

Marriage & Citizenship in Tanzania

1. Marriage not means citizenship for non-citizens

In light of several foreign legislations, it is commonly believed that the naturalization of a foreigner occurs automatically through marriage ties. However, this is not the case in Tanzanian law. In Tanzania, although marriage confers certain rights automatically, citizenship is not one of them.

2. What says the law about marriage?

The law allows for marriage between a man and a woman: section 9 of the Law of Marriage Act. It grants them rights and duties, as stated in Part IV of this same law.

Regarding foreigners, the law provides for the obtaining of specific permits for non-citizens married to a Tanzanian.

No Tanzanian law provides for automatic acquisition of nationality through marriage. However, it is mentioned that a woman married to a Tanzanian citizen can apply for naturalization at any time: section 11 (1) of The Tanzania Citizenship Act.

In all cases, **the law provides a procedure for all naturalization applications.**

3. The rights or permits a foreign spouse may obtain

The law provides for a residence permit for foreign citizens married to a Tanzanian citizen.

The law also provides, for any non-citizen, depending on the case, the possibility to submit a naturalization application; specific conditions for foreign women married to Tanzanians.

No element permitted by the law is automatically granted. **There is an established procedure that must be followed for each application.**

4. The path to Citizenship

"Subject to the following provisions of this Part a person who is a non-citizen of the United Republic and who does not qualify for the attainment of citizenship in accordance with the provisions of Part II may acquire citizenship of the United Republic only by naturalisation."

However, the application for Tanzanian nationality involves the renunciation of any other nationality or citizenship that a person may hold in order to claim the protection of any other country.

CONDITIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP BY NATURALIZATION

Qualifications for a foreigner who applies for Tanzania Citizenship are:

- i. That he has resided in the United Republic throughout the period of twelve months immediately preceding the date of application,

- ii. That during the ten years immediately preceding the said period of twelve months he resided in the United Republic for periods amounting in the aggregate do not less than seven years,
- iii. That he has an adequate knowledge of Kiswahili or the English language,
- iv. That he is of good character,
- v. That, in terms of his past and potential contribution to the national economy, or scientific and technological advancement and to the national social and cultural welfare, he would be a suitable citizen of the United Republic,
- vi. That he intends, if naturalized to continue to reside permanently in the United Republic.

<https://www.immigration.go.tz/index.php/3-0-citizenship-by-naturalization>

5. Let's clarify misunderstandings

It is important for everyone to know the law, and to understand it. To this end, with regard to the assumptions surrounding the subject of nationality in marriage, it is important to remember that:

- The work permit is not automatic; one must first have a job;
- Permanent residency is not automatic. It follows a preliminary procedure for residence permits, which can be combined with the work permit;
- According to the law stating the renunciation of any other nationality when applying for naturalization in Tanzania, it follows that dual nationality is not permitted.

6. The importance of knowing the law

The law is established to govern social relations and legal living conditions in the territory. To this end, it is important for each spouse and their children to respect it, in order to avoid any form of inconvenience.

Thus, all couples and families have the duty to know Tanzanian law according to their situation, in order to avoid any situations that could expose them to administrative difficulties or eviction notices.

7. The steps to follow

Love may cross borders instantly, but citizenship requires patience, process, and law.

You are or have a foreign partner and you do not know the procedure, know that it is important to be well accompanied in order not to miss any step.

It is important for you to start the right procedures at the right time and to meet the right deadlines. This is why you need the best legal support for your situation.

At IDEAL LAW GROUP, we are a qualified legal service and experts on immigration issues, as well as other areas.

Contact us for all your needs; we serve the different communities with professionalism, respect, and integrity.

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