



Adoption/Kafala in Egypt

Frequently Asked Questions

Your Guide About Kafala(adoption) in Egypt

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| How many orphans are there in Egypt?

The latest official number of orphans registered inside orphanages is **12,500**. All these children are waiting for a chance to grow up in a healthy environment.



| Why are the children in orphanages? Who abandons their child?

Most children in Egypt are abandoned because they have been born out of wedlock. Some other reasons are economic as some families struggle and live in poverty and can't cope. Some families abandon their children because of disability or other special needs. So families sometimes see orphanages as a way in which they can improve the chances for their children, and this is fed by a perception that their child will be better off.

Once a child is abandoned, he/she is incorporated into the state system for the care of children deprived of parental care. Children under two years are sent to centers that belong to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and and Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS), while children over 2 years are sent to centers that belong to the MOSS. There are many studies that show how children in institutional care lack emotionally and developmentally in comparison with children in families. A loving family is all that any child needs and you don't need to be perfect to be a perfect parent for one of them.

| Where are the children found? Is there a process to look for them?

Babies are found in the street, in public places, beside a mosque or a church, railway stations, on cars, and unfortunately some people abandon their children in rubbish bins or containers.

Once they are found, they are taken to the closest police station. The police issues a report proving where the child was found, and give him/her a random name. They are referred to a public hospital for a medical test, then a social worker from MOH takes the baby to the nearest governmental orphanage once placed in an orphanage the MOH issues a birth certificate.



| What are their names when found?

They have no names when they are found. At the police station they choose a random name for the child and a fictional names for father. The MOH then chooses a name for the mother.





What is the difference between the Western idea of adoption and kafala?

Adoption is defined as parents taking care of a non-biological son/daughter in their home, where the child is considered as their legal offspring. In western adoption, the family has the right to name the child using the father's full name. Also, the adopted child is entitled to inherit from the adoptive family.

As for Kafala, it is an arabic term for guardianship. Through kafala, a family takes in a child whose biological parents or family are incapable of raising him or her or who is otherwise deprived of a family environment, without the child being entitled to the family name or an automatic right of inheritance from the family. By definition, kafala is 'the commitment to voluntarily take care of the needs, of the education and of the protection of a minor, in the same way a family would do it for it's biological children.

| Does adoption really exist in Egypt?

Yes, adoption does exist in Egypt, known as Kafala or the Alternative Families Program. It allows for the foster parents or mother to care for a child in their home as a member of their family. It also permits the kafala parents or mother to name the child as per the family/or mother's surname. The parents/mother are then fully responsible for the child financially and in terms of parenting and education.

For information on how to apply and related conditions, please use the following link:





| Is Kafala allowed in Islam?

There has been a lot of misunderstanding regarding the permissibility of kafala under Islamic jurisprudence. Kafala while following rules of Islam isn't just allowed but encouraged and is seen not only as a meritorious deed, but also as a religious duty.

There are many Fatwas encouraging families for Kafala.



| Who can become a kafala parent?

A.) A married couple who possess the moral, social maturity, health and material capacity to care for a child. Married not less than 3 years (exception in case of infertility is possible). Both of them are between 25-60 years old and the number of children in family does not exceed two (unless they are independent), One spouse should hold a minimum of high school diploma or its equivalent. Family should be of same religion as the adopted child.

B.) Widows, divorced women and women who have never been married and reached 30 years of age are entitled to apply for kafala.

To know more about the criteria - follow this link:



| What if I don't live in Egypt, can I still adopt/ become a kafala parent?

Yes, Egyptian citizenship holders can apply for Kafala/adoption, even if they live outside of Egypt, on the condition that at least one of the two parents is an Egyptian citizen.



| Can I take the child with me if I live out of Egypt?

Yes you can, there are special procedures that you need to follow and you will need to acquire an approval from the MOSS.



| Can the baby take the full father's name?

This is not permitted in Islam, but is allowed for Christian families. The child of a Muslim Kafala family can either take the first name of the father or the last name of the family. Religion forbids the child to take both names.

Example :

- If the given names of the child is: Mohamed Ahmed AbdAllah Sayed
- The Kafala father's name is: Hany Mohsen Mohamed El Mallah
- The child name can be either: Mohamed Hany AbdAllah Sayed (taking the father's first name)
- Or Mohamed Ahmed AbdAllah Sayed El Mallah (taking the family's name)



| If I'm a single woman, what name does my adopted child get?

For a single mother the child can take the mother's family name (Fatwa issued in Sept 2019). The mother can also change the first given random name of the child.



| Do I need to breastfeed?

This is a personal decision of every mother and is also not required by religion or the law and doesn't necessarily make the bonding between the child and mother stronger. However it is possible to establish milk production for a kafala baby, even if you have never been pregnant or given birth by following a program for stimulating milk production that is designed by a specialized doctor. Breastfeeding a child under two years for a specific amount of time, makes you a milk mother for the child and creates a mahram relationship between you and the child. Which for many muslim families make certain legalities easier from their religious point of view.

| Why can't my child (adopted child) inherit from me?

Adopted children do not inherit in Islam but there are two legal ways in Islam by which you can make sure that your adopted child future is secured in case you die:

a.)Gifting: As long as the Kafala parents are alive, they can give the child any gift they want (buy a flat for the child, a piece of land, a car etc)

b.)Wassiyah (will) - In Islam, the wasiyyah refers to a 1/3 (or less) bequest that a Muslim can give after death. A wasiyyah can go to charity or relatives who are not otherwise heirs under the Islamic Rules of Inheritance.





The Application process

| How do I apply?

You can contact the Kafala hotline to know the details and requirements: **19828**

Or through the following link :





| Where do I go?

If you live in Egypt, you should contact the nearest directorate of MOSS to your residence.

| What documents do I need?

- National ID.
- Educational diploma of each spouse or for the mother in case a single mother applies.
- Medical certificate for each spouse.
- Criminal record of each spouse.
- Marriage certificate.
- Income statement for different sources of income.
- Contract of the owned house in Egypt.
- Contract of rented flat (recent electricity and water bills).



| How long does the process of approval take?

In the past it used to take different amount of time depending on the governorate where application was submitted (from 3 months, to 6 months)

With the new reforms of Kafala system being implemented it will be maximum 4.5 months and as soon as the assessment by the MOSS is completed for the family, they can start their journey of searching for their child.



| Can I choose the baby I will adopt? How?

After receiving a letter of approval, you can visit one of the orphanages of your choice and start to look out for a child that would fit into your family. Some families look for small babies, others prefer an older child. Discuss your preferences and what your capabilities are with the orphanage and they will be able to guide you and you can initiate what we call the bonding time.



| Final word:

Bringing a child into your home through adoption (Kafala) will be one of the biggest decisions you will make in your adult life. For most of us, this will not only be one of the biggest, but one of the most rewarding decisions of our lives.

Thanks to everyone who helped getting this PDF done:



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