



## Information on the application procedure for humanitarian visas

The directive on the "Facilitated procedure for the issuance of visitor visas for relatives of Syrian nationals living in Switzerland" dated 4 September 2013 was annulled by the State secretariat for Migration (SEM) on 29 November 2013. **It is therefore no longer possible to invite family members to Switzerland under the terms of this directive.**

Anyone wanting a visa for family members may now only apply for a **humanitarian visa**. As Syrian nationals cannot prove that they will leave Switzerland after three months, **they will no longer be issued visitor visas.**

### 1. Humanitarian visas: definition and criteria

The criteria for granting humanitarian visas are different from those issued under the directive of 4 September 2013.

The SEM states that "Foreign nationals wishing to leave their native country for compelling reasons may apply at any time to a Swiss representation abroad to obtain information on whether they would be granted a visa for Switzerland on the basis of their personal circumstances. A visa can be issued in individual cases for humanitarian reasons if **it is evident that the applicant's life or physical integrity are directly, seriously and tangibly endangered**. As a rule the Swiss authorities presume that individuals who are already in a third-party State are no longer in any danger."

<https://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/faq.html>

The applicant must therefore be able to prove individual persecution or particularly serious individual humanitarian circumstances, otherwise the application will be refused.

### 2. Procedure for booking an appointment

Applicants for a humanitarian visa to enter Switzerland must contact a Swiss representation abroad **directly** and book an appointment.

It is best to request an appointment in an e-mail to the following addresses:

- [ist.visa@eda.admin.ch](mailto:ist.visa@eda.admin.ch) for Istanbul
- [beyvis@eda.admin.ch](mailto:beyvis@eda.admin.ch) for Beirut
- [amm.visa@eda.admin.ch](mailto:amm.visa@eda.admin.ch) for Amman

The addresses for other countries can be found on the website:

<https://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>





The appointment request should include the following information:

- The application is for a **humanitarian visa** (not a visitor visa!)
- Surname, first name, date of birth of all those applying for a humanitarian visa
- Surnames, first names, dates of birth and addresses of any family members resident in Switzerland (if applicable)

**N.B.** A visa application is costly for the families and involves a major risk for applicants travelling to a third-party country.

We therefore recommend you to think carefully about the chances and risks before making a decision.

*If you do not receive an appointment at the embassy, you can contact us at the following address: [syrien@redcross.ch](mailto:syrien@redcross.ch).*

### **3. During the appointment**

The embassy will arrange for an interpreter to attend your appointment.  
The embassy does not charge for humanitarian visas!

The appointment is very short, so you must be **very well prepared**.

You must bring the following **documents** with you:

- Copy of the e-mail confirming the appointment
- One (1) visa application form, duly completed (in German, French, Italian, or English), using a typewriter, online or in block capitals (in blue or black ink), and signed by you. You will find the form at:  
<https://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/de/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>
- Travel document (passport or identity card)
- Copy of the travel document
- Two (2) recent, identical biometric passport photos
- Detailed excerpt from the family register

All documents established in Arabic must be translated to English by an official translator.

In addition to your application, please bring answers to the following questions in German, English or French. The applicant's situation must be described in detail and in writing, so that the embassy has all the information it needs to make a decision. Information provided only orally cannot be taken into account.

- Describe your specific personal problems in your native country.
- Are you registered with the authorities of the country you are staying and/or with the UNHCR? If No, why not? If Yes, what is the status of your registration with the UNHCR and/or with the authorities?
- Have you sought refuge in the Syrian refugee camps? If No, why not?





- Describe your current living conditions (housing, relatives, financial circumstances) in the country you are staying.
- Why is it no longer possible for you to remain in the country you are staying?

If you **only left Syria so that you could apply for a humanitarian visa**, it is very important to mention this **in writing** in your answers to the questions.

If you have any questions or need any more information, you may contact us at this address:

syrien@redcross.ch

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