

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: JOR32544
Country: Jordan
Date: 29 October 2007

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Questions

- 1. The SHRC Annual Report for 2005 indicates that Jordan tries to “respect the affairs” of exiled Syrians. Are you aware of any people of Syrian background, either born in Jordan or having resided there for many years, who have been refused Jordanian citizenship? If so, why might they be denied citizenship?**
- 2. Are you aware of any recent widespread official pressure on people of Syrian background, who have resided in Jordan for many years, to leave Jordan? If so, in your view what is the reason for that pressure?**

RESPONSE

The President of the Syrian Rights Committee (SHRC) in London, Mr Walid Saffour, was emailed the above questions on 26 October 2007 (RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to W. Saffour: ‘Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia’, 26 October – Attachment 1).

The following response was received on 29 October 2007 (Saffour, W. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: ‘Re: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia’, 29 October – Attachment 2).

- 1. The SHRC Annual Report for 2005 indicates that Jordan tries to “respect the affairs” of exiled Syrians. Are you aware of any people of Syrian background, either born in Jordan or having resided there for many years, who have been refused Jordanian citizenship? If so, why might they be denied citizenship?**

Mr Walid Saffour stated:

SHRC Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria (2005) mentioned that many countries including Jordan understand the needs of the Syrian Deportees and exiled as much as possible by not repatriating them to Syria, some have given the right to stay, other are allowed to travel to other countries. Jordan is the only settled neighbouring country which witnessed influx of Syrian exiles in early 1980s.

The other point is that no Syrian whether born in Jordan or lived for long years will acquire the Jordanian citizenship, because the law in Jordan does not make any time limit for granting Jordanian citizenship for non-Jordanians. Almost all the Syrians who have been living in Syria since early 1980s have never been granted citizenship or official permit to stay in Jordan. Few influential businessmen and rich people have been given Jordanian citizenship. The others have been allowed to stay, their circumstances of stay is subject to positive and negative effects according to the political relationships with Syria (Saffour, W. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'Re: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 29 October – Attachment 2).

2. Are you aware of any recent widespread official pressure on people of Syrian background, who have resided in Jordan for many years, to leave Jordan? If so, in your view what is the reason for that pressure?

Mr Saffour replied:

I have no solid evidence about any widespread pressure, but I said that the circumstances are subject to change according to the relationship with Syria and the international environment. The Jordanian authorities prohibited the Syrian opposition activities in late 1990s, therefore they denied the return of the leader of Muslim Brotherhood Movement (Mr. al-Bayanouni) in June 2000 after a visit to Europe. I have come across individual cases with claims that they were subject to pressure in Jordan, but I was unable to verify the truthfulness of such claims (Saffour, W. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'Re: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 29 October – Attachment 2).

List of Sources Consulted

Mr Walid Saffour, President, Syrian Human Rights Committee (SHRC), London

List of Attachments

1. RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to W. Saffour: 'Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 26 October.
2. Saffour, W. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'Re: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 29 October.