

PALESTINIAN DOCUMENTS REFERENCE GUIDE

Prepared by the USCIS Liaison to
the HSI Forensic Laboratory

28 January 2020



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Palestinian Documents Reference Guide

This guide is intended to assist USCIS personnel in their review of Palestinian travel and identity documents, whether issued by the Palestinian Authority or by third countries. This guide is not intended to help personnel authenticate such documents and should not be used for this purpose. Authentication requires formal forensic evaluation and/or overseas verification. Please direct any questions regarding the authenticity or security features of Palestinian documents to the USCIS Liaison at the HSI Forensic Laboratory. The USCIS Liaison can be reached via email at USCIS.Forensiclab.Inquiries@USCIS.DHS.Gov.

This guide is intended for the use of USCIS personnel only and is not a legal document. Do not distribute this guide or disseminate its contents outside of USCIS without the prior approval of the USCIS Liaison at the HSI Forensic Laboratory.

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Introduction

The Palestinian Authority is an interim self-governing body located on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Israel to the west and the Dead Sea and Jordan to the east. On September 3, 1993, the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, more commonly known as the Oslo Accords. The Accords formally recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the right of Israel to exist in peace. The Accords also established Palestinian control over the Gaza Strip and select areas of the West Bank for a five-year period, during which permanent status negotiations would take place. However, no final agreements or resolutions were reached.¹

This guide is only a reference for travel and identity documents. As such, no further information is provided relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the status of Palestinian statehood. Any USCIS personnel adjudicating benefits involving Palestinians are encouraged to familiarize themselves with conditions in the region. More information is available through the RAI0 Research Unit online at: <https://ecn.uscis.dhs.gov/team/raio/Research/SitePages/ResearchHome.aspx> or via email: Raioresearch@uscis.dhs.gov.

Palestinian Authority Documents

Palestinian Authority Passports Overview

Subsequent to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority issued its first passport in 1995. Per the Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), specifically 9 FAM 403.9-3(A)(1), all travel documents issued by the Palestinian Authority (PA) meet the legal definition of a passport and are acceptable forms of identification.² Although the Palestinian Authority issues passports, it is not a sovereign state. As such, Palestinian Authority-issued passports neither confer nor recognize Palestinian citizenship (nationality). Instead, these passports function solely as travel documents for persons subject to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority.

According to Department of States Visa Reciprocity Schedule and Civil document guide: “The only legitimate PA passports issued after June 2007 are those issued in Ramallah, Hebron, and Nablus. Any PA passport issued outside of these areas should be considered fraudulent.”³

On March 29, 2009, the Palestinian Authority began issuing a revised passport valid for five years. Standard versions of this passport, as well as regular “singular use” passports, have a black cover. There are no “official” or “diplomatic” passports issued by the Palestinian Authority; instead, a “VIP Passport” with a red cover is used.

¹ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>

² <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country/Israel.html?wcmode=disabled>

³ Id.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

In April 2010, a Palestinian Authority official briefed the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv on the procedures required to obtain a Palestinian Authority passport.⁴ Applicants who are 16 years of age or older are required to appear in person at the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Interior's passport office in the applicant's home district, both to submit the passport application and to receive the passport. Upon submission of the application, the applicant is given a receipt and a return date to pick up the completed passport. Processing time for a passport application is approximately one week, although this is subject to change depending on the number of queued requests and other factors. The applicant must submit all of the following:

- A valid Palestinian Authority identity card (can be a certified copy);
- A birth certificate;
- Evidence of employment;
- Four photographs on a blue background (prior to April 1, 2009, photographs had a red background); and
- If applicable, any previously expired or current passports, which must be surrendered.

The director of the passport office responsible for processing the application signs page three of the completed passport. Please note, Palestinian Authority passport offices expressly prohibit anyone from possessing two valid passports at the same time. There are no known exceptions to this policy. Accordingly, any passport acquired in a manner that deviates from the above-mentioned procedure merits additional scrutiny to ensure its authenticity.

Palestinian Authority passports are compliant with the formatting parameters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).⁵ At the bottom of the biographic page is a machine-readable zone consisting of two lines. Each line contains 44 character spaces (see the example on page 3). The issuing authority indicator is located on line 1, spaces 3-5. The nationality indicator is located on line 2, spaces 11-13. Nationality indicator will contain the letters "PSE," indicating that the document has been issued by the Palestinian Authority and that the bearer is subject to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority.

According to a report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada,⁶ the issuance procedure for any Palestinian Authority passport is the same as that outlined above. This holds true whether the application is completed inside or outside of the Palestinian Authority's territories. The report also indicates that mail-in applications are permissible. As of December 2019, the Department of State's reciprocity schedule indicates that the application fee for Palestinian Authority-issued passports is 230 Israeli Shekels.

⁴ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4e4383262.html>

⁵ See Appendix A for information on ICAO standards.

⁶ <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2015/12/07/zzz105324.e.pdf>

Palestinian Authority Identification Cards.

In addition to passports, the Palestinian Authority also issues an identity document (see the sample Palestinian Identity Card below). This card is used for multiple purposes, such as acquiring a Palestinian Authority passport and/or obtaining an Israeli-issued Criminal Information Certificate (which is required to obtain a U.S. visa). According to the Department of State:

All Palestinian ID holders living in the West Bank and Gaza must obtain a Criminal Information Certificate from the Israeli DCO (Civil Liaison Office) nearest your place of residence, or online at <https://forms.gov.il/globaldata/getsequence/getHtmlForm.aspx?formType=criminaldocument@police.gov.il> (instructions in Hebrew only), or at the nearest Israeli Embassy if you now reside abroad. You will also need to apply for a Palestinian Non-Conviction Certificate from the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Justice in the place of your residence. For more details on how to apply for the Non-Conviction Certificate please visit the Ministry of Justice website at: <http://www.moj.pna.ps/>.⁷

At present, there is little reliable information available related to issuance procedures for Palestinian Authority ID cards. Accordingly, USCIS personnel are encouraged to elicit testimony and corroborating evidence regarding how an alien presenting a Palestinian Authority ID card as proof of identity obtained that card.

The overall design for the card has remained consistent over the years, with only minor changes to formatting. A card that is inconsistent with the example below does not necessarily mean that it is fraudulent. Please direct questions regarding the security features and specifications of the Palestinian Authority identity card to the USCIS Liaison at the HSI Forensic Laboratory.



Example of Palestinian identity card.

Text appears in Arabic and Hebrew.

⁷ See United States Department of State, U.S. Visa: Reciprocity and Civil Documents by Country, Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza – Reciprocity Schedule, “Police, Court, Prison Records,” available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country/Israel.html> [accessed 05 December 2019].

Civil Document Overview

According to the Department of State:

At various times during the twentieth century, the West Bank and Gaza were under the administration of the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate [of Palestine], Jordan or Egypt, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, the issuing authority for civil documents depends on both the time and location of the life event being documented.

The West Bank and Gaza are subject to a complex set of governing arrangements involving Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Holders of Palestinian National Authority (PA) travel documents will generally present PA civil documents, but these applicants should apply for police certificates from the government of Israel. Israeli citizens who lived in or live in the West Bank or Gaza are not subject to the Palestinian Authority and obtain their documents from the Government of Israel.

On June 14, 2007, the designated foreign terrorist organization Hamas took de facto administrative control of Gaza, to include the issuance of civil documents for that territory. The U.S. Government does not accept documents issued by Hamas in Gaza unless verified by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. It is the responsibility of the applicant submitting a document issued after June 14, 2007 from any governmental agency in Gaza to obtain verification from the Palestinian Authority. The U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem does not assist in this process.⁸

(b)(7)(E)

USCIS personnel should be familiar with the information above when reviewing Palestinian Authority documents. USCIS personnel must also keep in mind the three elements that constitute a genuine document: genuine documents are (1) created by a competent authority; (2) issued to a lawful bearer; and (3) free of fraud. Where possible, USCIS personnel should also examine civil documents that served as the basis for obtaining Palestinian Authority documents. For example,

The Ministry of Interior (MOI) is the official issuing authority for Palestinian Authority birth certificates. The authorizing official is the Manager of General Administration of Civil Status. All applications for birth certificates must be submitted to the MOI office closest to the applicant's place of residence. Individuals residing outside of the West Bank can acquire a birth certificate by contacting a certified representative of the Palestinian Authority or writing to the MOI office closest to their birthplace.

As stated in the civil document overview, the United States does not recognize or accept birth records issued by Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. Per the Department of State, "The U.S. Government does not accept documents issued by Hamas in Gaza unless verified by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank."⁹

Like most countries' civil documents, a Palestinian Authority birth certificate may have a variety of formats, depending on the year and specific location of issue.

Lastly, it is a common feature in Palestinian Authority birth certificates to have both the birth registration date and the birth certificate issuance date occur many years after the actual date of birth. Because of this, there is often a large span of time between birth and registration or issuance of a birth certificate. Accordingly, it is imperative that USCIS personnel ensure through document review and the elicitation of testimony that

⁸ See United States Department of State, U.S. Visa: Reciprocity and Civil Documents by Country, Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza – Reciprocity Schedule, "General Documents," available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country/Israel.html> [accessed 05 December 2019].

⁹ <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country/Israel.html?wcmode=disabled>

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

Palestinian Authority birth certificates were not acquired through fraud – either by using fraudulent documents to acquire a birth certificate or by providing false testimony regarding an individual's birth and identity.

Palestinian Birth Certificate

The following are examples of birth certificates issued in Ramallah by the Palestinian Authority and are provided for general information purposes. Any further questions regarding Palestinian Authority birth certificates should be directed to the USCIS Liaison at the HSI Forensic Laboratory.

Birth certificate issued in Ramallah in 1999 for a birth that occurred in 1998.

Palestinian Authority	سلطة الفلسطينية
Ministry of Interior	وزارة الداخلية
Department of Civil Affairs	مديرية الأحوال المدنية



شهادة ميلاد
Birth Certificate

رقم الهوية Id No.	948 5
الإسم Name	[REDACTED]
إسم الأب Father's name	معين
إسم العائلة Family name	ابو ربيع
الديانة Religion	مسلم
إسم الجد G.F.'s name	منصور
الجنس Sex	ذكر
تاريخ الميلاد D. of birth	1998/04/04
مكان الميلاد P. of birth	نابلس
الجنسية Nationality	فلسطيني
إسم الأم M.'s name	لبنى
العنوان Address	0 - 0 0 نابلس
المستشفى Hospital	الانجيلي العربي
عائلة الأم M.'s family	العقاد

إن التفاصيل المدونة بولادة المذكور أعلاه أدرجت في سجل الولادة لسنة 1998
The details about the above mentioned birth have already been registered in the birth file of year 1998

من قبل مديرية الأحوال المدنية بـ م. رام الله بتاريخ 1999/11/02
by Department of Civil Affairs in Ramallah-office On 02/11/1999



توقيع
الموظف المختص



ختم الدائرة

Birth certificate issued in Ramallah in 2014 for a birth that occurred in 1963 (in English).

Palestinian Authority
Ministry of Interior
Department of Civil Affairs



السلطة الفلسطينية
وزارة الداخلية
مديرية الأحوال المدنية

Birth Certificate

Id No. [REDACTED] 3617 9

First Name [REDACTED] Father's Name [REDACTED]

G.F.'s Name **Ali** Family Name [REDACTED]

Mother's Name **Rahma** Mother's family **Abujaber**

Father's Nationality **Palestinian** Mother's Nationality **Palestinian**

Sex **Male** Religion **Muslim**

D. of Birth [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

P. of Birth **Kobar** Hospital -

Address **Marj Naja** 0 0 - 0

The details about the above mentioned birth have already been registered in the birth file of year 1963
by Department of Civil Affairs in **Ramallah** on **03/04/2014**

توقيع
الموظف المختص
Employee Signature



Seal

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

Birth certificate issued in Ramallah in 2014 for a birth that occurred in 1963 (in Arabic).

Palestinian Authority
Ministry of Interior
Department of Civil Affairs

السلطة الفلسطينية
وزارة الداخلية
مديرية الأحوال المدنية

شهادة ميلاد

رقم الهوية [REDACTED]

الإسم عماد
اسم الأب محمود

اسم الجد علي
اسم العقلة الحاج

اسم الأم رحمه
عائلة الأم ابو جابر

الجنس ذكر
الديانة مسلم

تاريخ الميلاد 1963/10/14
الرابع عشر من شهر تشرين الاول لعام الف وتسعمائة و ثلاث وستين

مكان الميلاد كوبر
المستشفى -

العنوان مزج نعجة
0 0 - 0

1963
إن التفاصيل المدونة بولادة المذكور أعلاه أدرجت في سجل الولادة لسنة

2014/04/02 بتاريخ
راحم الله

توقيع
الموظف المختص
Employee Signature

ختم الدائرة
Seal

(b)(6)

Name Changes

Legal name changes are effected by the MOI at a cost of 20 Jordanian dinars. This also requires a completed name change form stamped by a recognized service office as authorized by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Justice. Once the form has been completed and processed, the applicant must then visit the Administration Civil Status office in the city of residence to complete the legal process.

Third Country Documents for Palestinians

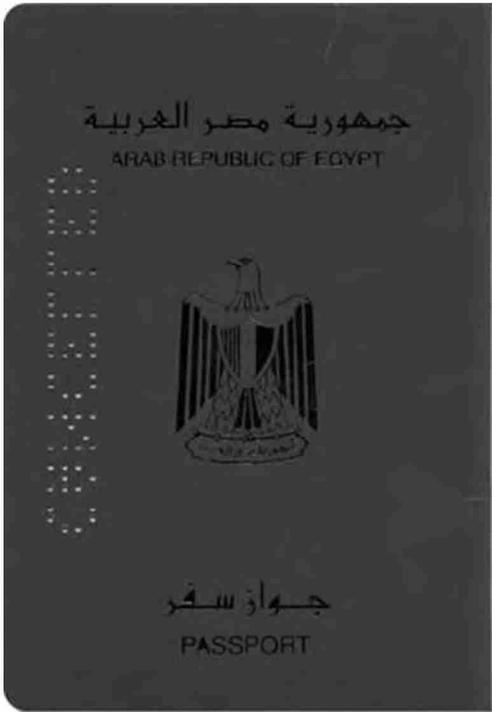
Many individuals who are subject to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority reside temporarily or permanently outside of the territories that it administers. Thus, many identification and travel documents are issued by a "third country." For example, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Libya all currently issue travel documents to Palestinians residing in their territories. Issuance procedures vary greatly and what the issued documents establish also varies. As such, the examining USCIS officer should explore (a) the formal issuance procedures for obtaining the document submitted, including any necessary supporting documentation; (b) the burden of proof required to receive the document; and (c) the document's overall legality and function in the third country.¹⁰

Travel documents issued to Palestinians by third countries often resemble those countries' passports. USCIS personnel should carefully review such documents in order to determine their purpose and the bearer's status in the issuing country. Understanding the formatting standards of the ICAO is critical for distinguishing national passports from travel documents issued to Palestinians. See Appendix A for information on ICAO standards.

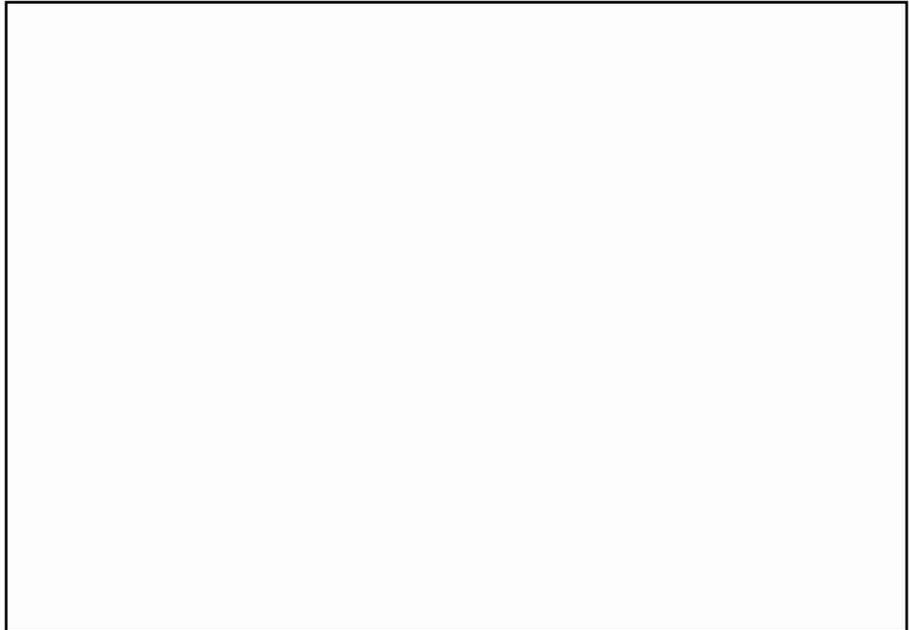
The following pages highlight key differences between national passports and travel documents issued to Palestinians.

¹⁰ As an example, see the link for Jordanian issuance procedures of Palestinian "temporary passports" at: <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/pages/attachments/2015/12/07/zzz105324.e.pdf>

Egypt

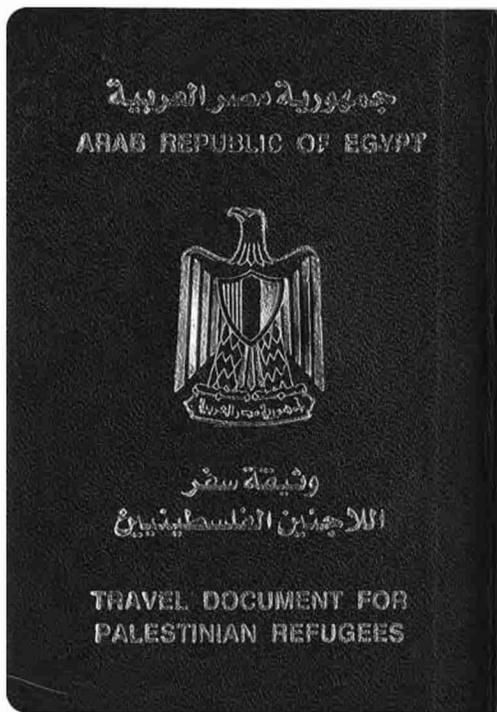


EGYPTIAN PASSPORT



Document issued to a citizen of Egypt.

(b)(6)



**EGYPTIAN TRAVEL DOCUMENT FOR
PALESTINIAN REFUGEES**



Document issued to a Palestinian, not an Egyptian citizen.

Jordan

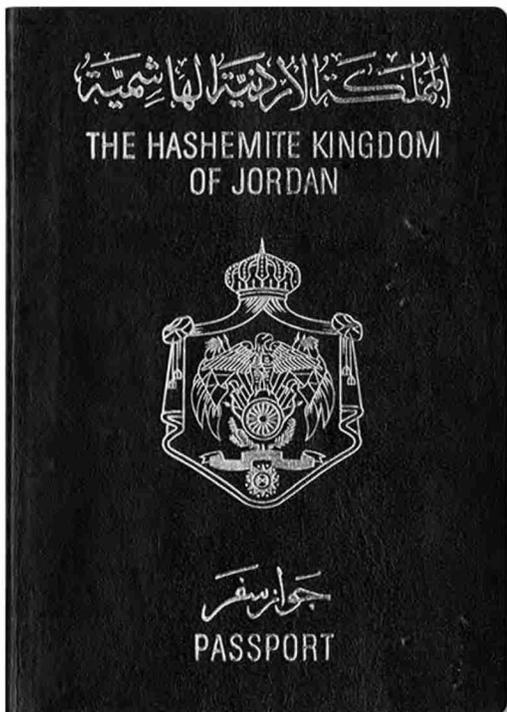
According to a 2013 Department of State report (available upon request), the Jordanian government has been issuing temporary (“T”) passports to Palestinians in most instances. These temporary passports do not contain a national identification number.

For Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, these temporary passports are typically valid for two years and five years, respectively. In order to receive a Jordanian temporary passport, Palestinians from the Gaza Strip must present proof (unspecified) of an asylum claim as well as proof that they have been residing in Jordan since 1967. Palestinians from the West Bank must present proof that they are Palestinian and that, “they/their fathers resided in Jordan between 1949 and 1954.” The cost for obtaining a Jordanian temporary passport is 50 Jordanian Dinars for the first application and 100 Jordanian Dinars for a renewal. The Department of State report further specifies that the Jordanian Civil Registration Department must obtain approval from the Jordanian General Intelligence Department for the document to be issued to the applicant. Lastly, the report indicates that Jordan has issued temporary passports with a five-year validity for investors and foreigners with scientific or extraordinary ability. Accordingly, USCIS personnel may wish to verify the reason for the issuance of a Jordanian temporary passport.

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As mentioned above, Jordanian temporary passports issued to Palestinians do not contain a national identification number.

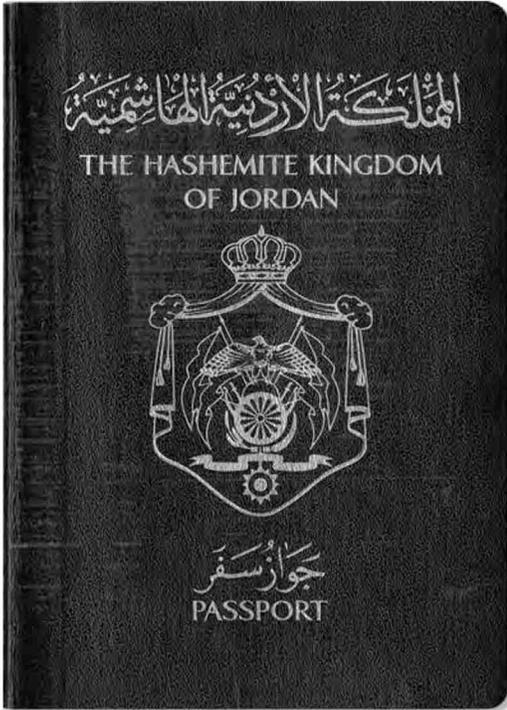
Congress report 2016-013009 for more detailed information on Jordanian citizenship laws.



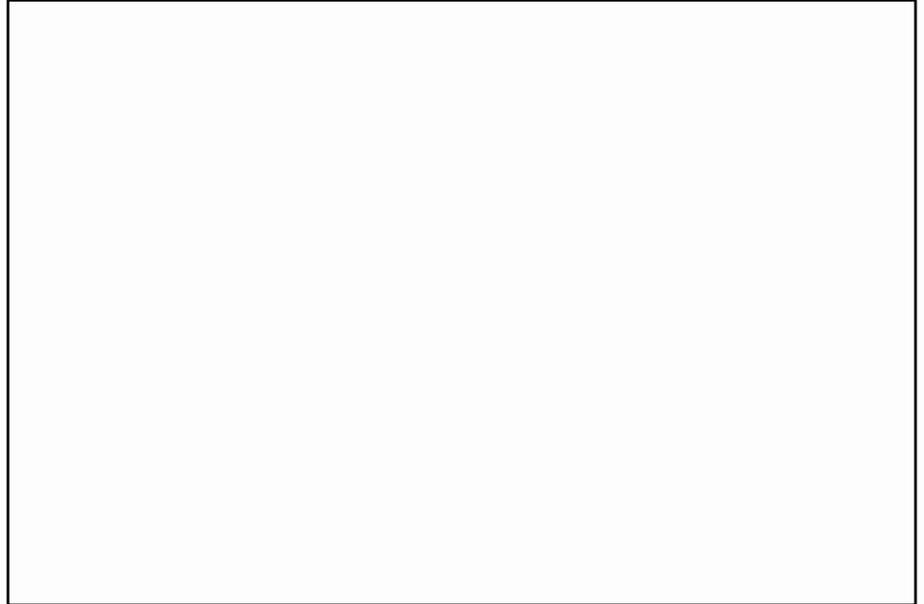
Imagery from www.EDISONTD.net

(b)(6)

*Non-machine readable Jordanian passport issued to a Palestinian
Passport number begins with “T” and there is no national identity number on
the page*

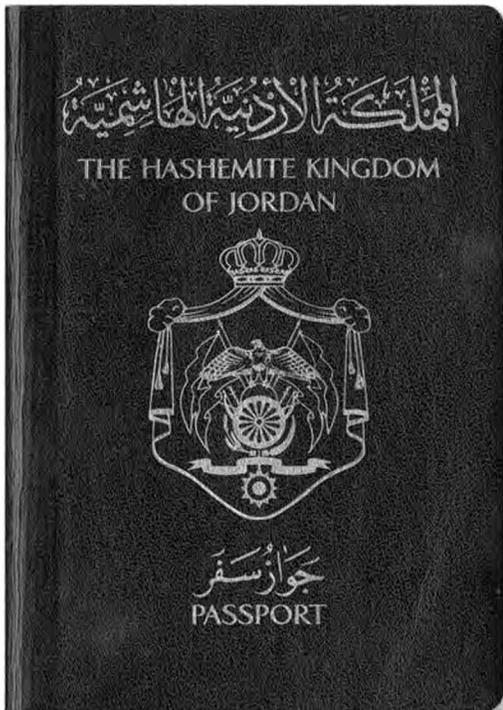


JORDANIAN PASSPORT



*Document issued to a citizen of Jordan
The biographic data page includes a national identity number*

(b)(6)



**JORDANIAN PASSPORT
FOR PALESTINIANS**

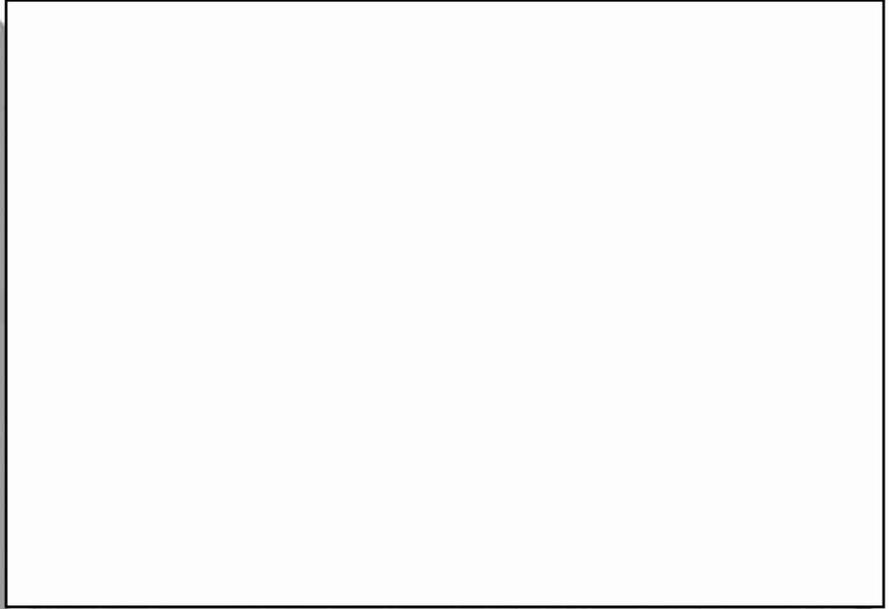


*Document issued to a Palestinian
Passport number begins with "T"
There is no national identity number on the page*

Lebanon

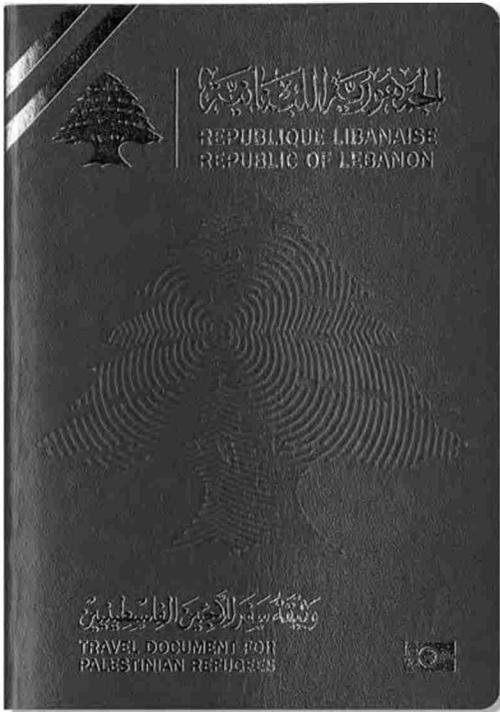


LEBANESE PASSPORT

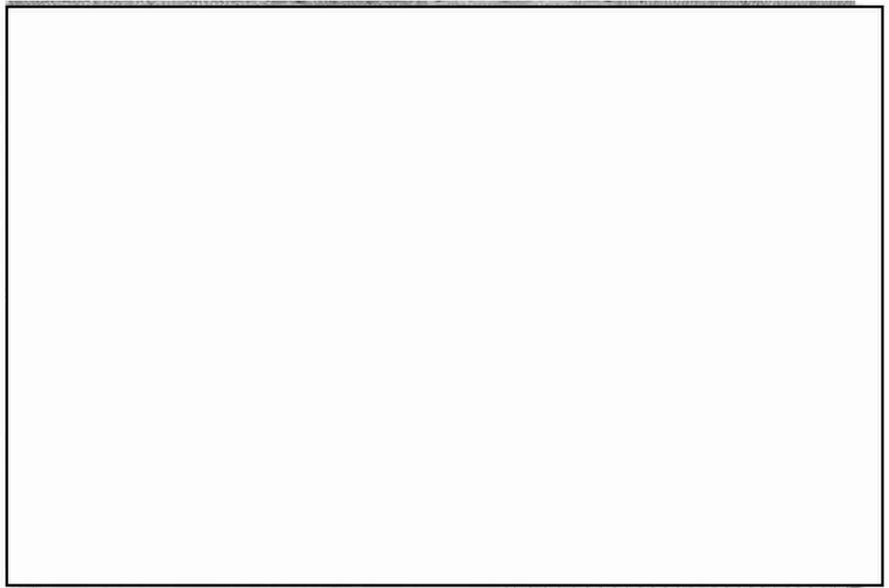


Document issued to a citizen of Lebanon

(b)(6)

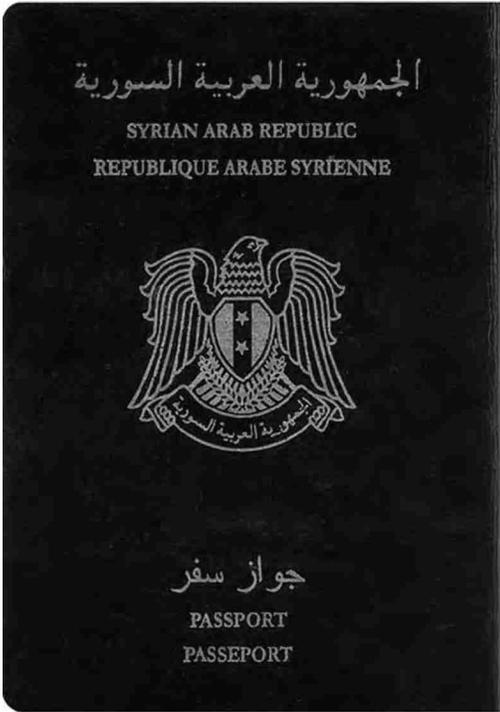


**LEBANESE TRAVEL DOCUMENT FOR
PALESTINIAN REFUGEES**

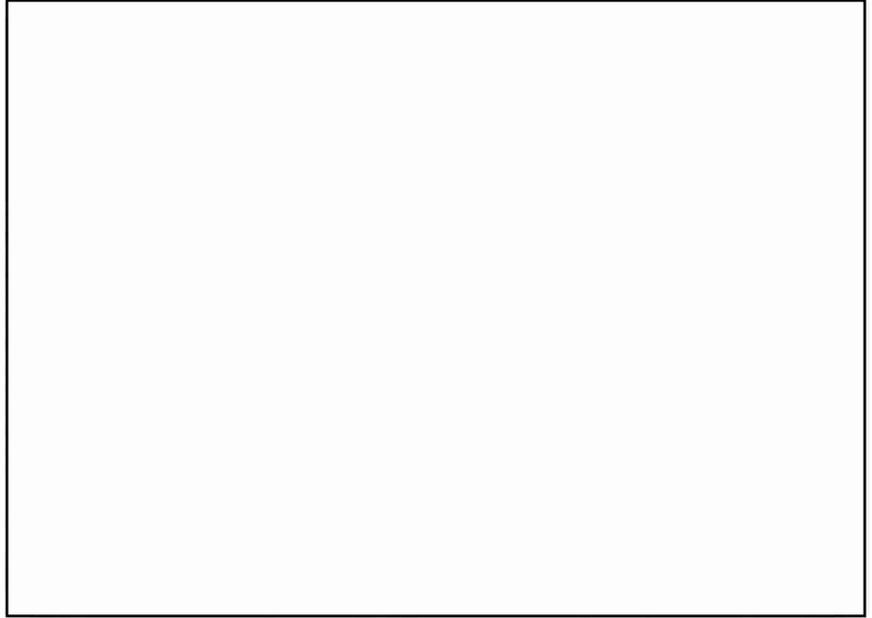


*Document issued to a Palestinian, not a Lebanese, citizen
XXC in the machine-readable zone indicates a stateless refugee*

Syria



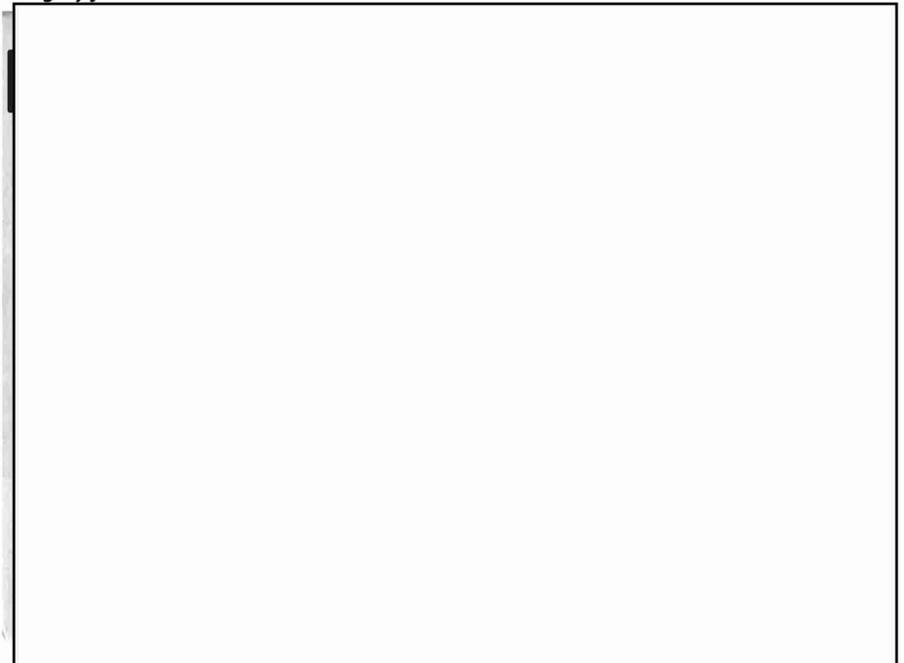
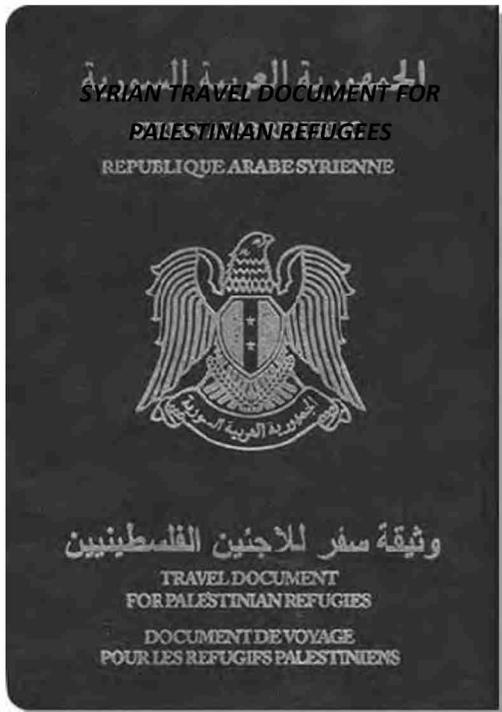
SYRIAN PASSPORT



Document issued to a citizen of Syria

(b)(6)

Imagery from www.EDISONTD.net



Document issued to a Palestinian, not a Syrian, citizen

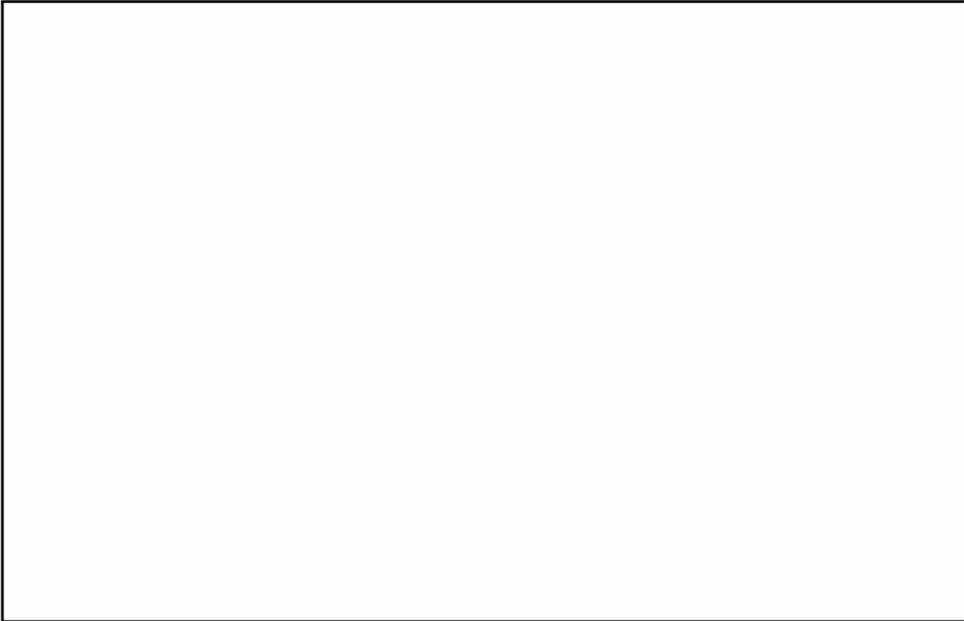
Issuance numbers beginning with 010 indicate issuance by the Palestinian Affairs authority in Syria

XXB in the machine-readable zone indicates a stateless refugee under the 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

Appendix A: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Format

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

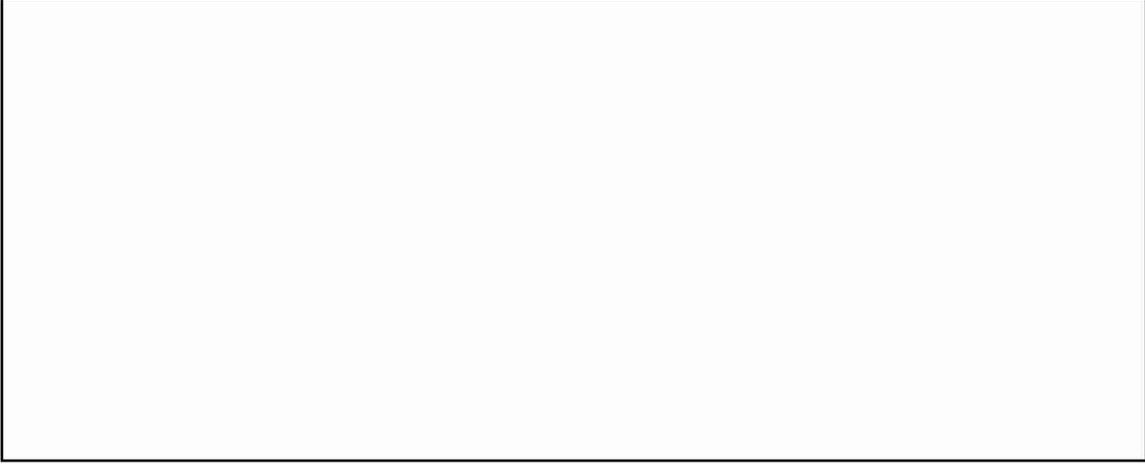
Most countries have adopted the passport formatting standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).¹¹ By understanding these formatting standards and letter codes,¹² USCIS personnel can determine an applicant's nationality, even in cases where USCIS only possesses a copy of the biographic page of the passport.



(b)(7)(E)



¹¹ Ibid.



USCIS personnel who wish to have more broad or in-depth information on ICAO standards may do so by contacting the USCIS Liaison to the HSI Forensic Laboratory at USCIS.Forensiclab.Inquiries@USCIS.DHS.Gov.

(b)(7)(E)

Please read the notes
emailed to you

We'll come back in 15 minutes

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES PE NOTES

1. What did you do to support the PLO	
2. Did you do this during meetings	
3. What were these messages	
4. What do you mean by greeting	
5. You said that sometimes you would write names for them, what were the names for	
6. How long did you do this for	
7. Is Fatah and PLO the same	
8. Did you do anything else for them	
9. When you helped the Fatah or PLO, did you do this voluntarily	
[... some of sworn statement removed]	
1. What happened in 2000	

(b)(7)(E)

Eligibility thinking caps on!

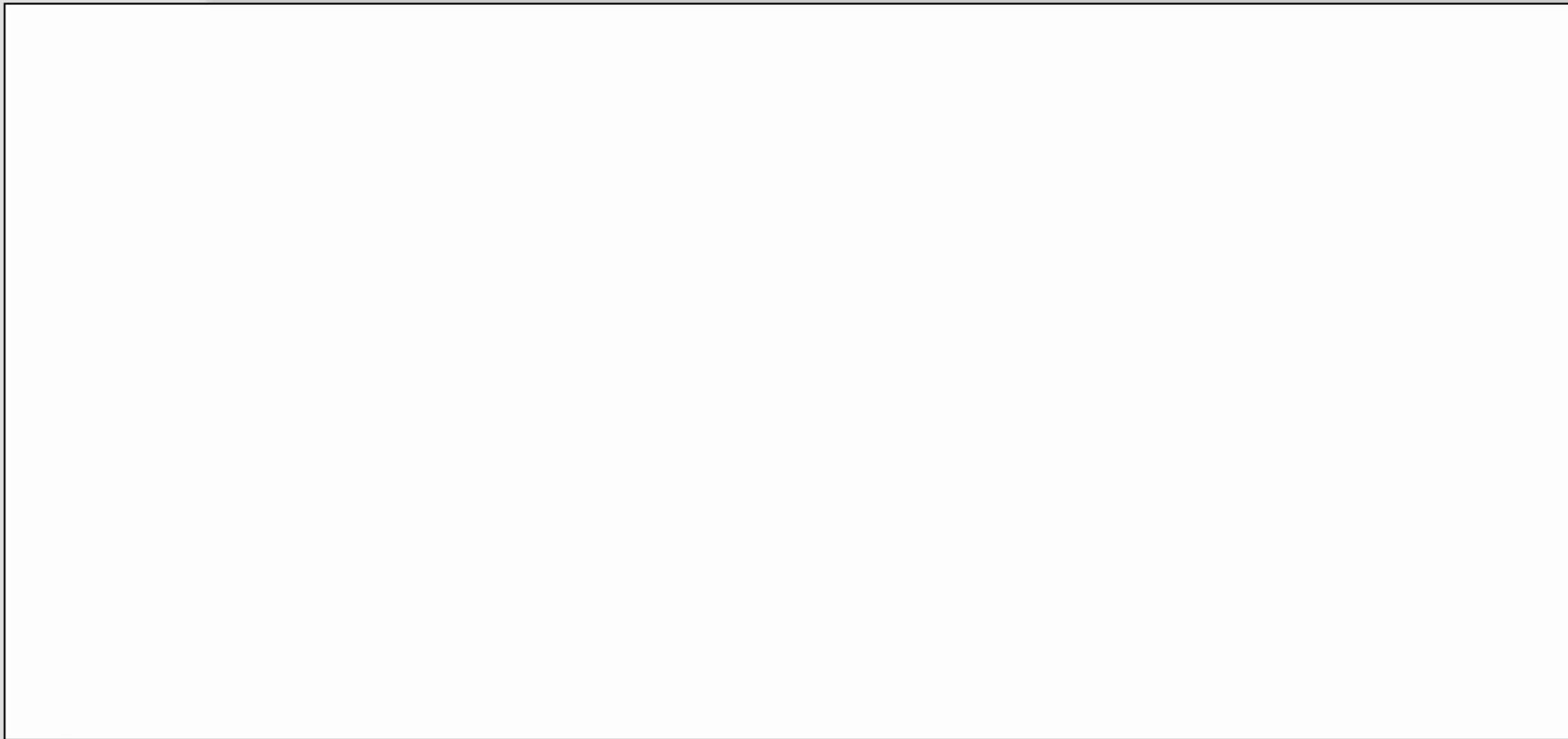
(b)(7)(E)

-
-
-

away, worked for 6 months

More thinking caps!

(b)(7)(E)



TRIG in
Palestinian
Cases
Practical
Exercise

April 28, 2021
ZNK

READ

IDENTIFY

DISCUSS

Background

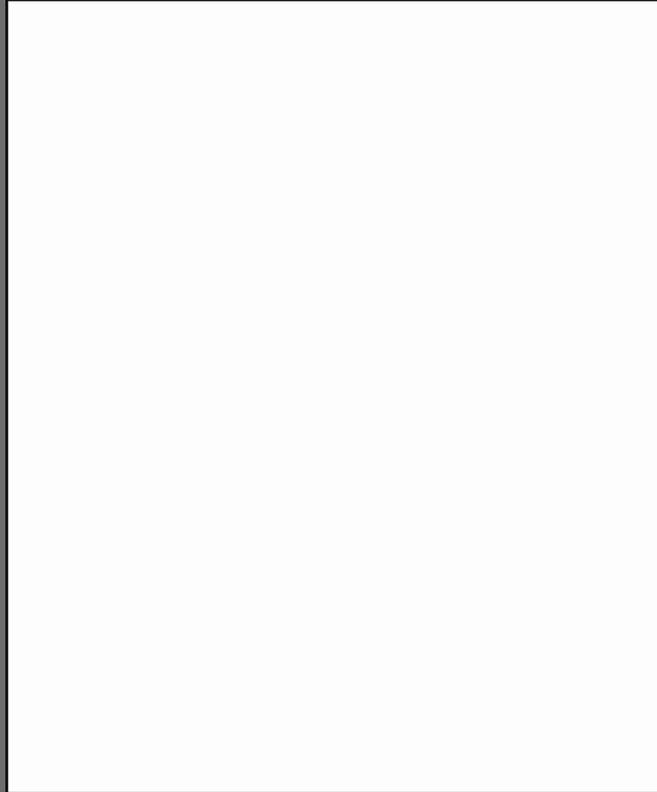
-

(b)(7)(E)

10 Minutes to Read Sworn Statement

- As you read, consider:

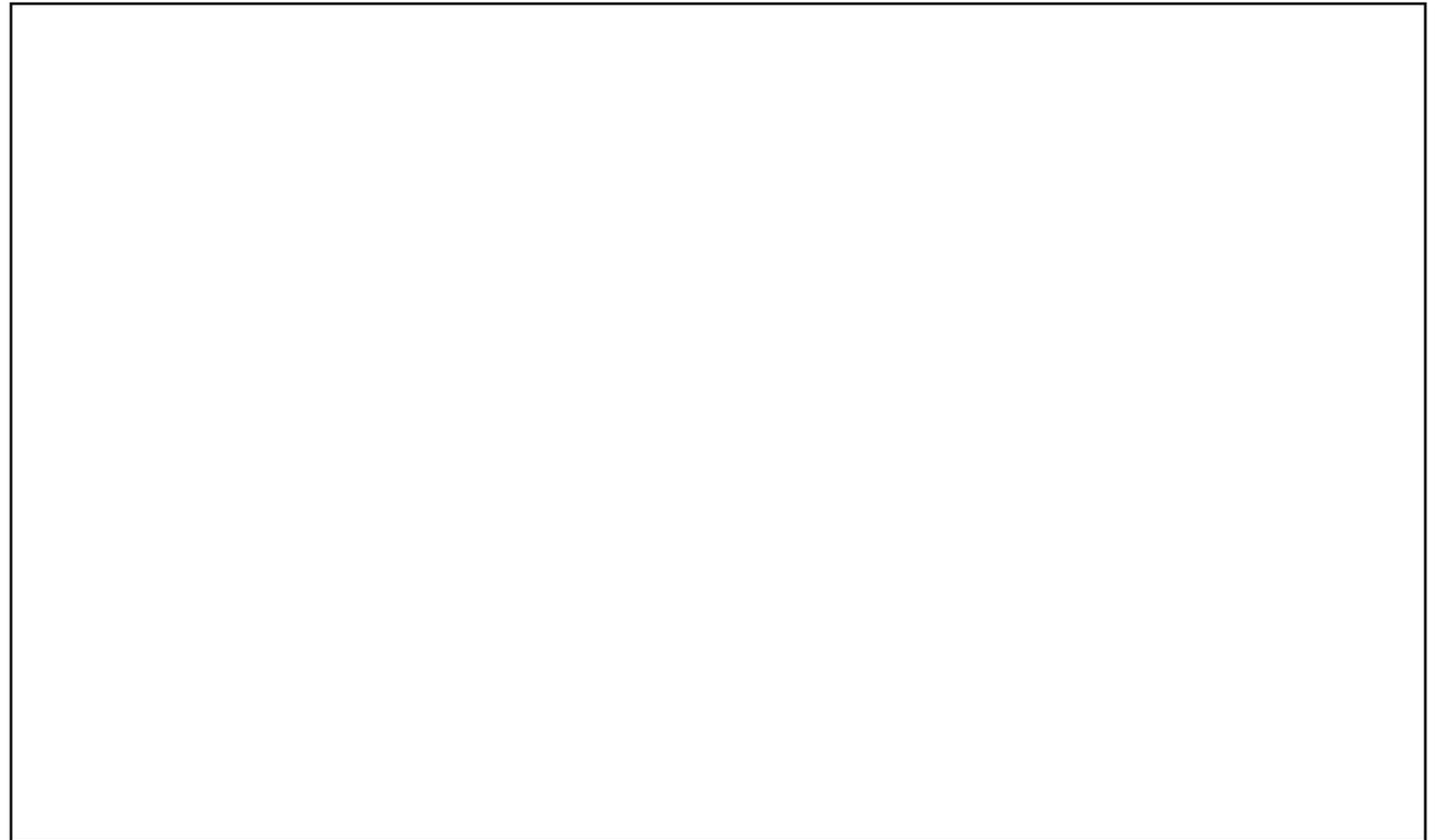
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



(b)(7)(E)

Is there TRIG?

(b)(7)(E)



Based on evidence given, grant or refer?



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Disclaimer and scope of training

- This training will only cover COI related to the Palestinian Territories.
- This training will not cover issues related to Palestinians living in other locations including but not limited to: Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Cyprus and Saudi Arabia
- In this training, the Palestinian Territories will be referred to using the terms: Palestinian Territories, West Bank, Gaza/Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Jericho Area depending on the area being referenced. These terms are what will be used because they are what the US Government uses in either Department of State reports or international legal agreements in which the US Government is signatory
- This training does not cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nor does it seek to advocate for any position related to the conflict. Rather this training seeks to present COI about the Palestinian Territories related to specific questions submitted by officers. Any topics included/not included are not a reflection of the importance of the topic writ large in the history of the Palestinian Territories.

