



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Syria: Update to SYR20080.E of 4 April 1995 on the Syrian government's attitude towards, and its treatment of, citizens who have made refugee or asylum claims, particularly when the claim was made in Canada or the United States

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

In a letter to the Research Directorate from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Canada, the UNHCR made clear its official position on the Syrian government's attitude towards, and its treatment of, citizens who have made refugee or asylum claims, particularly when the claim was made in Canada or the United States:

The Syrian law on departure of Syrian nationals, Law no. 42 of 31 December 1975 remains in force and has not been amended. Available information indicates that the practical implementation of this law has not changed since [April 1995]. Any Syrian national who departs the country illegally faces judicial consequences that may, in principle, result in up to three months imprisonment.

Generally speaking, one may expect the same treatment for unsuccessful Syrian asylum-seekers who have departed the country illegally. ... [T]he response of the Syrian authorities is very much dependent upon the nature of the departure and the profile and background of the individual. If it becomes known that they have applied for asylum, the consequences may be severe. However, if the individual's claim for asylum remains confidential then s/he may avoid further complications with the local law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities. Of course, the maintenance of confidentiality will depend, in part, on the manner in which the individual is returned to the country of origin (28 Aug. 2003).

This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Reference

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ottawa. 28 August 2003. Correspondence from a legal officer.



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