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Comments	This is a consolidated version. The Act, Legislative Decree No. 276 of 20 November 1969, was first published in the Official Gazette of 1969, p. 903. The amendment included here is: - Legislative Decree 17 of 13 February 1972, which was published in the Official Gazette of 1972, p. 351.

Nationality Act

The Head of the State,

Pursuant to the provisions of the Provisional Constitution, and to the Council of Ministers Decision No. 276 of 24 November 1969

Decreases the following:

CHAPTER ONE

Article 1

The following words and expressions shall have the meanings stated against them wherever they occur in the text unless otherwise indicated:

- A) The Country: The Syrian Arab Republic
- B) Nationality: The nationality of the Syrian Arab Republic
- C) The Ministry: The Ministry of the Interior
- D) The Minister: The Minister of the Interior
- E) Of full rights: Enjoying full civil rights, is over eighteen years, if comps mentis, and has never been declared incapable of running his affairs.
- F) A Syrian Arab: Any person who enjoys the nationality of the Syrian Arab Republic.
- G) An Expatriate Citizen: Any person of Arab origin who is not resident of an Arab state or holder of the nationality of an Arab state.
- H) Alien: Any person who does not enjoy the nationality of the Syrian Arab Republic or that of any other Arab country.
- I) Naturalized person: Is a person who has acquired the Nationality of the Syrian Arab Republic pursuant to the provisions of this Decree or any earlier nationality laws.

CHAPTER TWO: Confirmation

Article 2

The nationality of the Syrian Arab Republic shall be considered confirmed for everyone who was enjoying it in accordance with Legislative Decree No. 67 of 31 October 1961.

Article 3

The following shall be considered Syrian Arab Ipso facto:

- A. Anyone born inside or outside the country to a Syrian Arab father.
- B. Anyone born in the country to a Syrian Arab mother and to an unknown father.
- C. Anyone born in the country to unknown parents or to parents of unknown nationality or without one. a foundling in the country shall be considered born in it in the place in which he is found unless proved otherwise.([3])
- D. Anyone born in the country and was not Agreement the time of his birth entitled to acquire a foreign nationality by virtue of his parentage.

(Illegible Passage)

CHAPTER THREE: Naturalization

Article 4

The nationality may be granted to an alien by decree upon the recommendation of the Minister following an application from the alien concerned who should be:

- a. Of full civil rights.
- b. Resident in the country for at least five consecutive years prior to the submission of the application. Interrupted residence is considered consecutive provided absence does not exceed one year which is added to the five years.
- c. Free of all communicable diseases, infirmities, or ailments that may prevent him from work.
- d. Of good conduct and reputation and with no record of criminal offence or of freedom-restricting punishment in connection with infamous crimes unless rehabilitated.
- e. Of a specialization or expertise that may be beneficial to the country or to have a legitimate means of earning a living. Otherwise he should possess sufficient resources that free him from needing help from others.
- f. Able to read and write Arabic.

Article 5

The nationality is to be granted on an individual basis with the exception of members of one nuclear family.

Article 6

Nationality can be granted by a decree based on the Minister's recommendation without abiding by the nationality granting conditions stipulated in Article 4 for the following people:

- a. An expatriate citizen who applies for nationality.
- b. A person who has done to the country or the Arab nation noble services.
- c. A person who used to belong to an Arab country and who applies for nationality for reasons at discretion of the Minister.

Article 7

Nationality can be granted to adult children of a naturalized father upon their request by a decree based on the recommendation of the Minister. The required residence period provided for in paragraph b, article 4 is to be reduced to two years at least.

CHAPTER FOUR: Acquisition of Nationality Through Marriage

Article 8

1. Nationality shall be granted to the wife of a naturalized alien under the following conditions:

- a. An application in that regard has to be submitted to the Ministry.
- b. The marriage should hold valid for two years as of the date of the application.
- c. She should be residing in the country legally within the period mentioned in the preceding paragraph b.
- d. A Decree should be issued by the Minister granting her a nationality)

2. Minor children can acquire nationality unless their normal residence is outside the country and they retained the original nationality of their father according to (ITS) the regulating legislation.

3. Minor children who have acquired nationality according to the previous paragraph can choose their original nationality within the year subsequent to reaching adulthood. They are allowed to do so by a decision from the Minister.

Article 9

An alien woman who marries to a person holding the nationality cannot acquire it unless under the conditions provided for in article 8, paragraph 1.

CHAPTER FIVE: Losing Nationality Through Abandonment or Marriage or Reacquisition

Article 10

1. A Syrian Arab loses his nationality if he acquired a foreign nationality, provided a decree based on his request and a recommendation by the Minister allowing him to abandon his nationality after having fulfilled all his obligations and duties towards the state.

2. Any Syrian Arab being naturalized and having acquired a foreign nationality based on his request before being permitted to abandon his nationality retain it by all means and in all situations unless it was decided to deprive him from it according to the provisions of paragraph (a) of article 21. He is to be sanctioned with 1-3 months detention and a fine of 500-2000 Syrian pounds, or either one of these two penalties.

3. The general prosecutor cannot launch a common right lawsuit in this regard except with the written recommendation of the Minister.

Article 11

1. The acquisition by a Syrian Arab man of a foreign nationality, when authorized to do so, leads to the loss by the wife of her nationality if the relevant laws governing the new nationality of her husband provide for her acquisition of it, unless she applies, within a year of her husband's acquisition of a foreign nationality, to keep her Syrian Arab nationality.

2. Minor children forfeit their nationality if the relevant laws governing their father's new nationality provide for their acquisition of it.

3. Children subject to the provisions of the preceding paragraph may opt for their father's

original nationality during the year following their attainment of the age of majority if they have been living in the country or have returned to it for the purpose of permanent residence. Permission to do so is granted by the Minister.

Article 12

A Syrian Arab woman married to an alien shall keep her nationality unless she asks to acquire her husband's nationality assuming that the relevant nationality law allows it. The wife shall keep her nationality if the marriage contract is invalid under Syrian law but valid under the laws governing that contract.

Article 13([4])

A wife who has acquired the nationality in accordance with Articles 8, 9, 18 and 19 shall not lose it upon the end of the marriage unless she marries an alien and acquires his nationality or recovers her original nationality.

Article 14 (illegible passage)

Article 15

A woman recovers the nationality upon the death of her husband, her minor children shall have her nationality while retaining the right to return to the nationality of their father within a year of their reaching the age of majority. Permission to do so shall be given by the Minister.

CHAPTER SIX: Special provisions for other Arab nationals

Article 16

The nationality may be awarded to nationals of Arab countries by decision of the Minister following an application from the nationality seeker who is required to be:

- A. Of full civil rights.
- B. A national of an Arab country.
- C. Actually resident in the country Agreement the time of submitting the application.
- D. Free of communicable diseases and infirmities that would prevent him from work.
- E. Of good conduct and reputation with no past record of punishment for a criminal offense or of freedom restricting punishment for an infamous crime unless rehabilitated.

Article 17

Minors shall enjoy the nationality even if they actually reside outside the country.

Article 18

The acquisition by a man of the nationality entails his wife's acquisition if it provides that:

- A. She expresses a desire to do so by either signing her husband's application or submitting one of her own.
- B. She enjoys the nationality of an Arab country, is of Syrian origin, or was once a Syrian Arab national.

Article 19

A woman possessing the nationality of an Arab country or who is of Syrian origin, or of past Syrian Arab nationality who marries a Syrian Arab national shall become Syrian Arab by decision of the Minister upon following a written request from the woman concerned.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Deprivation and Restitution of Nationality

Article 20

Anyone who has obtained the nationality by misrepresentation or fraud shall be deprived thereof together with any others who may have acquired it by affiliation.

Article 21

A citizen may be deprived of the nationality by a decree pursuant to a proposal from the Minister stating full reasons thereof in any one of the following cases:

- A. If the person has, inconsistently with paragraph 1 of Article 10 above, acquired a foreign nationality.
- B. If the person has, of his own free will, entered into military service with a foreign state without prior authorization from the Minister of Defence.
- C. If the person has entered employment of any kind with a foreign state inside the country or outside it and has failed to heed the Minister's order to leave it within a stated period of time.
- D. If the person has engaged in any activity or work for a country which is in a state of war with the country.
- E. If it is established that the person has left the country clandestinely for a country that is in a state of war with the country.
- F. If the person was originally granted the nationality in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 and if investigations establish that depriving him of the nationality would be in the interest of the security and safety of the country.
- G. If the person has left the country indefinitely for the purpose of selling in a non-Arab country and if he has been away for more than three years and has been notified to return but has failed to respond or has given unconvincing reasons within three months of receiving the notification. In case he refuses to receive the notification, or is of unknown place of residence, or should it prove impossible to communicate the notification to him, publication in the Official Gazette shall be considered as notification.

Article 22

The Decree providing for depriving someone of nationality in accordance with paragraphs D and E above may also provide for the sequestration of his movable and immovable property.

Article 23

The deprivation of someone of nationality shall effect this person alone unless otherwise expressly stated.

Article 24

The nationality may be restituted to someone who had been deprived of it. Any moveable or immovable property sequestrated may also be returned; otherwise, compensation for it may be paid Agreement the value of that property Agreement the time of deprivation. This shall be enacted by decree upon a proposal from the Minister stating full reasons.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Final Provisions

Article 25

The Minister shall issue regulations on the issuance of the Expatriate Citizen Certificates, its

rights and privileges, following consultation with the Foreign Ministry.

Article 26

Decrees and Decisions on the acquisition or deprivation, recovery or restitution of the nationality shall have legal effect as of the date of their publication and shall have no retroactive effect. They must be published in the Official Gazette without prejudice to the rights of others of good intentions.

Article 27

All rulings in nationality issues shall be of general application and their content shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Article 28

Only the state council in its capacity as an administrative law body is competent to rule in nationality suits.

Article 29

The burden of proof in nationality suits shall be borne by the claimants.

Article 30

Except where otherwise clearly stated, children shall have the nationality of the father.

Article 31

Anyone who, for the purpose of proving possession or non possession of the nationality for himself or for others, knowingly presents false data or false documents, shall be liable to a term of no more than two year imprisonment or a fine not exceeding one thousand Syrian pounds, without prejudice to any severer penalties provided for in other laws.

Article 32

This Legislative Decree shall have no effect on any status acquired by virtue of earlier nationality legislations.

Article 33 ([5])

The Minister shall issue regulations for the implementation of this Legislative Decree.

Article 34

Legislative Decree No. 67 of 31 October 196... is hereby declared null and void along with all previous nationality legislations.

Article 35

This Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Damascus, 24 November 1969.
The Head of the State.

[3] See The Foundlings Act

[4] As amended by legislative Decree No. 17 of 13 February 1972. See footnote to Article 10 above.

[5] See Regulations governing Applications for Naturalization, and for Recovery and Renunciation of Nationality below.