

**Egypt grants citizenship to 50,000 Palestinians'**  
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Security official tells Egyptian paper that Interior Ministry instructed to give citizenship to all Palestinians with Egyptian mothers.

Some 50,000 Palestinians, most of them from the Gaza Strip, have been granted Egyptian citizenship over the past few months, a security official revealed Thursday.

The official said that the Egyptian Interior Ministry had been instructed to give Egyptian citizenship to all Palestinians who were born to Egyptian mothers.

The official, who was not identified, told the Egyptian newspaper *El-Watan* that the instructions came from the country's High Council for Human Rights in Cairo last May.

The official pointed out that the number of Palestinians who have received Egyptian citizenship increased dramatically after the death of Hosni Mubarak.

Egypt now occupies the second place – after Jordan – in granting citizenship to Palestinians.

The court decision paved the way for thousands of Palestinians, particularly those living in the Gaza Strip, to apply for and receive Egyptian passports.

Until recently, Egypt, like most Arab countries, had refused to grant citizenship to Palestinians in accordance with an Arab League resolution dating back to 1965.

According to the resolution, "Palestinians who are residing in the Arab countries are given, upon their request, valid travel documents. If such documents are concerned [Arab] authorities must, wherever they be, issue these documents or renew them without delay."

The Arab countries have justified their refusal to grant citizenship to Palestinians by arguing that they wish to protect the Palestinians' right to ensure their return to their original homes inside Israel.

The Egyptian official also revealed that Cairo was now studying the request of an additional 35,000 Palestinians to receive Egyptian citizenship.

He predicted that by 2013 the number of Palestinians who would have received Egyptian citizenship would rise to 100,000.

Mahmoud Zahar, a senior Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, disclosed earlier this year that he too had become an Egyptian citizen because that he had been born to an Egyptian mother.

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