

The Law Regulating the Entry of non-Syrians to Syria

Law 2, 2014, banning the entry or exit of any person to the Syrian Arab Republic, except for those who hold a valid passport (or any valid substitute document) carrying an entry visa obtained from one of the Syrian Arab Republic diplomatic or consular missions abroad (or from any authority duly authorized by the Syrian Arab Republic).

Here is the text of the law.

Law No. 2

The President of the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, and based on the approval of the Parliament in its session held on 3 Jumada I 1435 AH (corresponding to 4 March 2014 AD), issues the following:

Chapter 1: List of Definitions

Article 1

With regard to the provisions of this law, each of the following expressions shall have the meaning set out next to it:

The Ministry (of Interior)	The Ministry of Interior.
The Minister (of Interior)	The Minister of the Interior.
The Department (or DoIP)	The Department of Immigration and Passports.
The Director	The Director of the Department of Immigration and Passports.
An Arab	A person who is a national of an Arab state.
(A non-Arab) Foreigner	A person who is neither a national of the Syrian Arab Republic nor of any other Arab country.
(Governorate-level) Branch	A branch of the Department of Immigration and Passports (DoIP) that is located in a Syrian Governorate.
(Area-level) Section	A section of the Department of Immigration and Passports that is located in the area.
(Border) Center	An Immigration and passports border port (land, air, or sea).
Entry Visa	A permission to enter (or pass through) the lands of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is granted to non-Syrian nationals.
Exit Visa	A permission to leave the lands of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is granted to non-Syrian nationals.
Deportation	An order issued by the competent authorities to deport a person (an Arab, or a non-Arab foreign national) from the country, in accordance with specific cases provided by law.
A Refugee	Anyone who has been granted the status of a refugee in accordance with international agreements, taking into account the legal status of registered Palestinian refugees in Syria.

An Expatriate	Every Syrian Arab person living in a foreign country, or those of Syrian descent, or those who were born in the foreign country and have obtained its citizenship.
Solvency	A person's ability to meet their financial obligations (without resorting to borrowing money) during their stay in the Syrian Arab Republic.
Laissez Passez	An Official document issued by the Immigration and Passport Department (subject to the approval of the Minister of the Interior) that is granted to persons of unknown nationality, or refugees, or persons of known nationality who cannot obtain passports from their embassies, as well as their wives and children.

Chapter 2: Entry and Exit Visas, Documents

Article 2

- A. Entry to and exit from the Syrian Arab Republic is prohibited except for those who hold a valid passport (or any valid substitute document that confers right of return) issued by the competent authorities in their country (or by any other authority recognized by the Syrian Arab Republic).
- B. The passport (or substitute document) must carry a valid entry visa obtained from one of our diplomatic or consular missions abroad, or any other authority entrusted to do so by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.
- C. Nationals of foreign countries in which the Syrian Arab Republic does not have diplomatic representation shall receive entry and transit visas directly from DoIP border Centers.
- D. The DoIP Director is authorized to allow, after verification, foreign nationals of any nationality to enter the Syrian Arab Republic.

Article 3

Entry to and exit from the Syrian Arab Republic is only allowed at the locations prescribed by the Minister of Interior and only with the permission of the competent authority at the border. The passport (or substitute document) must be stamped to indicate entry/exit.

Article 4

- A. The Minister of Interior (in coordination with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates) shall issue a decision detailing the types of entry visas, the authorities allowed to grant them, the conditions and procedures for granting them, their validity periods, and cases of visa exemption.
- B. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates shall set the fees of entry visas.
- C. The Minister of Interior, in coordination with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, and in coordination with the Minister of Labor, shall determine the types of work visas, the authorities that may grant them, the conditions and procedures for granting them, periods of validity, duration of stay, the number of visas that may be issued, and cases of exemption.
- D. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates shall determine the fees of work visas, in coordination with the Minister of Labor.
- E. An entry visas granted by a Syrian diplomatic or consular mission abroad does not automatically give the holder the right to enter the Syrian Arab Republic. Such a visa needs the approval of the competent DoIP border center.

Article 5

The Minister of Interior shall specify in a decision the types of transit visas, their forms, conditions for granting them to Arab and non-Arab foreigners and refugees, procedures for obtaining them, and cases of partial and total exemption from fees. The ticket fees shall be determined in coordination with the Minister of Finance.

Article 6

- A. Subject to the provisions of Article 32 of this law, non-Syrian Arabs and non-Syrian Foreigners who have overstayed the residency or visa time limit shall receive the punishment set forth in Chapter 8 of this law before being able to obtain an exit visa.
- B. The Minister of Interior shall determine the requirements for granting an exit visa in a decision that shall set forth the requirements for granting an exit visa, validity period, the authorities that may grant exit visas, exemption cases, and the fees (which must not be lower than 500 SYP).

Article 7

The Minister of Interior may exempt any Arab or non-Arab foreigner from having to obtain a visa or having to have a passport.

Article 8

An Arab or non-Arab located in the Syrian Arab Republic should present their passport (or a substitute document) when requested to do so by the competent authorities. In the event of loss or destruction of the passport (or substitute document), they must inform the Department of Passports and Immigration, or its nearest branch, or the nearest police center, within one week of the event.

Article 9

Ship captains, airplane pilot, and train drivers, when entering or leaving the Syrian Arab Republic, must submit to the competent authorities a list of the names of workers on their ships (or planes, or trains) and a list of the names of passengers, with information about them. They must furthermore inform the competent authorities of the names of passengers who do not have passports, or who hold incorrect or expired passports. They must prevent such passengers from boarding or disembarking from the ship (or plane, or train) without permission from the competent authorities.

Chapter 3: Registration Procedures for Arab and non-Arab Foreigners

Article 10

The Minister of Interior shall issue the instructions and procedures for prevention of entry to or departure from the Syrian Arab Republic, the mechanism for the inclusion of banned persons' names, the mechanism for writing off their names, and ways to file objections.

Article 11

A foreigner who has entered the Syrian Arab Republic and who desires to stay must personally submit a statement at the Department of Passports and Immigration (or one of its governorate-level branches, or one of its area-level sections), according to the approved form, and within fifteen days from the date of entry.

Article 12

The Director may exempt an Arab or non-Arab foreigner from the requirement to file a statement, for considerations having to do with diplomatic courtesy, or for another acceptable consideration. In such a

case, a written declaration (using the prescribed form) must be provided to DoIP or one of its governorate-level branches.

Article 13

- A. An Arab or non-Arab foreigner who wishes to change his/her place of residence must inform the DoIP (or one of its governorate-level branches in the other Syrian governorates) of the new address. In the event that the new address is outside the governorate of the old address, the foreigner must present himself/herself, within three days of arrival, at the competent DoIP governorate-level branch, or the nearest police center in the town he/she has moved to.
- B. Tourists who have entered the Syrian Arab Republic within a tourism group and with a tourist entry visa are exempted from the provisions of the preceding paragraph, for one month after the date of arrival.

Article 14

Every owner of a hotel (or inn, or any other place of like character), or the person in charge of administering such a place, or any person who takes in (or leases a house to) an Arab or a non-Arab foreigner, must inform the competent authorities of the name of the Arab or non-Arab foreigner and his/her address within three days from the date of arrival/departure.

Article 15

Any person who intends to employ or bring over an Arab or a non-Arab foreigner must obtain the approval of the Ministry of Labor.

Chapter 4: Residence Permits

Article 16

Every Arab or non-Arab foreigner who desires to stay in the Syrian Arab Republic must apply for a residence permit, and indicate the reason for seeking residence. He/she must be sufficiently wealthy, and must leave Syria at the end of his stay unless the permit is renewed.

Article 17

Residence permits are classified as follows:

- A. Special Residence Permit: Five years.
- B. Regular Residence Permit: Three years.
- C. Temporary Residence Permit: One year.
- D. Tourist Residence Permit: Three months, maximum.
- E. Work Residence Permit: One year, maximum, after Ministry of Labor approval.

Article 18

Special residency is granted to the following categories of Arab and non-Arab foreigners.

1. Those who have been actually residing, legally, in the Syrian Arab Republic, for at least 15 years.
2. Those who have been actually residing in the Syrian Arab Republic, legally, for at least five years, and who have been performing work that is useful to the national economy, or performing scientific, cultural, or technical services to the country. Such work or services will be defined by the Minister of Interior after consulting the competent authorities.

3. Scientists, authors, artists, thinkers, industrialists, business-people, people who run tourist projects, and any others who are performing a valuable service to the country, and who are specified in a decision to be issued by the Minister of Interior in coordination with the competent authorities.
4. Wives of Syrian citizens who have been actually residing, legally, in the Syrian Arab Republic, for at least two years, as long as the marriage endures.

Article 19

Regular residency is granted to the following categories of Arabs and non-Arab foreigners:

1. Those who were born in the Syrian Arab Republic, and who have been actually residing in the Syrian Arab Republic for three years or more at the time of application.
2. The children of Syrian women.
3. Those who have been actually residing in the Syrian Arab Republic legally for five years or more at the time of application.

Article 20

Temporary residence is granted to the following categories of Arab and non-Arab foreigners:

1. Students registered at public or private universities, colleges, and schools that are approved as such by the Syrian Government, and in accordance with the period of study.
2. Scientists, thinkers, artists, industrialists, and businesspersons.
3. Refugees, after providing the necessary proof of refugee status.
4. The husbands of female Syrian citizens, whether Arabs or foreigners.
5. The wives of male Syrian citizens, whether Arabs or non-Arab foreigners.
6. Patients who intend to stay for treatment.
7. Visitors who intend to visit with family members.
8. Investors.
9. Property owners.
10. Whomever the Director sees fit to grant residency for considerations relating to diplomatic courtesy or the public interest.

Article 21

Work residency can be granted to Arabs and non-Arab foreigners who have obtained the approval of the Ministry of Labor, in accordance with applicable laws.

Article 22

- A. Special residency and regular residency can be renewed, with a permission of the Director, if the duration of the resident's absence outside the Syrian Arab Republic exceeds six months but does not exceed one year.
- B. The right of an Arab or a non-Arab foreigner to previously obtained residency is dropped if he/she violates the provisions of the preceding paragraph, with the exception of Arabs and non-Arab foreigners who are absent for the purpose of study in schools, colleges, or universities, or to perform obligatory military service, if they provide proof of it.

Article 23

An Arab or a non-Arab foreigner who is granted residence for a particular purpose is prohibited from violating this purpose without the consent of the Minister of Interior or his authorized representative.

Article 24

The person granted residence and his/her spouse and minor children living with him/her may benefit from residence.

Article 25

The Minister of Interior shall issue a decision to set the procedure for granting and renewing residence, the authority allowed to grant residence, cases of exemption, forms of residence cards, application forms, consent forms, and the information that must be included.

Chapter 5: Deportation

Article 26

- A. A decision made by the Minister of interior shall identify cases of and procedures for deporting Arabs and foreigners outside the Syrian Arab Republic, and shall provide a mechanism of implementation and filing objections against deportation decisions. It shall also specify places of detention for those who are to be deported, taking into account security concerns and the public interest considerations.
- B. Arabs or foreigners who have already been deported may return to the Syrian Arab Republic upon the approval of the Minister of Interior.

Chapter 6: Exceptions

Article 27

Obtaining entry, exit and transit visas and residency permits by the members of diplomatic and consular corps, representatives of international and regional organizations recognized by the Syrian Arab Republic and those who enjoy the same legal status, and collecting fees from them shall be subject to the discretion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in accordance with the applicable international conventions in the Syrian Arab Republic and the principle of reciprocity. These visas shall be granted by the Syrian missions abroad or those authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates to do so.

Article 28

The following categories shall be excluded from the provisions of visas and residency permit contained in this Law:

1. Workers on ships, aircraft or trains who hold tickets shall be granted visas by the competent authorities. These visas entitle them to stay only as long as the vessel is at the port, the plane is at the airport or the train is in the station. The Minister of Interior shall make a decision on how the tickets to be marked by the competent authorities in ports, airports, stations and border posts when they enter, arrive to or depart the Syrian Arab Republic.
2. Passengers on ships, planes and trains who are allowed by the competent authorities to disembark at the Syrian Arab Republic as long as the vessel is at the port, the plane is at the airport or the train is in the station. Ship captains, airplane pilots and train divers must inform the competent authorities about the name of each passenger who has not shown up, and must hand over the passenger's passport to the authorities.
3. Nationals of the Arab and foreign states who live in the border areas adjacent to the Syrian Arab Republic who have been exempted under a special law provision or in accordance with bilateral agreements concluded between the two countries.

4. Nationals of the Arab and foreign states who are exempted under international agreements to which Syria is a party.
5. Expatriates within the limitations of the rules prescribed by a decision made by the Minister of Interior in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates.
6. Any person who the Minister of Interior deems to exempt through a written permission made for special considerations related to international courtesies and the public interest.

Chapter 7: Residency Fees

Article 29

- 1) The following fees shall be collected for issuing residency cards of all kinds:
 - a) 15,000 SYP for the Special Residency Card.
 - b) 15,000 SYP for the Work Residency Card, including Work Residency Card for actors.
 - c) 10,000 SYP for the Regular Residency Card.
 - d) 5,000 SYP for the Temporary Residency Card, for a year or less.
- 2) The amount collected for the Residency Card includes entry and exit visa fees for Arabs and foreigners during the period of validity of the Residency Card, no matter how many visas there are.

Article 30

The following categories shall be exempted once from the fees mentioned in the above Article:

1. Refugees of different nationalities and their spouses and minor children.
2. Arabs and foreigners who the Director deems to exempt for special considerations related to international courtesies or for being poor.

Chapter 8: Penalties

Article 31

Violators of Articles 2 and 3 of this Law shall be deported from the country upon a decision made by the Minister of Interior or any person authorized by the Minister.

Article 32

- A. A fine of 100 SYP per day of delay, up to a maximum of six months of delay, shall be imposed against any person who exceeds the validated period of his/her residency or visa. The fine shall be collected in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.
- B. The Minister of Interior may exempt a violator from the fine if the violator provides a valid excuse within seven days from the date of being notified about the violation.
- C. If the violator fails to pay the fine within seven days, he/she shall be referred to the competent judicial authority, and the fine stated in paragraph (a) of this Article shall be doubled.
- D. If the violation is for more than six months, the violator shall be punished by one to six months of imprisonment and shall be fined 25,000 to 50,000 SYP.

Article 33

Without prejudice to any more severe penalty provided for in other laws:

- A. Any person who violates the provisions of Articles 9-14 of this Law or the executive orders thereof shall be punished by one to six months of imprisonment and/or a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 SYP.

Additionally, any person who aids in perpetrating or attempting to perpetrate the violation shall be punished by the same penalty.

- B. Any person who violates or attempts to violate the provisions of paragraph (a) Article 2 and Article 3 of this Law or the executive orders thereof shall be punished by six months to two years of imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 SYP. Additionally, any person who aids in perpetrating or attempting to perpetrate the violation shall be punished by the same penalty.
- C. If the foreigner is a national of a state that is at war with the Syrian Arab Republic or the diplomatic relations with that state are severed, the penalty set forth in the above paragraph (b) shall be one to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 SYP.
- D. Any person who illegally enters or leaves the Syrian Arab Republic, or who is caught in border areas without a valid justification for being there or the reasons given for that turn out to be incorrect or in conflict with the circumstances of the arrest shall be punished by one to five years of imprisonment and/or a fine of 5,000,000 to 10,000,000 SYP, in accordance with Law No. 9 dated 25 June 2013.

Article 34

Any person who violates the provisions of Article 13 of this Law or the executive orders thereof shall be punished by one to six months of imprisonment and/or a fine of 25,000 to 50,000 SYP.

Article 35

Any person who refuses to comply with the decision to deport him/her shall be punished by six months to two years of imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 SYP in accordance with provisions of Article 26 of this Law, without prejudice to the implementation of the deportation. In the case of recidivism, the penalty shall be no less than six months of imprisonment.

Article 36

The same penalty provided for in paragraph (d) of Article 33 of this Law shall be applicable to any person who knowingly makes false statements to the competent authorities or provides them with incorrect documents in order to facilitate his/her entry to/residency in the Syrian Arab Republic or the entry/residency of others.

Article 37

If the convicted person does not pay the fine provided for in this Law, he/she shall be imprisoned one day for every one hundred SYP of the fine provided that imprisonment period does not exceed the period stipulated in the original punishment.

Article 38

Any person who violates the provisions of Articles 15-23 of this Law or the executive orders thereof shall be punished by one to six months of imprisonment and/or a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 SYP in addition to the penalties stipulated in the effective Labor Law. The violator shall also be deported and shall be entitled to return only after three years of deportation.

Article 39

In the case of recidivism of any of the violations contained in this Chapter, the penalty shall be doubled.

Article 40

The revenues of all fines incurred for the breaches of the provisions of this Law shall go to the Public Treasury of the State.

Chapter 9: Final Provisions

Article 41

In order to implement the provisions of this Law, instructions for the entry, exit, residency and movement of Arab and foreign nationals shall be issued by a decision of the Minister of Interior.

Article 42

Instructions for the entry, exit, residency and movement of the Palestinian refugees who hold Arab and foreign nationalities shall be issued by a decision of the Minister of Interior in accordance with the provisions related to them.

Article 43

The period of the illegal stay shall not be taken into account in calculating the periods specified for granting a residency in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

Article 44

The Legislative Decree No. 29 dated 15 January 1970 and all legal texts, decisions and instructions implementing its provisions shall be abolished from the date of the entry into force of this Law.

Article 45

This Law shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall be effective after three months as of the date of issuance.

Damascus on 10 Jumada I 1435 AH, corresponding to 11 March 2014 AD.