

Lebanese Republic

Ministry of Education and Higher Education

The Minister

6393/11

To Ms. Lama Fakh

**Subject:** Request to provide Human Rights Watch with information about the impact of the Lebanese Nationality Law for 1925 on the children and husbands of Lebanese women, and their access to legal residency, education, healthcare and employment.

**Reference:** Your letter dated August 24, 2018

Regarding the above subject and reference,

As per your abovementioned letter, which addressed the research that Human Rights Watch has done on the impact of the Lebanese Nationality Law for 1925 on the children and husbands of Lebanese women and their access to legal residency, education, healthcare and employment, and through which you have requested information on this matter in response to six questions,

**Lebanon has ratified a number of laws that regulate the right to education for citizens, to name a few:**

- A- Legislative Order number 134 for 6/12/1959 which stipulates that “**education is free.**”
- B- Law number 686 dated 3/16/1998 ratified the principle of “**mandatory and free primary education.**”
- C- **Law number 150 dated 8/17/2011 amending Article 49 of Legislative Order 134** dated 1/12/1959, which stipulates as follows:  
“Education is mandatory at the primary level, and provided for free in government schools. It is a right of all Lebanese at this school age.  
The criteria and regulations for this free mandatory education shall be set by order of the Council of Ministers.”

*October 23, 2018*

As Lebanon is committed to achieving its Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is required to promote the right to education for all. Also, the **National Strategic Vision for Education** has put in the purview of the Minister of Education and Higher Education the duty to give necessary attention to the process of registering students of Lebanese mothers with foreign husbands, **and treat them as all students are treated and not isolate them during their studies, and duly allocate seats to each of them who wants an education. (Attached, is a copy of a circular issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in this regard).**

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is working to promote the right to education for all by:

- 1- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is working to reinforce the **Education 2030 Strategy**.
- 2- Creating a committee headed by His Excellency the Minister of Education and Higher Education (**the MEHE Steering Committee**) to strengthen the “Sustainable Development Agenda 2030”, and in particular its fourth growth goal which is to “ensure a quality, equal, and comprehensive education for all, and increase life-learning opportunities for all.
- 3- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is responsible for ensuring education for all students, including non-citizen students who are children of Lebanese women and foreign fathers.

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**In keeping with the principles indicated above, we will endeavor to answer the questions posed, as follows:**

1- As per what we have stated about the role of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in strengthening the principle of non-discrimination, and how everyone has the right to education, the Ministry does not charge anything to non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese women with foreign husbands to attend primary or secondary schools.

2- We have previously explained that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education continually strives to achieve the fourth growth goal of the Sustainable Growth Agenda 2030. We would point to Notice number 12/M/2018 dated 3/1/2018 (a copy of which is attached), by which the Ministry requests all private and government primary and secondary school officials to give the proper attention to the process of registering students whose Lebanese mothers are married to foreigners, **treat them as all students are treated**, isolate them during their studies, and duly provide seats to each of them who wants an education.

3- As to the question of the extent to which non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese mothers enrol in the same shift as Lebanese citizens, we would point, for example, to decision number 802/M/2017 dated 9/19/2017 issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (a copy of which is attached), which concerns the extension of enrolment operations for the academic year 2017/2018, and the acceptance of registration by non-Lebanese citizen students in government schools for the morning shift.

4- We have previously explained that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education gives the necessary attention to the process of registering non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese mothers, just as with all students.

A- **As regards the required documentation for the registration of any student**, regardless of his nationality, in primary and secondary government schools, it is as follows:

A certified copy of the identity card or personal civil status extract; school certification; authenticated health certificate from the relevant authorities; health file; vaccine card; three photocopies certified by the *mukhtar* [elected local official who oversees personal status affairs]; in addition to a document affirming the legality of the foreign student's presence in Lebanese territory, such as a passport or residency.

B- **As to the fees for government primary and secondary schools:**

- **For kindergartens and elementary schools:** all students are exempt from fees as per the Law of Free Mandatory Education. The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for paying the cost for Lebanese students, and the [United Nations High] Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] is responsible for paying for non-Lebanese students.
- **For secondary school fees,** which total 271,000 (two hundred seventy one thousand) Lebanese liras, UNHCR covered the costs for the past year 2017-2018 for non-Lebanese students, including the children of Lebanese mothers, while the families of Lebanese students pay the costs for their children, with the exception of students covered under the program for the poorest families.

5- In keeping with what we explained previously in the introduction of our letter, about how the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has strived to promote the right to education for all, and has adopted the principle of equal treatment of all in this regard; and in accordance with what we have explained in answering the fourth question, secondary schools do not demand any additional fees from non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese mothers.

6- The number of non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese mothers registered in government schools has not been calculated. The number will be calculated for this school year through the SIMS program, and in coordination with school administrations.

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Building upon the above, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education understands the importance of upholding the international and national respect for each person’s equal opportunity to education. The Ministry recognizes the necessity of achieving the goals of the sustainable development strategies and aims to strengthen the right to education by facilitating all students’ access to education—especially those non-citizen students who are the children of Lebanese women with foreign husbands—**by treating them as all students are treated**, and by paying the necessary attention to the process of registering them in primary and secondary government and private schools.

Minister of Education and Higher Education,

*[signature]*

Marwan Hamadeh