



Syria

*Ajanib and Maktoumeen
Citizenship and Military Service*



This brief report is not, and does not purport to be, a detailed or comprehensive survey of all aspects of the issues addressed. It should thus be weighed against other country of origin information available on the topic.

The brief report at hand does not include any policy recommendations. The information does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Danish Immigration Service.

Furthermore, this brief report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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Executive summary

In 2011 Decree no. 49 of 2011 was issued which stated that ajanib al-Hasakah, who as a result of the 1962 census were rendered stateless, were considered Syrian citizens. However, they are requested to apply to move their registration from the al-Hasakah registry to the regular Syrian civil registry. Once they have successfully completed the registration, they become Syrian citizens and obtain a Syrian ID number, ID card and family book.

Before submitting the application, all family members must be registered as ajanib, including children who are not regularised as ajanib yet. Children born after their parents' naturalisation automatically become Syrian citizens.

Whilst only the head of household can submit the application, each family member has to be present in person when applying and receiving his/her ID card. As such, a person living abroad will not be able to obtain a Syrian ID card, unless he/she travels to Syria.

With the adoption of Decree 2011, the Syrian authorities seem to be committed to granting nationality to ajanib who fulfil the requirements of the application process, and a significant number of ajanib have obtained Syrian nationality. However, there have been reports of irregularities and cases of paying bribes during the application process.

Maktoumeen, who also became stateless as a result of the 1962 census, are not eligible to obtain Syrian citizenship. However, a maktoum, who is the descendant of an ajnabi, can apply to be registered as an ajnabi and then become a Syrian citizen. However, reports indicate challenges and delays in the process, with some resorting to bribes or connections. There are still many maktoumeen who have undergone registration but face ongoing uncertainty regarding citizenship.

Regarding military service, ajanib and maktoumeen males are not conscripted to military service. However, those who are naturalised under Decree 2011 become subject to military service, except those born before 1993 as they are exempted.

Ajanib men who are naturalised must obtain military booklets like other Syrian citizens. The military booklets of a naturalised ajanib states that they are naturalised ajanib and states the exemptions for those born before 1993.

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Introduction

This brief report focuses on stateless Kurds, i.e. ajanib al-Hasakah¹ and maktoumeen, in Syria. More specifically, the report focuses on the following issues:

- The naturalisation Decree No. 49 of 2011 and the procedure to apply for naturalisation
- Military service and military booklets of naturalised ajanib Kurds

The report gives an overview of information regarding ajanib and maktoumeen, in addition to an update on some of the issues regarding this group of stateless people in Syria.

The report is a synthesis of information collected from written sources including information from two query responses provided by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 2021 and 2024 on the request of the Danish Immigration Service, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021, and *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024.

The two query responses are not publically available but information from these is used in this report in agreement with the Danish MFA.

The report is written in accordance with the European Agency for Asylum (EUAA) COI Report Methodology.²

The research and editing of this report were finalised on 9 April 2024.

The report is available on the website of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) us.dk and is thus available to all stakeholders in the refugee status determination process as well as to the general public.

¹ In this report ajanib al-Hasakah will be referred to as 'ajanib'

² EUAA, *Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology*, 22 February 2023, [url](https://euaa.europa.eu/en/publications/country-of-origin-information-report-methodology)

1. Stateless Kurds in Syria

1.1. The 1962 census in al-Hasakah province

In 1962 the Syrian government (GoS) issued Decree No. 93. The decree ordered that a population census be conducted in the north-eastern Syrian province of al-Hasakah – a region inhabited predominantly by Kurds.³ Whilst the stated objective of the census was to identify persons who had entered Syria illegally from neighbouring Turkey and Iraq, it was considered as part of a comprehensive plan to arabise the resource-rich northeast of Syria.⁴

The census was carried out on a single day as outlined in the decree. Individuals had to prove legal residency in Syria by presenting specific documentation, including proof of residence in the country since 1945. Persons who did not appear on the given day were granted 15 days to present their documents.⁵

Reportedly, the implementation of the census was arbitrary and irregular. The GoS had no systematic procedures in place as committees travelled all over the governorate and only surveyed people they came across. Other challenging aspects of the implementation included the requirement to fill out a form whilst many of the residents were illiterate, as well as insufficient information provided by the Syrian authorities on the process, objectives and regulating procedures.⁶

Consequently, between 100,000 and 130,000 Syrian Kurdish citizens out of 400,000 were stripped of their nationality and thus became stateless.⁷

1.2. Result of the census

The 1962 census led to a division of the population of al-Hasakah into three different categories. The first consisted of persons who were able to present the required documents

³ Human rights watch (HRW), *Syria the Silenced Kurds*, Vol. 8. No. 4, October 1996, [url](#); London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), p. 6; Tilburg University, Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May, 2013, [url](#), pp. 14-16

⁴ Tilburg University, Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May, 2013, [url](#), p. 15; Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 7; London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), p. 7

⁵ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 6; London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁶ Tilburg University, Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, May 24, 2013, [url](#), pp. 15-16; HRW, *Syria the Silenced Kurds*, Vol. 8. No.4, October 1996, [url](#); London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), pp.15-17

⁷ HRW, *Syria the Silenced Kurds*, Vol. 8. No. 4, October 1996, [url](#); Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 8; London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), p. 6

and thus remained Syrian citizens. Persons, who failed to provide documents, were categorised stateless either as *ajanib* (foreigners in Arabic) or *maktoumeen* (unregistered in Arabic).⁸

Ajanib (plural of ajnabi) and maktoumeen (plural of maktoum) were subsequently discriminated against and deprived of many fundamental rights. Among other things, they faced difficulties in accessing education and formal employment, registering properties and obtaining official documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates. The status of being either ajanib or maktoumeen is hereditary.⁹

1.2.1. *Ajanib al-Hasakah*

In relation to the 1962 census, persons who were unable to present all of the required documents, including proof of being a resident from before 1945, but who managed to register their names were categorized as ajanib. This group were thus considered foreigners in Syria. The majority of them were Kurds. Their status was registered in a separate register for foreigners in the al-Hasakah registry. This registry is administered by the Civil Status Department, the same department responsible for the registration of Syrian citizens. Similar to Syrian citizens, ajanib were registered according to family numbers.¹⁰

1.2.2. *Maktoumeen*

The other group of stateless people as a result of the 1962 census are the maktoumeen.¹¹ Individuals who either did not present any documents, were unaware of the census or subjected to the arbitrary implementation, were not registered in any civil registry and thus became maktoumeen.¹² The majority of those who became maktoumeen were Kurds, and a minority were Arabs.¹³

⁸ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Country of Origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), pp. 47-48; Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 7-9

⁹ Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May 2013, [url](#) pp. 15-16, pp. 24-28

¹⁰ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 8-9; Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May, 2013, [url](#), pp. 15-16

¹¹ It should be noted that according to the MFA query response, there is another definition of 'maktoum' in the Syrian law, which refers to other persons than maktoumeen Kurds of al-Hasakah. Syrian Civil Status Code Law no. 13, of 2021, defines maktoum as "a person whose father or parents are registered in the civil records of Syria, or who by origin belongs to it but was not registered within the specified legal period of registration". This type of "Syrian maktoum" is, contrary to maktoumeen Kurds of al-Hasakah, eligible for registration in the Syrian civil records and his or her father or parents are registered in the civil records of Syria, or by origin belongs to Syria. Whenever the term 'maktoum' is used in this brief report, it refers to maktoumeen Kurds of al-Hasakah (Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021)

¹² Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021; Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May 2013, [url](#), pp. 15-16; Thomas McGee, *Stateless Identity and National I.D.: Kurds in Syria*, University of Exeter Masters Thesis, 2012, [url](#), p. 173

¹³ Al-Modon, "المكتومون العرب في الحسكة: أحياء في السجلات الأمنية فقط" [Maktoumeen Arabs of al-Hasakah: Only alive in the security records], 17 March 2018, [url](#)

1.2.2.1. Maktoumeen Arabs

A small group of Arab residents of al-Hasakah have the same status as maktoumeen Kurds, as they have not registered their names or provided documentation of being residents from before 1945, as required by the 1962 census. Like maktoumeen Kurds, they do not hold the citizenship of Syria or any other country; they do not have any official document; and they can be in possession of an unofficial identity document (Arabic *bitaqat ta'reef*) (see section [2.2. ID documents of maktoumeen](#)).¹⁴

The number of maktoumeen Arabs is a few thousand, and they are descendants from Arab clans living in Ras al-Ain and Tal Brak areas in al-Hasakah, including Adwan, al-Bakara, Bani Saba' and al-Tufahiyin. The individuals were not accounted for in the census due to their absence from their villages, or their nomadic lifestyle at the time of the issuance of Decree No. 93 of 1962. These people consider themselves Syrian citizens who should obtain full citizenship rights.¹⁵

2. ID documents of stateless Kurds

2.1. ID documents of ajanib

After the 1962 census, a white paper was issued to ajanib where it was stated that "the person concerned is not in the register of Syrians Arabs in al-Hasakah". In 1980, these papers were replaced by a new type of identity card, which ajanib have been using since then.¹⁶

This ID card is elongated and colored orange-red. An ID photo is affixed to the left. Next to the photo, it is stated that the card is not valid outside the country or as travel document.¹⁷ Below the photo, personal information, i.e. name and birth date, is stated. Below personal information, or sometimes on the back of the card, it is stated that "the person concerned is not found in the register of Syrian Arabs in al-Hasakah as a result of the 1962 census. On request, the person concerned was provided with the statement that he/she is registered in the ajanib registry of this province".¹⁸

¹⁴ Al-Modon, "المكتومون العرب" في الحسكة: أحياء في السجلات الأمنية فقط [Maktoumeen Arabs of al-Hasakah: Only alive in the security records], 17 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵ Al-Modon, "المكتومون العرب" في الحسكة: أحياء في السجلات الأمنية فقط [Maktoumeen Arabs of al-Hasakah: Only alive in the security records], 17 March 2018, [url](#); Yekeiti Media, معدومو الجنسية ومكتومو القيد في محافظة الحسكة.. ماذا تعرف عنهم؟ [Stateless and undocumented people in al-Hasakah Governorate.. What do you know about them?], 6 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere, Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds*, 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁷ Norway, Landinfo, Syria: *Identitetsdokumenter og Pass [Syria: Identity documents and passport]*, 9 September 2022, [url](#), p. 27; Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds]*, 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁸ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds]*, 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 8

To obtain an identity card, ajanib must contact the nearest civil status office in al-Hasakah. However, the procedure to obtain an ID card is complicated and time-consuming both when applying for the ID card for the first time and when applying for duplicates of lost cards. Sometimes, obtaining the necessary permissions requires that several intelligence services are approached. In some cases, bribes have to be paid to public officials to obtain the required documents and permits.¹⁹

2.2. ID documents of maktoumeen

Prior to 1999, Maktoumeen could not have any documents issued except for an unofficial identity document (in Arabic *shihadat tareef*) which was issued by the local mukhtar (or mayor). The Political Security Service of the GoS had to approve the identity document before it was issued to the applicant.²⁰ The identity document contained an ID photo, personal information of the concerned person along with the signature of the mukhtar and two witnesses.²¹

In 1999, a decree was issued by the Governor of al-Hasakah, which prohibited mukhtars in al-Hasakah from issuing these identity documents. Reportedly, few mukhtars disobeyed the decree and kept issuing the certificates for years. Identity certificates issued after 1999 were therefore only issued by the mukhtars without the authorities' approval.²² However, as of 2022, it was not possible for maktoumeen to obtain identity documents.²³

2.3. Marriage registration and status of the children

Before year 2000, it was not possible for ajanib to register their marriage without bribing the responsible public employee. For this reason, many ajanib have not been able to register their children, as registration of marriage is a prerequisite for registering a child. In 2000, new regulations made registration of marriage between stateless persons possible. Thus, the children could also be registered. However, even after 2000, registration of marriage was complicated and time-consuming.²⁴

Additionally, the issuance of civil documents, such as marriage and birth certificates, was also dependent on the individual's registration in the civil register. The registration status of the parents, whether they were registered as ajanib or maktoumeen, also affected the status of

¹⁹ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 8-9

²⁰ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 9-10

²¹ Norway, Landinfo, Syria: *Identitetsdokumenter og Pass*, [Syria: Identity documents and passport], 9 September 2022, [url](#), pp. 9-27; Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 9-10

²² Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere* [Thematic Paper: Syria: stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 9-10

²³ Norway, Landinfo, Syria: *Identitetsdokumenter og Pass* [Syria: Identity documents and passport], 9 September 2022, [url](#), p. 27

²⁴ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 10

their children and the documents they were eligible to obtain. For instance, if both the husband and wife were ajanib, the authorities would register their marriage, and the status of their children would be ajanib.²⁵

3. Decree No. 49 of 2011 and citizenship

3.1. The issuance of Decree No. 49 of 2011

In March 2011, Presidential Decree No. 49 was issued, providing the authorities the power of granting citizenship to registered ajanib in the al-Hasakah province. Issued in the early days of the Syrian civil war, the decree was an attempt by the GoS to lessen Kurdish support for the large-scale popular uprising.²⁶

Persons who are registered as ajanib are automatically considered Syrian citizens in accordance with article 1 of Decree No. 49 of 2011. This means that ajanib do not have to apply for Syrian nationality, contrary to certain other categories of foreigners that must fulfil specific conditions in compliance with the rules of the Syrian nationality law issued by Legislative Decree No. 276 of 1969.²⁷

Whilst automatically granted citizenship by Decree No. 49 of 2011, ajanib must however still comply with specific procedural rules. These rules are thus not a prerequisite to obtain citizenship, but rather procedural steps allowing for the move of one's registration from the ajanib civil records to the regular Syrian civil registry.²⁸ In this regard, ajanib are naturalised once they have successfully completed their move of registration from the al-Hasakah registry to the Syrian civil registry. Similar to other Syrian citizens, naturalised ajanib can obtain Syrian civil documentation once registered in the civil registry and granted a national identification number.²⁹

²⁵ For more case examples see p. 11 in Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere* [Thematic Paper: Syria: stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#).

²⁶ London School of Economics and Political Affairs, *Kurdish Political and Civil Movements in Syria and the Question of Representation*, December 2020, [url](#), p. 19; Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), pp.12-13

²⁷ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021; Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

²⁸ In this report, the regular Syrian civil registry will be referred to as 'Syrian civil registry'.

²⁹ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [[Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021; Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

3.2. The procedure for applying for registration in the Syrian civil registry

3.2.1. *Ajanib naturalised under Decree No. 49 of 2011*

The procedural rules for ajanib to apply for registration in the Syrian civil registry are described in the decision of the Minister of Interior No. 461 issued on 21 April 2011.³⁰

The application can be submitted in all Syrian governorates, where sub-committees have been established, enabling ajanib to submit applications in their place of residence.³¹

Only the person who heads the household can submit an application on behalf of the entire family. The person who heads the household is typically the father. However, if the father is deceased, disabled or living abroad, the application may be submitted by the spouse or the oldest adult child. Applications cannot be submitted individually.³² The application must contain the actual place of residence of the family, as well as the names of all family members and their actual place of residence.³³

Children born after the naturalisation of their parents automatically become Syrian citizens.³⁴

The person who heads the household must attach an extract of his individual civil registration issued for persons registered as ajanib.³⁵ Once the applicant has completed the application with the needed documentation, a subcommittee will verify the application before sending it to the civil registry of al-Hasakah. In the event that the subcommittee rejects the application, the applicant, or any of the persons of concern, can appeal the decision to a Central Committee.³⁶

After the subcommittee approves the application, the applicant and the family members will be registered at the Syrian civil registry office of their place of residence. They will be granted an individual national Syrian number, a personal Syrian ID card, and a family book, similar to Syrian citizens.³⁷ Each family member has to be present in person when applying for and receiving

³⁰ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

³¹ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

³² Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021; Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

³³ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021; Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

³⁴ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021

³⁵ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021

³⁶ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021

³⁷ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

his/her ID card. As such, a person living abroad will not be able to obtain a Syrian ID card, which serves as proof of having become a Syrian citizen, unless he/she travels to Syria to process it.³⁸

With the adoption of Decree No. 49 of 2011, the Syrian authorities are seemingly committed to granting nationality to ajanib who fulfil the requirements of the application process. According to the Syrian civil status department, 120,000 individuals were registered as ajanib. By 2015, the civil status department granted citizenship to 105,000 ajanib registered individuals.³⁹ Recent information obtained in March 2024, stated that the majority of ajanib residing in Syria have moved their registration from al-Hasakah to the Syrian civil registry and obtained Syrian citizenship.⁴⁰

However, there are reports of persons who were not granted citizenship, despite fulfilling the requirements. Furthermore, in a small number of cases, citizenship was only obtained after paying large sums of money.⁴¹ Some ajanib also refrained from applying for citizenship due to the required military service, or out of fear of contact with the authorities in relation to security issues.⁴²

3.2.2. *Maktoumeen naturalised under Decree No. 49 of 2011*

Decree No. 49 is issued for the purpose of granting Syrian nationality only to persons who are registered as ajanib. As such, the decree does *not* entitle maktoumeen to acquire citizenship.⁴³ All family members applying for the move of registration must be registered as ajanib. However, in the case of an unregistered child (maktoum) of ajanib parents, the head of household must regularise the status of the child in accordance with the new Syrian Personal Status Code No. 13 of 2021. Similarly, in cases where a maktoum is the descendant of an ajnabi, he/she can apply for registration as ajnabi and thus benefit from the decree.⁴⁴

In order for a maktoum, who is a descendant of an ajnabi, to apply for Syrian nationality, he/she should register in the civil registry of ajanib al-Hasakah. The registration cannot be done from abroad or by proxy. Any maktoum, who is the descendant of a registered ajnabi, must go to Syria and follow the procedure for registration, which – amongst other steps - includes a

³⁸ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021

³⁹ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁰ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

⁴¹ Norway, Landinfo, *Temanotat: Syria: Statsløse kurdere*, [Thematic Paper: Syria: Stateless Kurds], 12 February 2018, [url](#); p. 13; Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, May 24 2013, [url](#), p.10

⁴² Norway, Landinfo, *Syria: Identitetsdokumenter og Pass* [Syria: Identity documents and passport], 9 September 2022, [url](#), p. 13; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Country of Origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), p. 21

⁴³ EUAA, *Syria - Targeting of individuals*, September 2022, [url](#), p. 90; UNHCR, *Law and Policy, Syrian Arab Republic*, 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021

security clearance as well as a medical check-up. These steps are conducted to ensure the kinship between the maktoom, and the registered parent/s as well as the age of the maktoom. Once the process is completed, the registration document will be issued.⁴⁵

It should be noted that the Syrian Minister of Interior issued a decision on April 1, 2019, allowing maktoomeen of naturalised ajanib parents who are born abroad and who are 18 years or above, to be registered in the Syrian civil registry from a Syrian embassy abroad. The registration process conducted from an embassy includes verification of the registration by the Syrian consular staff and the civil registry in Syria.⁴⁶

Reportedly, some maktoomeen have managed to obtain Syrian citizenship.⁴⁷ According to a report from Syrians Truth and Justice published in September 2018, since 2011, approximately 50,000 maktoomeen had first registered as ajanib and then managed to be naturalised under Decree No. 49 of 2011.⁴⁸ However, it is not specified whether all maktoomeen who managed to register as ajanib, where descendants of ajanib.

Maktoomeen had to undergo a complicated and costly process in order to first register as ajanib and then apply for naturalisation under Decree No. 49 of 2011.⁴⁹ According to EUAA, undergoing this process required the service of a lawyer.⁵⁰ The Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands stated that there were maktoomeen who had to use connections and pay bribes in order to first register as ajanib before applying to be naturalized under Decree no. 49 of 2011.⁵¹

In 2012, following demonstrations of maktoomeen criticising the exclusion from the aforementioned decree, the GoS requested all maktoomeen to undergo an estimation of their ages, in order to register and naturalise them. Among the maktoomeen who underwent the age estimation process, between 2000-3000 maktoomeen were Arabs in the city of al-Hasakah. However, the GoS did not register or naturalise any of the maktoomeen who underwent the age estimation process.⁵² According to the EUAA report, citizenship applications of thousands

⁴⁵ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021

⁴⁶ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien* [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria], 6 July 2021

⁴⁷ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *County of origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), p. 48; EUAA, *Syria - Targeting of Individuals*, September 2022, [url](#), p. 90

⁴⁸ STJ (Syrians for Truth and Justice), *Syrian Citizenship Disappeared*, 15 September 2018, [url](#), p. 5; In a report published in July 2021, STJ stated that approximately 46,000 maktoomeen were living in Syria as of 2021 (STJ, *Decades of Statelessness & the Absence of Basic Rights*, July 2021, [url](#))

⁴⁹ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *County of origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), p. 48; EUAA, *Syria - Targeting of Individuals*, September 2022, [url](#), p. 90

⁵⁰ EUAA, *Syria - Targeting of Individuals*, September 2022, [url](#), p. 90

⁵¹ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *County of origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), p. 48

⁵² Al-Modon, "الحسكة: أحياء في السجلات الأمنية فقط" [Maktoomeen Arabs of al-Hasakah: Only alive in the security records], 17 March 2018, [url](#); Yekeiti Media, "معدومو الجنسية ومكتومو القيد في محافظة الحسكة.. ماذا تعرف عنهم؟" [Stateless and undocumented people in al-Hasakah Governorate.. What do you know about them?], 6 August 2018, [url](#)

of maktoomeen were still under process by 2022, and there was no reported case of a person who has been granted citizenship as a maktoom who is not a descendant of an ajanibi.⁵³

4. Military service for naturalized ajanib

Ajanib and maktoomeen are not conscripted by the Syrian Arab Army.⁵⁴ Ajanib men who are naturalised, and maktoomeen who first registered as ajanib and then have obtained the Syrian citizenship, will be requested to perform the compulsory military service on equal terms with Syrian citizens, in accordance with the Syrian Military Service Law No. 30 of 2007 and its amendments, unless they are exempted by law.⁵⁵

4.1. Military service rules applicable for naturalized ajanib

The Syrian government issued “the Republican Decision No. 149 of 2011”, as a supplementary decree to Decree No. 49 of 2011 on the naturalisation of stateless ajanib.⁵⁶ Decision No. 149 regulates the military service of naturalised Kurds as follows:

- naturalised ajanib born before 1993 are exempted from military service permanently;
- those born in 1993 are conscripted but would not immediately be called up for military service, as they would be granted a one-year deferral;⁵⁷ and
- those born in 1994 or later would be immediately eligible for military service once they turn 18 as other Syrian citizens.⁵⁸

In a report about military service in Syria published by the Danish Immigration Service in July 2023, sources stated that naturalised ajanib born before 1993 (i.e. born in 1992 or earlier) are exempted from military service in practice. Naturalised ajanib born in 1993 and later have been

⁵³ EUAA, *Syria - Targeting of Individuals*, September 2022, [url](#), p. 90

⁵⁴ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024

⁵⁵ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024; Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021; Denmark, DIS, *Syria Military service: recruitment procedure, conscripts' duties and military service for naturalised Ajanibs*, July 2023, [url](#), p. 14; EASO, *Syria - Military service*, April 2021, [url](#), p. 19; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Country of origin information report Syria*, May 2022, [url](#), p. 49

⁵⁶ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021

⁵⁷ Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021; Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May 2013, [url](#), p. 20

⁵⁸ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien [Query response concerning military service in Syria]*, 7 March 2024; Denmark, MFA, *Notat vedr. statsborgerskab til statsløse kurdere i Syrien [Query response concerning stateless Kurds in Syria]*, 6 July 2021; Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May 2013, [url](#), p. 20

called up for military service.⁵⁹ However, according to a report published by Tilburg University in 2013, there have been unverified cases of naturalised ajanib men born before 1993 who were taken to military service due to the GoS need for manpower.⁶⁰

4.2. Procedure to be called up for military service

The Syrian military service law stipulates that all Syrian males between 18 and 42 are obligated to complete the compulsory military service, unless they are exempted by the law.⁶¹

The Syrian civil registry is required to provide the military conscription offices of the General Directorate of Military Recruitment with the names of all male Syrian citizens registered with it, who are about to turn 18 years old, at least six months before the start of the year in which they turn 18 years. The same procedure applies to naturalized ajanib males (and maktoomeen who first registered as ajanib and then have obtained the Syrian citizenship). The military conscription offices will receive the names of all naturalised ajanib males who are in the military service age. The offices will then call up all eligible recruits whose names have been provided to enlist for military service.⁶²

Ajanib men, who have not registered with the Syrian civil registry, or who have not initiated the administrative process to transfer their records from the registry of ajanib al-Hasakah to the Syrian civil registry, do not have their names in the Syrian civil registry. Therefore, their names will not be forwarded to the military conscription offices, and thus not be called up for military service. As soon as ajanib men in the military age register with the Syrian civil registry, in compliance with the aforementioned Syrian Ministry of Interior order No. 461 of 2011, they will be required to serve the compulsory military service.⁶³

Ajanib males, who live abroad and are born in 1993 or after, will only be eligible for compulsory military service when they register themselves in the Syrian civil registry upon return to Syria (see section [3.2.1. Ajanib naturalised under Decree No. 49 of 2011](#)).⁶⁴

4.3. Procedure to obtain a military booklet

When the Syrian civil registry provides the names of all Syrian men, including all registered ajanib, who are eligible for military service, to the military conscription offices, it states next to the names of naturalised ajanib that they have obtained Syrian citizenship in accordance with Legislative Decree No. 49 of 2011. Afterwards, these persons will, like other Syrian citizens,

⁵⁹ Denmark, DIS, *Syria Military service: recruitment procedure, conscripts' duties and military service for naturalised Ajanibs*, July 2023, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁰ Tilburg University, Tilburg Law School Research Paper No. 011/2013, *The Stateless Syrians*, 24 May, 2013, [url](#), p. 21

⁶¹ Denmark, DIS, *Syria: Military Service*, January 2024, [url](#), p. 10

⁶² Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

⁶³ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

⁶⁴ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

need to obtain military service booklets, which will state their military service status, by reporting to the military conscription office.⁶⁵

A military booklet of a naturalised and registered ajanibi is sealed with blue ink wherein the name of the person concerned is mentioned followed by information that the person has been registered in the civil registrar of a specific province (for example Damascus) at a specific date (date/month/ year), in accordance with the aforementioned decree.⁶⁶

The legal ground for the exemption, which was granted to naturalised ajanib who were born before year 1993, is registered in the military booklet.⁶⁷ The exemption is stated in a red ink seal on the same page underneath the blue ink. The seal with red ink states that the entry of the concerned naturalised ajanibi was deleted in accordance with Decision No. 149 of 24/12/2011 issued by the General Directorate of the Army – The Organisation and Management Section.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

⁶⁶ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

⁶⁷ Denmark, DIS, *Syria Military service: recruitment procedure, conscripts' duties and military service for naturalised Ajanibs*, July 2023, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁸ Denmark, MFA, *Høring vedr. Militærtjeneste i Syrien* [Query response concerning military service in Syria], 7 March 2024

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