

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: SYR33787
Country: Syria
Date: 13 October 2008

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Questions

- 1. Please provide information on the extent of corruption within the government and the prevalence of bribery amongst government officials and bureaucrats in conducting citizens' day to day affairs.**
- 2. What is the treatment vetted against those who depart Syria illegally and are then deported back to Syria? Would this treatment be different if a deportee was related to someone who was formerly detained for being involved in the Muslim Brotherhood?**
- 3. How strictly are travel bans enforced in Syria in terms of departure? What punishments are typically imposed on those who attempt departure in defiance of travel bans?**
- 4. What penalties or sanctions are imposed on those who return to Syria after travelling in breach of travel bans? How strictly are these penalties enforced?**
- 5. How plausible are claims to the effect that, despite being the subject of a travel ban, a person could obtain passports in 2006 and 2007, change the entry for their profession in the more recent passport, remove their name from a "black list" and leave the country via an international airport through the payment of bribes?**

RESPONSE

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- 5. How plausible are claims to the effect that, despite being the subject of a travel ban, a person could obtain passports in 2006 and 2007, change the entry for their profession in the more recent passport, remove their name from a “black list” and leave the country via an international airport through the payment of bribes?**

On 10 October 2008 the Tribunal received the following advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

A. Please provide information on the extent of corruption within the government and the prevalence of bribery among government officials and bureaucrats in conducting citizens’ day to day affairs.

As is common in many countries with inefficient and poorly resourced government services, minor level corruption is not uncommon. However, the extent to which corruption and bribery exists depends very much on the area of government and the issue at hand. On issues pertaining to national security, it would be relatively rare for corruption and bribery to be used.

B. What is the treatment meted against those who depart Syria illegally and are then deported back to Syria? Would the treatment be different if a deportee was related to someone who was formerly detained for being involved in the Muslim Brotherhood?

Treatment depends on the reasons why a travel ban was placed on the person. Treatment would be more serious, involving detention, in cases where a travel ban had been imposed for criminal or security reasons. A fine may be imposed on those on whom a travel ban was placed for family law reasons. We have no information as to whether treatment would be different for those related to someone who was formerly detained for being involved in the Muslim Brotherhood.

C. How strictly are travel bans enforced in terms of departure? What punishments are typically imposed on those who attempt departure in defiance of travel bans?

Syria’s entry and exit procedures are strictly enforced. In DFAT’s experience, travel bans are quite strictly enforced in terms of departure. Punishments for those who attempt departure in defiance of a travel ban depend on the reasons for the travel ban having been imposed. In cases where a ban has been imposed for reasons relating to matters of a criminal or national security nature, the punishment is likely to be more stringent.

D. What penalties are imposed on those who return to Syria after travelling in breach of travel bans? How strictly are these penalties enforced?

See answers to B and C above.

E. How plausible are claims to the effect that, despite being the subject of a travel ban, a person could obtain passports in 2006 and 2007, change the entry for their profession in the more recent passport, remove their name from a “black list” and leave the country via an international airport through the payment of bribes?

It is highly unlikely that someone who claims to have been on a “black list” would be able to use bribery to obtain new passports, to have his name taken off the “black list” and leave the country. As noted in the response to question C, entry and exit procedures are strictly enforced in Syria. While bribery might be a means to avoid a speeding ticket or speed up the processing of routine government paperwork, it is extremely unlikely that it would be

successful to obtain new passports, particularly if the person was under a travel ban, had a history of leaving the country in defiance of the travel ban and was allegedly under suspicion because of relatives with connections to the Muslim Brotherhood (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008, *DFAT REPORT: 899 – RRT Information Request: SYR33787*, 10 October – Attachment 1; for the Tribunal email which elicited this request, see: RRT Research & Information 2008, Email to DFAT: ‘RRT Country Information Request – [SYR33787]’, 15 September – Attachment 2).

List of Sources Consulted

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

List of Attachments

1. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008, *DFAT REPORT: 899 – RRT Information Request: SYR33787*, 10 October.
2. RRT Research & Information 2008, Email to DFAT: ‘RRT Country Information Request – [SYR33787]’, 15 September.