details



2 The execution of the marriage certificate of a Lebanese husband

The Ma'amour Noufous of the place of marriage transfers the marriage certificate to the Ma'amour Noufous of the husband's civil status records, who executes the marriage in the family record, gives the marriage certificate an execution number, and enters that on the marriage certificate (Box 24).

● If the wife is Lebanese

The marriage certificate is transferred to the Ma'amour Noufous of the place of her civil status records. The latter removes the wife's name from her parent's record and transfers it to her husband's if both spouses are from the same region. If they are not, the Ma'amour

Noufous sends the executed marriage certificate to the Ma'amour Noufous of the place of the wife's records to remove her name from her parents' civil status records.

● If the wife is qaid al dars

The marriage certificate is sent to the General Directorate of General Security who records the change of the wife's marital status

● If the wife is a Registered Palestinian Refugee

The marriage certificate is sent to the Refugee Directorate to record the change of the wife's marital status

● If the wife is Syrian or a Foreigner

The Ma'amour Noufous delivers to the wife the executed marriage certificate. The wife should then follow the registration and execution of the marriage certificate with the authorities of her country of nationality.

After completion of the entire marriage registration process, individuals may obtain from the Ma'amour Noufous of the place of the husband's civil status records updated documentation indicating their new marital status (the request may also be made via Liban Post):

- A family civil status extract
- An individual civil status extract

Registration of marriage of a Lebanese who has converted from one religion/sect to another.

The conversion of religion or sect does not affect the marriage registration process unless the date of the official execution of the conversion in the individual civil status records is later than the date of the marriage. In this case, the registration of the marriage is dependent upon the approval of the Director General of the Civil Status Directorate. Hence, additional documents are required when submitting a declaration of marriage to the Ma'amour Noufous:

- An authenticated copy of each event registered previously in the concerned individual's civil status extracts (marriage, divorce, etc.);
- An attestation with the registration number and date of the conversion.

This is followed by a number of steps:

- The Ma'amour Noufous prepares a note giving his opinion on the necessity of executing the marriage certificate.
- The Ma'amour Noufous sends his note to the Head of the Civil Status Division in the Governorate for his opinion.
- The Head of the Civil Status Division sends his opinion to the Director General of the Civil Status Division.
- The Director General decides whether to approve or disapprove the registration.

If the Director General approves the registration the Ma'amour Noufous follows the procedures for the registration of the marriage certificate.

NOTE: If the Director General decides not to approve the execution of the marriage certificate, see Afterword: "IF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES REFUSE TO REGISTER A MARRIAGE".

5

SECTION FIVE

Declaration and execution of the marriage certificate
for qaid al dars, Syrian and foreign husbands

SECTION FIVE

Declaration and execution of the marriage certificate for qaid al dars, Syrian and foreign husbands

The procedures outlined here apply to all non-Lebanese husbands, including qaid al dars individuals, Syrians, and Palestinians, with the exception of Palestinian refugees registered with the Ministry of Interior – Refugee Directorate.

The marriage certificate, along with other required documents (See Annex 2) should be submitted for declaration to the competent authority, depending on where the marriage is concluded:

If the marriage is concluded in Beirut:

- to the General Directorate of Civil Status – Foreigners’ Events Division

If the marriage is concluded outside Beirut:

- to the Civil Status Division in the Governorate where the marriage was concluded

The relevant authority

- a) registers the event of marriage in the register
- b) gives the marriage certificate a receipt number
- c) enters the receipt number on the marriage certificate (Boxes 22 and 23).

1 Conformation of the Spouses’ Civil Status Records

Qaid al Dars Husband

- The marriage certificate is sent from the Foreigners’ Events Division or the Civil Status Division in the Governorate to the General Directorate of General Security – Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division for conformation of the civil status records of the husband.
- General Security sends the marriage certificate back to the Foreigners’ Events Division or the Civil Status Division in the Governorate where the marriage was concluded.
- The Foreigners’ Events Division or the Civil Status Division in the Governorate registers the marriage certificate and gives it a number. It adds the registration number on the marriage certificate (Box 24).

Syrian or foreign husband

The conformation is done by the competent authorities to whom the marriage certificate and all the required documents are submitted.

Wife of a qaid al dars, Syrian or foreign husband

The marriage certificate is sent from the Foreigners’ Events Division or the Civil Status Extract Division in the Governorate where the marriage was concluded to the different competent authorities responsible for the conformation of the civil status of the wife according to her nationality or legal status.

• Lebanese wife

- To the Ma’amour Noufous where the wife has her civil status records. Qaid al Dars wife
- To the General Directorate of General Security – Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division

• Registered Palestinian refugee wife

- To the Directorate of Refugee Affairs

• Syrian or foreign wife

The conformation is done automatically by the Foreigners’ Events Division based on the following documents:

- A Syrian wife should submit, with the marriage certificate, an individual civil status extract newly issued by the Syrian authorities and authenticated by both the Syrian and Lebanese Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and the Syrian Embassy in Lebanon; or a valid passport and other documentation proving marital status and all other civil status details.
- A foreign wife should submit a valid passport and other documentation proving her marital status and all other personal status details.

2 Execution of the Marriage of Foreigners (other than Palestinian Refugees)

Following the conformation process, the Foreigners’ Events Division or the Civil Status Division executes the marriage certificate by registering it and gives it a number

(entered in Box 24). After this is done, the marriage certificate is sent again to the relevant authorities to update the individual civil status records:

Qaid al Dars Husband

- The Foreigners' Events Division or the Civil Status Division in the Governorate sends the registered marriage certificate to the General Directorate of General Security - Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division to update the event in the individual's records.

Syrian or Foreign Husband

- The Foreigners' Events Division notifies the authorities of the husband's country of origin, via the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the marriage.
- The Foreigners' Events Division returns the registered marriage certificate to the Syrian or foreign husband.

The Syrian or foreign husband should then follow the required procedures to register the marriage in his country of origin.

Notification of the registration of the marriage in Lebanon does not constitute an official declaration by the foreign husband to his country's authorities. This should be done directly by the husband according to the rules and procedures of his country.

3 Execution of the marriage certificate for the wife of a foreign, qaid al dars, or syrian husband

• If the wife is Lebanese

The marriage certificate is transferred to the Ma'amour Noufous of the place of her civil status records. The latter records the event of the marriage but does not remove her name from her parent's civil status records, so that she keeps her Lebanese nationality.

• If the wife is qaid al dars

The marriage certificate is sent by the Foreigners' Events Division or Civil Status Division to the General Directorate of General Security, who records the change in the wife's marital status.

• If the wife is a Registered Palestinian Refugee

The marriage certificate is sent by the Foreigners' Events Division or Personal Status Division to the Refugee Directorate to record the change of the wife's marital status.

• If the wife is Syrian or a Foreigner

The Foreigners' Events Division or Civil Status Division delivers to the wife the executed marriage certificate. The wife should follow the registration and execution of the marriage certificate with the authorities of her country of nationality.

Chart No. 6: Stages for the declaration and execution of the marriage of a kaid al dars, Syrian or foreign husband



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SECTION SIX

Declaration and execution of the marriage certificate of a registered palestinian refugee husband

SECTION SIX

Declaration and execution of the marriage certificate of a registered palestinian refugee husband

All general steps and procedures detailed in **Sections Two and Three** apply to registered Palestinian refugees.

Authorities Competent to Register with:

- The marriage must be declared with the General Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs - Refugee Directorate, at the Ministry of Interior.

1 Declaration Procedures

The following documents must be submitted:

- The original and a copy of the marriage certificate with identification documents (**see Annex 2**).
- If the marriage was concluded outside Beirut, the marriage certificate must be signed and authenticated by the Ma'amour Noufous where the marriage took place.
- An application for registration of the marriage issued by the mukhtar where the husband lives. This document indicates full name, name of mother, and the census and file numbers.

The Directorate of Refugees registers the marriage certificate in its incoming register, gives it a number and records it on the marriage certificate (Box 22 and 23).

2 Conformation of the Spouses' Civil Status Records

Conformation of the Palestinian refugee husband's civil status records is conducted by the Refugee Directorate. This procedure differs for the wife according to her nationality:

- **Lebanese wife**

The Refugee Directorate sends the marriage certificate to the Civil Status Officer of the place of records of the wife. Once the conformation is completed, the marriage certificate is returned to the Directorate of Refugees.

- **Registered Palestinian refugee wife**

The Refugee Directorate itself conducts the conformation of the civil status records.

- **Qaid al Dars wife**

The Refugee Directorate sends the marriage certificate to the General Directorate of General Security - Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division. It is returned to the Refugee Directorate after conformation is completed.

- **Syrian or Foreign wife**

The conformation is done automatically by the Refugee Directorate based on an individual civil status extract for a Syrian wife and a valid passport (translated into Arabic) for a foreigner.

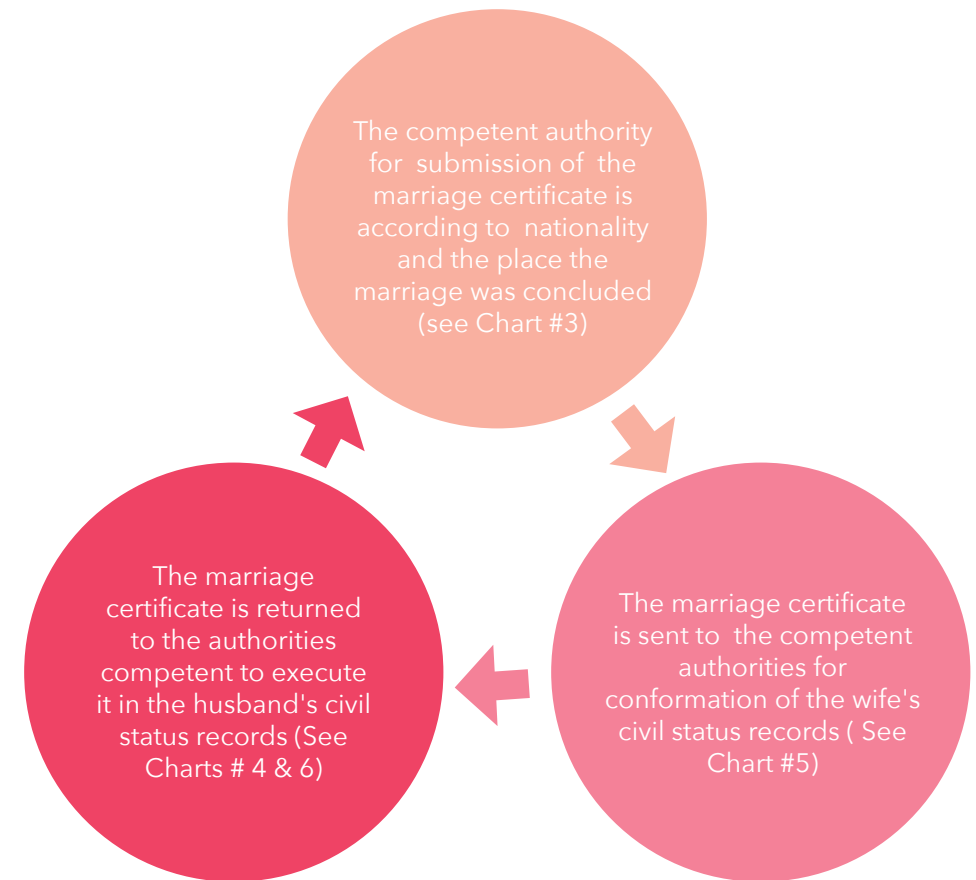
- **Maqtoum al Qaid wife**

The Refugee Directorate sends the marriage certificate to the General Directorate of General Security who conducts an investigation and confirms whether the wife is maqtoum al qaid. The Refugee Directorate registers the marriage if the result of the investigation confirms that the wife is maqtoum al qaid (In this case there is automatic administrative registration of the marriage, with no need for referral to a court/a court decision - unlike the case of a maqtoum al qaid woman married to a Lebanese man).

3 The execution of the marriage certificate of a registered palestinian refugee

Following the conformation of civil status records, the General Directorate for Refugee Affairs executes the marriage certificate in the husband's civil status records and gives the marriage certificate a number (Box 24).

Chart no. 7: Summary of procedures for the registration of marriage for all categories (Lebanese, qaid al dars, Syrian, registered palestinian refugees and foreigners)



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SECTION SEVEN

Registering a marriage concluded outside Lebanon of Lebanese nationals, qaid al dars, and registered Palestinian refugees

SECTION SEVEN

Registering a marriage concluded outside Lebanon of Lebanese nationals, qaid al dars, and registered Palestinian refugees

The steps are:

1 Concluding the Marriage

- Conclude and register the marriage according to the rules and procedure of the foreign country where the marriage is taking place;
- Obtain the official marriage certificate issued by the competent authorities* in the foreign country.

*If the authorities request a certificate of permission to marry, you may obtain it from the territorially competent Lebanese consulate where the marriage takes place after presenting a recently issued individual civil status extract.

2 Registering the Marriage with the Lebanese Consulate

- Present the official marriage certificate, obtained from the competent authorities, to the Lebanese consulate to register the marriage, along with all other required identification documents.
- The Consulate will authenticate the marriage certificate, register it in its registry, and give it a number.
- The Consulate sends the marriage certificate, by diplomatic pouch, with a covering letter, to the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the marriage to be executed in the spouses' civil status register in Lebanon.
- Keep the number of the registration of the marriage certificate, the date of the transfer, and date of the diplomatic pouch in which it was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to be able to follow up on the execution process and/or make enquiries.

Ask the local Lebanese consulate for details of all the approved procedures and documents required.

The cost of the declaration of the marriage with the consulate is free. However, there are statutory fees, as well as discretionary costs, for this procedure to be carried out with the competent authorities in Lebanon.

③ Execution of the marriage certificate in Lebanon

- The Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs transfers the marriage certificate to the Emigrants' Division at the General Directorate of Civil Status.
- The Emigrants' Division sends the marriage certificate to the General Directorate of Civil Status, which transfers it to the different competent authorities to receive the marriage declaration and (as per the procedures detailed in Chart no 3), to proceed with the registration and execution of the marriage certificate as follows:

- **If one of the spouses is Lebanese**

The marriage certificate is sent to the Ma'amour Noufous of the district where the husband has his civil status records.

- **If the spouse is qaid al dars**

The marriage certificate is sent to the Head of the Civil Status Division in the Governorate of the spouse's civil status records, or to the Foreigners' Events Division if the records are in Beirut, and then to the General Directorate of General Security - Special Categories and Qaid al Dars Division.

- **If the spouse is a registered Palestinian refugee**

The marriage certificate is sent to the Directorate for Refugee Affairs.

NOTE: All individuals are advised to follow up and make sure that the execution of their marriage with the General Directorate of Civil Status has been completed. This may be done in person or by an authorized person.

If the information and documents relating to the marriage do not conform or are incomplete, the Emigrants' Division returns the file to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take the necessary steps for the marriage certificate to be corrected or completed as necessary before executing it in Lebanon.

8

SECTION EIGHT

Marriages that cannot be administratively registered

SECTION EIGHT

Marriages that cannot be administratively registered

1 Stateless Persons (Maqtoumi al Qaid) and their Spouses: Some Kind of Registration

Maqtoum al qaid men are not able to register civil status events, such as marriages and the births of their children, as they have no civil register. However, possible judicial solutions are proposed for certain categories of maqtoum al qaid in Section Nine.

Today in Lebanon there is no official register with the General Directorate of Civil Status for undocumented, stateless persons (maqtoum al qaid). Without civil status records, this category of the population cannot register a marriage, or any other civil status event, such as the birth of a child. The lack of civil status records for maqtoum al qaid persons, and the deterrent effects of long and complicated procedures to obtain court decisions, have in many cases contributed to the creation and perpetuation of cases of statelessness in the country.

However, the situation differs in cases of maqtoum al qaid individuals married to a person who holds a nationality or other legal status (Lebanese or foreign national, a registered Palestinian refugee, or a person who holds qaid al dars status). In these cases there is some kind of registration for the maqtoum al qaid spouse, which is usually done through a court decision. (However, registration of a marriage involving a registered Palestinian refugee husband is done automatically by the Directorate for Refugee Affairs. See Section Six for details).

● Maqtoum al Qaid Man

- **If the wife is a Lebanese national or Qaid al Dars or a Registered Palestinian Refugee:** The wife can obtain a "correction" to her civil status record (taṣḥīḥ) after her marriage to a maqtoum al qaid man, by requesting that the General Directorate for Civil Status puts a reference to her marriage (ishara) on her record. This is not done automatically but through a court decision. The only consequence of this procedure is to ensure that the woman's marital status is mentioned in her civil status records. It does not have any other legal

consequences, i.e. she cannot register her children in her records, nor pass on to them her nationality if she is Lebanese, or her legal status if she is qaid al dars or a registered Palestinian refugee.

- **If the wife is holding a foreign nationality:** The marriage cannot be registered with the Foreigners' Events Division. The rules and procedures in her country of nationality determine whether the marriage can be registered there. However, the fact that she does not have an officially registered marriage certificate (from Lebanon) may pose problems for her in registering her marriage in her own country.

● Maqtoum Al Qaid Woman - The situation depends on the legal status of the husband:

- **If the husband is Lebanese:** The marriage cannot be registered with the General Directorate of Civil Status. In this case the husband is referred by the competent authorities to a Single Judge court in order to obtain a court decision ordering that a reference to his marriage (ishara) be made on his civil status record, and that his marital status be changed from single to married in that record.
- **If the husband is a foreigner:** He cannot register his marriage in Lebanon, and should consult the authorities of his country of nationality regarding the vital step of registering his marriage with them. The fact that he does not have an officially registered marriage certificate may pose problems for registering his marriage in his country of origin, and consequently his children will not obtain his nationality and will become stateless.

2 Those whose marriage took place prior to naturalization but was not declared when the application for naturalization was submitted

For those who were married but were naturalized as Lebanese as a single person (either because the marriage was not declared when applying for naturalization, or the competent authorities made an error and omitted it in the naturalization decree) their marriage, concluded before naturalization, cannot be registered administratively, as this contradicts the marital status registered in their civil status records at the time of naturalization.

In these cases it is necessary to go to court to obtain a decision of correction to the civil status records. It is advisable to seek advice from a legal expert to know what the

possibilities are and the procedures required, due to the lack of consensus on how such cases should be treated, the overall complexity of the issue, and the uniqueness of the cases involved, which must be looked at on an individual basis.

3 Palestinian Refugees not registered with the Ministry of Interior (non-IDs)

Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon who are not registered with the General Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs (commonly referred to as 'non-IDs'), suffer from a lack of legal status in Lebanon because they cannot provide up-to-date documentation from the countries they came from (their documentation is not renewed by the authorities of those countries) It is important to note that the card issued by the General Security for some undocumented Palestinians, commonly known as a Non-ID, has no legal consequences and therefore cannot be used to register a marriage. However, there are cases in which registration of marriage for non-ID Palestinians is possible:

• Undocumented Palestinian Refugee Man

- **If the wife is a Lebanese national or Qaid al Dars or a Registered Palestinian Refugee:** The wife can "correct" her civil status records (taṣḥīḥ qaid) following her marriage to an undocumented Palestinian refugee only by requesting that the General Directorate of Civil Status puts a reference to her marriage (ishara) on her civil status record. This is not done automatically but through a court decision. The only consequence of this procedure is to ensure that the woman's marital status is mentioned on her civil status records. It does not have any other legal consequences, i.e. she cannot register her children on her record nor give them her nationality if she is Lebanese or her legal status if she is qaid al dars or has registered Palestinian refugee status.
- **If the wife is holding a foreign nationality:** The marriage is not registered in Lebanon. The rules and procedures in her country of nationality will determine whether the marriage can be registered there. However, the fact that she does not have an officially registered marriage certificate (from Lebanon) may pose problems for her in registering her marriage in her own country.

• Undocumented Palestinian Refugee Woman

The situation depends on the legal status of the husband:

- **If the husband is Lebanese:** It is not possible to register the marriage automatically with the Lebanese authorities. The husband is referred by the authorities to a Single Civil Judge court in order to obtain a court decision ordering that a reference (ishara) is put on his civil status record and that his marital status be changed from single to married.
- **If the husband is a foreigner:** He should consult the rules and regulations of his country of nationality to know if he can register his marriage. However, the fact that he does not have an officially registered marriage certificate may be a serious obstacle to registering his marriage in his country of origin, and consequently his children will not obtain his nationality and will become stateless.

SECTION NINE

Solutions for marriages that cannot be administratively registered

Stateless (Maqtoum al Qaid) Persons

Until Lebanon creates a legal framework for stateless persons, the current solutions are not straightforward. However, it is imperative to look at measures that will provide stateless persons with a legal status (and ultimately a nationality) in order to live as legal persons who can, inter alia, marry and register their marriage. The treatment of this issue at length is not the purpose of this manual. However, here, in brief, are the currently available solutions to statelessness for various categories of stateless individuals. These solutions will enable them to register a marriage and other civil status events.

- **Registration law suit (Da'wa Qaid/Da'wa Noufous)**

Applies to three categories of stateless persons whose fathers or grandfathers have civil status records in Lebanon

- A stateless person born to a Lebanese father who has a civil status record, and whose marriage is registered, but not the birth of his children, may file a Da'wa Qaid or Da'wa Noufous before a Single Civil Judge, requesting to be registered in the father's records. The stateless person must provide proof of relationship to the father. This can be obtained from the religious court (known as a ruling of confirmation of affiliation) or through a DNA test. The court ruling asks the General Directorate of Civil Status Records to register the stateless person's birth on the civil status records of the father.
- For a stateless person born to a Lebanese father who has civil status records but whose marriage is not registered (and hence the births of his children are not registered), the marriage of the father must first be registered in order for the stateless person to be able to file a registration lawsuit before the Single Civil Judge to obtain a court ruling asking the General Directorate of Civil Status to register his/her birth on the father's civil status records. The stateless person must provide proof of relationship to the father (confirmation of affiliation from the

9

SECTION NINE

Solutions for marriages that cannot be administratively registered

religious court) or through a DNA test. Although the registration of the father's marriage can be done administratively and a lawsuit filed for the registration of the birth of his children, it is the practice to make two separate requests before the court, i.e. registration of the marriage and the Da'wa Qaid.

- For a stateless person born to a Lebanese father who is not registered, the same court procedures apply: filing a law suit of Da'wa Qaid before the Single Civil Judge, requesting the registration of the father in his father's records. Here also, the same tools can be used to provide evidence of the affiliation of the father to his father (applicant's grandfather). The stateless person can then apply for the father's marriage and his/her own birth to be entered in the father's civil status records.

• **Nationality Law Suit (Da'wa Jensiya)**

For those who can claim Lebanese nationality

A nationality law suit is filed before the territorially competent Court of First Instance, Civil Chamber (in the place of residence) to declare a person's Lebanese nationality if the applicant can prove that he/she meets the conditions of one of the cases below:

- A stateless person of a Lebanese family not registered in the 1932 census who can prove that they were Ottoman subjects and resident in Lebanon on 30 August 1924;
- A stateless person born in Lebanon who can prove his/her birth in Lebanon without having acquired the nationality of a foreign mother or father;
- A stateless person born in Lebanon who can prove his/her birth in Lebanon to parents whose nationality is unknown or who are of stateless origin;
- A stateless person born in Lebanon who can prove his/her birth in Lebanon of unknown parents.

NOTE: If you are a stateless person of a foreign family or foreign father, you have to consult the legal provisions of the country of origin of your family regarding the acquisition of nationality. After you acquire that nationality, you will be treated as a foreigner in Lebanon and the rules and regulations concerning foreigners will apply to you.

AFTERWORD

AFTERWORD

If the Lebanese authorities refuse to execute a marriage certificate

In certain situations the General Directorate of Civil Status may refuse to register and execute a marriage certificate (for instance, if submission for marriage registration was not done within the first year, or the wife is maqtoum al qaid, or the husband changed his religion after the marriage, or it is a civil marriage that the administration is refusing to automatically register unless it obtains the approval of the Minister of Interior). Faced with this situation, an individual can appeal against the decision to a higher administrative authority (preferred) or take the case to court. In all cases, however, to be able to appeal it is necessary to obtain a written decision of refusal to register the marriage certificate from the relevant authorities.

Any individual can make the appeal him/herself, without a lawyer. However, it is preferable to seek legal advice and legal aid.

If the appeal to the General Directorate of Civil Status is not successful, an individual may file a lawsuit before the Single Judge sitting in the court with territorial competence to look at the case, i.e. the place of civil status records of one of the spouses. If the applicant's file is complete and has all the necessary evidence required, the judge's decision orders the Directorate General of Civil Status to register the marriage. If the Judge's decision is negative, the applicant may appeal to the Civil Court of Appeal within 15 days of the decision. The appeal must be submitted by a legal counselor.

[Ask the court clerk or the Bar Association in Beirut or Tripoli regarding legal aid.](#)

ANNEX No.1

Documents required for contracting a religious or civil marriage

- Attestation of abode issued by the mukhtar
- The 'izen shar'i (for religious marriages) or a recently issued civil status extract (akhraj qaid) for a civil marriage
- A certificate of marital status (issued by the religious authority or the Civil Status Officer)
- A certificate of medical tests confirming that there are no medical impediments to the conclusion of the marriage. This should be issued by a legally recognized laboratory. For Sunnis and Shi'a, the medical certificate should be issued by an accredited doctor of the Shari'a Court.
- If one of the partners is a foreigner, the religious authority will require an approval from the General Directorate of General Security before issuing the permission to marry, although there is no law requiring this. It may take up to two months to obtain this approval. This approval is not required if the marriage is concluded outside Lebanon. (See Section Two for details of required documents).

ANNEX No.2

Identification documents required for all stages of contracting, authenticating and registering a marriage in Lebanon, according to nationality

For Lebanese nationals

- A recently issued individual civil status extract (akhraj qaid)
- Family civil status extract
- The identity card issued by the Ministry of Interior

For holders of qaid al dars permits

- A valid qaid al dars residency permit issued by the General Directorate of General Security

For Syrians

- Individual Syrian identity card
- Individual civil status extract issued recently by the Syrian authorities and authenticated by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian Embassy in Lebanon (for a Syrian husband, a valid passport can replace the individual civil status extract)
- Family civil status extract issued recently by the Syrian authorities and authenticated by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian Embassy in Lebanon
- A return card (batqa awda) issued by the Syrian authorities, or a residency permit issued by the Lebanese General Directorate of the General Security

For Palestinian refugees registered with the Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Political and Refugee Affairs (GDPRA)

- Palestinian refugee ID issued by the GDPRA

For Palestinians not registered with GDPRA

- A valid passport issued by the Palestinian Authority
- An Attestation of Nationality issued by the Palestinian Embassy in Lebanon

Or

- A valid laissez-passer issued by any foreign country
- An entry stamp showing the date of entry to Lebanon

For Maqtoum al Qaid

- An attestation from the local mukhtar if born to a Lebanese father
- A resume of record issued by the Directorate General of General Security if born to a stateless father

For Foreigners (other than Palestinians and Syrians, Qaid al Dars, or Maqtoumi al Qaid)

- A valid passport
- Legal residency permit
- A birth certificate issued and authenticated by the competent authorities of the country of origin and by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or an official attestation detailing the personal civil status.

For recognized refugees (other than Palestinians and Syrians)

Who are not in a position to provide the documents required to certify their legal status in Lebanon

- In exceptional cases and for practical reasons, the refugee certificate issued by UNHCR may be accepted to register the marriage.

List of Personal Status Laws:

- Ottoman Family Rights Law, dated 25 October 1917
- The System of Administrative Transactions related to Family Rights Law, dated 31 December 1917
- Personal Status Law for the Druze Confession, dated 24 February 1948
- Law of Personal Status and Legal Procedures for the Catholic Confessions, dated 22 February 1949
- Marriage Law for the Eastern Catholic Confessions Endorsed by Pope Pius XII, dated 22 February 1949
- Marriage Law for the Lebanese Latin Confession, dated 22 February 1949
- Personal Status Law for the Armenian Orthodox Confession, dated 22 February 1949
- Personal Status Law for the Syriac Orthodox Confession, dated 22 February 1949
- Personal Status Law for the Assyrian Orthodox Confession, dated 22 February 1949
- Religious Provisions Law for the Israelite Confession in Lebanon, dated 22 February 1949
- Law of Personal Status and Legal Procedures for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the East, dated 16 October 2003
- Personal Status Law for the Evangelical Confession in Syria and Lebanon, dated 1 April 2005
- Law of Personal Status and Legal Procedures the Coptic Orthodox Confession in Lebanon, dated 11 September 2010

This manual is intended as a guide primarily for organizations and institutions providing advice on marriage registration or involved in contracting and registering marriages. It is, however, written and organized to allow ease of access, for all concerned, to the information in it. It is hoped that the use of this manual will facilitate access to marriage registration, and that the Lebanese authorities will adopt it, distribute it widely and participate in enhancing it with additional information.



For further information on any point or issue in this manual, please contact Frontiers Ruwad Association on 01 383 556, 01 389 556, 03 457 324