



What Do Arrival Watch-Listing and a Travel Ban Mean in Egypt? How Do I Find Out Whether My Name Is on the Lists and Challenge It, or Apply to Bar My Spouse or Child From Traveling?

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Many people ask us: “What does arrival watch-listing (tarqub al-wusul) in Egypt mean?”, “How do I file a request for arrival watch-listing?”, “Is there a lawsuit for arrival watch-listing?”, “What is the form of a request for it?”, and they also ask about a “travel ban for a child,” a “travel ban for a husband,” and a “travel ban for a wife.” To answer: “arrival watch-listing” means placing a person’s name on lists communicated to the security authorities at ports of entry (airports and seaports) so that he is stopped on arrival in Egypt and brought before the authority that requested the listing, whereas a “travel ban” prevents him from leaving the country. Both restrict freedom of movement, and the Constitution does not permit barring a citizen from leaving the country except by a reasoned judicial order, for a specified period, and in the cases defined by law (Article 62 of the Constitution). The first practical question is not “how do I file a lawsuit?” but “who issued the decision, and why?”, because the answer determines your path: a grievance to the investigating authority, a challenge before the administrative judiciary, or an application to the Urgent Matters Judge of the Family Court where the dispute is between parents or spouses. No one may bar a child, a husband or a wife from traveling merely because he or she wishes to; a decision of the competent authority is required. Egyptians and others living abroad in particular should check their status before traveling to Egypt.

First: What does “arrival watch-listing” mean, and how does it differ from a “travel ban”?

“Arrival watch-listing” and “travel ban” are common lay terms. In practice both operate through lists sent to entry and exit points, but their effects differ:





Point of comparison	Arrival watch-listing	Travel ban
Meaning	Alerting the security authorities at ports of entry that a named person is arriving in Egypt	Preventing a named person from leaving the country through ports of exit
Effect	The passenger is stopped on arrival and brought before the requesting authority, or an existing order or judgment is enforced against him	The person is prevented from completing departure procedures at the airport or seaport
Does it bar entry?	It does not bar a citizen from returning to his own country, which the Constitution prohibits (Art. 62); it only alerts the port	Not related to entry
Common grounds	A pending case or investigation, a judgment in absentia, a warrant for arrest and production, a family dispute, a debt or alimony	The same grounds, including the risk of frustrating the enforcement of a judgment or the loss of a right
Who requests it	The Public Prosecution, the investigating judge, the court, and other authorities as the case may be	The Public Prosecution, the investigating judge, the judge competent in family disputes, and other authorities as the case may be

An individual cannot list another person's name on his own; he files a complaint or application with the competent authority (the Public Prosecution or the judge), which decides after examining the application and its grounds.





Second: Legal basis and established case law

Authority	Substance
Article 62 of the Constitution	Freedom of movement, residence and emigration is guaranteed; a citizen may not be barred from leaving the country except by a reasoned judicial order, for a specified period, and in the cases defined by law; nor may he be barred from returning
Supreme Constitutional Court – Case No. 243 of Judicial Year 21 (Constitutional) – session of 2000/11/04	Held unconstitutional Articles 8 and 11 of Presidential Decree-Law No. 97 of 1959 on Passports, insofar as they empowered the Minister of Interior to set the conditions for issuing a passport and to refuse or withdraw it, and held that Article 3 of Minister of Interior Decree No. 3937 of 1996, which made a wife's travel conditional on her husband's consent, fell as a consequence. The Court held that the rule is permissibility and a ban is the exception, and that it must be regulated by a law, not by an executive decision
Supreme Constitutional Court – Conflict of Jurisdiction No. 40 of Judicial Year 27 – session of 2015/06/13	Determined which ordinary judicial authority has jurisdiction over a grievance against a Public Prosecutor's decision banning defendants from traveling in a public-funds case
New Criminal Procedure Code, Law No. 174 of 2025	Regulates travel bans and arrival watch-lists by a reasoned order of the Public Prosecutor or his delegate or of the investigating judge, and permits a grievance before the criminal court. It is not yet in force: the House of Representatives approved, in its session of 2026/09/30, postponing it to 2027/10/01

Many scholars take the view that the Criminal Procedure Code currently in force (Law No. 150 of 1950) contains no express provision regulating ban and watch-lists, which the new Code was meant to address. As approved by the House of Representatives in the new Code, the order is issued with reasons where there is sufficient evidence of the seriousness of the accusation in a felony or in a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment, and its term is one year, renewable for similar periods.





In family disputes, a child, a husband or a wife may be barred from traveling only by a decision of the competent judge, who balances the interest of the minor against the rights of the parents; the application is not granted where its purpose is spite or pressure on the other party.

Note on the texts: this article is built on the rules in force today. We refer to the new Criminal Procedure Code, Law No. 174 of 2025, because it is not yet in force; it does not apply to your situation now and will take effect from 2027/10/01 as approved by the House of Representatives.

Third: Practical steps

The steps depend on your position; we divide them into four cases:

(1) If you fear your name is listed, including expatriates traveling to Egypt

1. Check well before you travel, through the judgments-and-restrictions inquiry service on the Digital Egypt platform, the Passports, Immigration and Nationality Administration in Abbasiya, or the competent prosecution office or enforcement office according to the type of case. Do not rely on the electronic inquiry alone; confirm through a lawyer.
2. Appoint a lawyer under a special power of attorney (which a person residing abroad can obtain from the Egyptian consulate) covering inquiries, grievances, applications and attendance at investigations.
3. Identify the authority that issued the decision, its ground and the case number: criminal, judgment in absentia, debt, family dispute or administrative decision, since each follows a different path.
4. If a case or investigation exists, agree with your lawyer on the safest course before traveling, such as appearing before the Prosecution with him, providing guarantees, or applying to have the name removed. Do not enter the country without knowing your status.





(2) If the decision was issued by the Public Prosecution, an investigating judge or a court

1. File a reasoned application with the issuing authority to remove the name, attaching proof that the ground has ceased or that there is no risk of flight (known residence, employment, family, financial guarantees).
2. Where appropriate, apply for a temporary travel permit for a serious reason (medical treatment, work or study) with a guarantee of return.
3. File a grievance before the competent judicial authority as provided by law. On 2015/06/13 the Supreme Constitutional Court determined the ordinary judicial authority competent to hear a grievance against a Public Prosecutor's ban in a public-funds case, so do not file your grievance with an authority that lacks jurisdiction. Once the new Criminal Procedure Code takes effect, the criminal court will hear the grievance.

(3) If the decision is administrative and not based on a judicial order

1. Ask your lawyer to obtain a copy of the decision or proof of the listing, its ground and the authority that requested it.
2. File a grievance with the Ministry of Interior (the lists department of the Passports, Immigration and Nationality Administration).
3. File an annulment action before the Court of Administrative Justice, relying on Article 62 of the Constitution and Supreme Constitutional Court Case No. 243 of Judicial Year 21, since only a judge or a member of the Public Prosecution designated by law may impose a ban, not the executive authority alone. Request a stay of execution of the decision pending judgment; it requires two elements: serious grounds and urgency (Art. 49 of the State Council Law No. 47 of 1972).

(4) If you want to prevent a child, a husband or a wife from traveling

1. Agreement is the starting point: the other party's written consent to the child's travel avoids a dispute, and documenting it protects you.
2. In case of disagreement, file an application with the Urgent Matters Judge of the Family Court in your capacity as father, custodial mother or guardian, stating the reason for the





concern, such as the risk of frustrating visitation or custody or of the child not returning, together with the documents. The Minister of Interior, the Director of the Passports Administration and the other party are ordinarily joined.

3. The application is not granted where its purpose is spite or pressure on the other party; the interest of the minor is the criterion.
4. Barring a wife from traveling: the husband cannot do so by an administrative request of his own, because the Supreme Constitutional Court held that the provision making her travel conditional on his consent fell (Case No. 243 of Judicial Year 21); a decision of the competent judge is required after examining his application.
5. Barring a husband from traveling: if he fails to pay alimony awarded by a judgment, the wife or ex-wife may apply to the judge, attaching the alimony judgment and proof that the arrears have accrued and that he has refused to pay.
6. The person against whom the order is made may file a grievance against it before the competent court under the Civil and Commercial Procedure Code.

Fourth: Required documents

- The passport or national ID card of the person concerned.
- A special power of attorney to the lawyer (from the Egyptian consulate for a person residing abroad) covering inquiries, grievances, appeals and applications.
- A copy of the decision or proof of the listing and the issuing authority, or the result of the inquiry.
- Proof that the ground has ceased: a final acquittal or a decision that there is no basis to proceed with the case, a certificate of payment of the debt or alimony, or a settlement with the right-holder.
- Proof of guarantees: residence, employment, a return ticket and, where necessary, a financial surety.
- To bar a child from traveling: the child's birth certificate, the marriage certificate or divorce deed, the custody or visitation judgment, and proof of the concern (such as a previous attempt to travel, messages or bookings).





- To bar a husband for alimony arrears: the marriage certificate or divorce deed, the alimony judgment, and proof of non-payment.

Fifth: Deadlines and time limits

Period	Effect	Basis
Sixty days from the date of learning of the decision	Time limit for an action to annul an administrative listing decision before the administrative judiciary; the right to annulment lapses once it expires	Art. 24 of the State Council Law No. 47 of 1972
Fifteen days from learning of the order	Time limit for a grievance before the criminal court against a ban or listing order, which the court decides within a further fifteen days	New Criminal Procedure Code, Law No. 174 of 2025 (in force from 2027/10/01)
One year, renewable	Term of the ban or watch-list order, renewable for similar periods as approved by the House of Representatives	The same Law
Well before travel	There is no statutory deadline for inquiry, but delay may expose you to being stopped at the airport or on arrival	Practical recommendation

Sixth: Court and government fees

Filing an application or grievance with the Public Prosecution carries no court fee. An annulment action before the administrative judiciary and an application to the Urgent Matters Judge of the Family Court carry modest fees fixed by the court on registration, in addition to service costs and the fee for issuing a special power of attorney at the consulate or the Real Estate Registry; inquire about them before filing, as they vary with the type of application. These fees do not include attorneys' fees.

Seventh: Common mistakes that forfeit the right

- Traveling or returning without a prior inquiry, then being surprised by a ban or a stop at the airport.





- Relying on “brokers” or intermediaries who promise to remove the name for a fee; removal comes only by decision of the competent authority.
- Confusing the authorities: a grievance against a Prosecution order goes before the ordinary judicial authority, an administrative decision is challenged before the administrative judiciary, and family applications go to the Urgent Matters Judge.
- Missing the sixty-day period for the annulment action.
- Applying to bar a child or a spouse out of spite and without a serious reason, in which case the application is dismissed.
- Assuming that the passage of time removes a name from the lists by itself; do not assume it, and inquire.
- Omitting inquiry, grievance and appeal from the special power of attorney, leaving your agent unable to take the step.

Eighth: When do you need a lawyer?

- If you are an expatriate and fear your name is on arrival watch-lists or ban lists before you travel to Egypt.
- If a ban or arrival watch-listing decision was issued against you and you do not know its authority or ground.
- To file an annulment action before the administrative judiciary and a request for a stay of execution within the time limit.
- To draft an application to bar a child, a husband or a wife and to present proof of the concern.
- To negotiate the removal of the name or a temporary travel permit with guarantees.
- If you are the person sought to be barred in a family dispute, to resist the application for lack of justification.

You can request a legal consultation with one of the firm’s lawyers through our website hamlf.com, where the consultation fee and duration are shown at booking.





A question worth knowing the answer to

Does arrival watch-listing prevent me from entering Egypt? Is it risky to travel if my name is on it?

Answer: Arrival watch-listing does not bar a citizen from returning to his own country, which the Constitution prohibits (Art. 62), but it alerts the security authorities at the port to your arrival, so you may be stopped and brought before the authority that requested the listing, or an existing order or judgment may be enforced against you; the effect varies with the ground of the listing. It is therefore safest not to travel until your lawyer has inquired about your status and identified the authority and the ground, and has arranged a legal position that protects you, such as appearing at the investigation, providing guarantees or applying to have the name removed. The fact that your case seems old is no substitute for this.

If you are a party to a similar problem, do not hesitate to contact us or visit our office. Our team's experience in these cases saves you time and effort, puts your rights on the right track from the first step, and gives you the reassurance that your file is in hands that know how to protect it.

If you liked this article or benefited from it, we would be glad if you rated our office on our Google page; your opinion matters to us and helps others reach accurate information:

<https://search.google.com/local/writereview?placeid=ChIJ28LCe4AVWBQRL1UKgIqlKmQ>

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