



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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23 November 2004

SYR43111.E

Syria: Update to SYR33173.FE of 23 December 1999 on the age limit for performing military service
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

A consular attaché of the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Ottawa provided the following information in a telephone interview on 22 November 2004:

The age limit for performing military service in Syria is 52 (fifty-two). The consular attaché further clarified information found in SYR33173.FE of 23 December 1999, which stated that "all persons who leave Syria to go abroad before reaching 12 years of age or who are born in North America of Syrian parents and pay the sum of US\$1,000 are exempted from military service." According to the consular attaché, there are no exemptions from military service just because one left Syria at a young age or was born to a Syrian father in North America. A North American-born son of a Syrian man, who otherwise does not qualify for military exemption (because he is an only son, etc.), can avoid obligatory military service only if his birth was never registered with the Syrian authorities (i.e., if Syria is not aware of his existence). Otherwise, he is obligated to perform his military service. The consular attaché added that military service exemptions were granted very rarely in Syria. In addition, the aforementioned US\$1,000 payment is in fact, according to the consular attaché, a fine that can be paid when a man who missed his obligatory military duty reaches 52 years of age, in order that he may regularize his record.

The remaining information found in SYR33173.FE, specifically the fact that an exemption must be applied for in person in Syria or by relatives in Syria who can act as power of attorney, the provisions regarding deferment and exemption for only sons, and the fact that records of the military status of Syrian citizens are kept, was found by the consular attaché to still be valid.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection.

Reference

Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ottawa. 22 November 2004. Telephone interview with a consular attaché.



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