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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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05 June 2003

### SAU41575.E

Saudi Arabia: Whether citizenship is granted by virtue of being born in Saudi Arabia; whether the children of a permanent resident of Saudi Arabia be considered citizens by sole virtue of their birth in that country; whether a citizen of Pakistan who has resided in Saudi Arabia for 28 years as a permanent resident can apply and eventually obtain Saudi citizenship

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No information on whether a citizen of Pakistan who has resided in Saudi Arabia for 28 years as a permanent resident can apply for and eventually obtain Saudi citizenship could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

However, the attached synopsis on Saudi Arabian citizenship published by the Investigation Service of the United States Office of Personnel Management states that "birth within the territory of Saudi Arabia does not automatically confer citizenship" (Mar. 2001). The report also states that

Saudi Arabia does not automatically grant rights to apply for naturalization. For persons who otherwise qualify (*unspecified*) for permanent residency, naturalization conditions include: residence in the country for five years, no criminal record and renunciation of previous citizenship (US Mar. 2001).

The report also states that dual citizenship is not recognized in Saudi Arabia (*ibid.*). However a Saudi woman married to a foreigner can keep her Saudi nationality insofar as the laws of her husband's country of origin will allow her to do so (*ibid.*).

According to a country specific circular on international parental child abduction in Saudi Arabia issued by the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the United States Department of State,

Dual nationality is not recognized under Saudi law. Children of Saudi fathers automatically acquire Saudi citizenship at birth, regardless of where the child was born. Saudi women cannot transmit citizenship; therefore, their children would acquire only the citizenship of the father. (Jan. 2002).

In addition, *Country Reports 2002* states that in 2002,

The government prohibited dual citizenship... apart from marriage to a citizen, there were no provisions for foreign residents to acquire citizenship. Children born to a citizen father acquired Saudi citizenship. However, a citizen mother may not convey citizenship to her children. Foreigners were granted citizenship in rare cases, generally through the advocacy of an influential patron (31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 2d).

The attached Response to Information Request SAU01001.ZAR of 14 February 2001 prepared by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services, (now the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services-BCIS), provides more detailed information on the acquisition of citizenship in Saudi Arabia, stating that

... it is very difficult to get Saudi citizenship because the Saudi government is reluctant to provide the enormous benefits that Saudi citizenship entails, e.g., tax benefits and health care.... it is getting more difficult for foreign residents to get sponsorship for employment as non-citizen workers because the government is conducting a "Saudi-ization" campaign by which more Saudi citizens are encouraged to work, thus lessening the need for non-citizen workers.... the Saudi government has adopted this strategy due to the realization that the government will be unable, down the road, to support its citizenry in the manner in which the population has become accustomed.

For further information on the acquisition of Saudi citizenship or naturalization, please consult SAU37212.E of 12 July 2001.

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 to refugee status or asylum.

#### References

*Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002*. 31 March 2003. United States Department of State. Washington, DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18288.htm>> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

United States. January 2002. United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. "Saudi Arabia - International Parental Child Abduction." <[http://www.travel.state.gov/abduction\\_saudi.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/abduction_saudi.html)> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

\_\_\_\_\_. March 2001. Office of Personnel Management, Investigation Services. *Citizenship Laws of the World*. <<http://www.opm.gov/extra/investigate/IS-01.pdf>> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

\_\_\_\_\_. 14 February 2001. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS). "Saudi Arabia." <<http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/services/asylum/ric/documentation/sau01001.htm>> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

#### Attachments

United States. March 2001. Office of Personnel Management, Investigation Services. *Citizenship Laws of the World*. <<http://www.opm.gov/extra/investigate/IS-01.pdf>> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

\_\_\_\_\_. 14 February 2001. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS). "Saudi Arabia." <<http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/services/asylum/ric/documentation/sau01001.htm>> [Accessed 3 June 2003]

  
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