



**Summary concerns relating to the implementation by the Government of Kuwait (GoK)
of Articles 2, 5 and 6 of the
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
Review by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of Kuwait's
implementation of the treaty
118th session / 10 - 25 August 2026
20 July 2026**

1. [Salam for Democracy and Human Rights](#) (SALAM DHR) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered as a [limited company](#) in the United Kingdom. The organisation undertakes research and advocacy in order to promote and protect adherence to international human rights standards and democratic principles, mainly in Bahrain, but also the Gulf, region, and across the globe. SALAM DHR is a member or partner of a variety of international coalitions and partnerships, including The Global Alliance to End Statelessness, The World Organisation Against Torture (known by its French acronym, OMCT), the European Network on Statelessness, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion and the MENA Statelessness Network / HAWIATI, amongst others. SALAM DHR shares the objectives of these organisations. SALAM DHR is registered on the EU's [Transparency Register](#).
2. Rights Realization Centre (RRC) is a United Kingdom-registered [charity](#). Its mandate is to promote and protect international human rights standards in the South West Asian, North Africa (SWANA) and Horn of Africa regions.
3. This alternative report addresses consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination the implementation of the [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) (CERD) by the Government of Kuwait (GoK) at the CERD's 118th session, 10-25 August 2026.
4. SALAM DHR and RRC address principally implementation of Articles 2, 5 and 6 of the treaty by the state party. These are addressed, mainly, in paragraphs 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20 of the state party's report.¹

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - List of themes in relation to the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth periodic reports of Kuwait, 15 June 2026, UN reference CERD/C/KWT/Q/25-26, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FKWT%2FQ%2F25-26&Lang=en Addressing statelessness, these are:

15 - Information on the implementation of the nationality legislation in the State party. / Concerns about the revocation of nationality and risk of statelessness.

16 - Measures taken to allow Kuwaiti women married to foreigners to pass on their nationality to their children and spouses on an equal footing with Kuwaiti men.

17. Measures to combat discrimination against stateless Bidoon people and measures adopted to abolish the barriers faced by them in obtaining official documents and to ensure their enjoyment of civil, political,

5. SALAM DHR and partner, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, published research and advocacy in relation to the GoK's conduct towards the stateless Bidoon community, pursuant to Articles 2,5 and 6 of the Covenant, in the context of Covid, and in respect to the enduring legal status and treatment of the community. The January 2023 report was entitled *"Nothing But a Pen and a Word": Voices from the Stateless Bidoon Community in Kuwait During the Covid-19 Pandemic*.²
6. In relation to the overall objective of the CERD, SALAM DHR wishes to draw the Committee's attention to an October 2012 experience of a SALAM DHR team member. In October 2012, a member of the then Prime Minister's staff told a current staff member of SALAM DHR, following a meeting with the then Prime Minister, Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, that the reason why the GoK did not facilitate granting citizenship to the stateless community was on account of "demography": *"they [the Bidoon] are mostly poor and Shi'a."* This assertion, while dated, appears to fly in the face of the object and purpose of the Convention.
7. The report, finalised in September 2022 explored the life experiences of members of Kuwait's stateless Bidoon community during the Covid-19 pandemic, from its emergence around March 2020 to around January 2022. It provided a qualitative snapshot of the lives of those who took part in the project by exploring whether and how their experiences have been shaped by their socio-legal status and what the impact of that experience was.
8. The study found that over the course of Covid-19 pandemic in Kuwait, on account of the longstanding legal status and imposed, widespread lack of official documentation, members of the stateless Kuwaiti Bidoon community could not immediately access healthcare at all times; and when members of the community could access healthcare, it was generally later – sometimes months later in respect to access to vaccination – than provision made to citizens, or of an inferior quality. Provision of healthcare oft times appeared to ignore specific vulnerabilities, such as co-morbidities and/or social factors that put the stateless at greater risk than citizens and access to healthcare, notably vaccination, via online registration was diminished due to documentation requirements that scores if not hundreds or even many hundreds of stateless persons did not have.
9. On account of their legal status, at the same time, members of the Bidoon community experienced unstable, generally poorly remunerated work and other social deprivations commensurate with their legal status.³
10. Amidst the public health crisis, the government body responsible for the administration of the stateless Bidoon community carried out what appears to have been industrial-scale falsification of identity documents in order to change the legal status of Kuwaiti Bidoon. Widely called the Central System, its practices appeared to be in contravention of Kuwaiti and binding, international law and yet, as an effectively autonomous agency, its conduct appears to have escaped oversight and accountability. Its actions, alongside others taken by the Kuwaiti authorities, appear to have been aimed at reducing the documented existence of stateless persons in Kuwait, without providing a reasonable or internationally recognisable pathway to nationalisation.

economic, social and cultural rights without discrimination. Measures to ensure that Bidoon children have access to education without discrimination.

In respect to Multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination (arts. 2 and 5), paragraph 18 states:

18 - Measures to address multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination against women, in particular migrant women, stateless women (Bidoon) and women belonging to ethnic and ethno-religious groups.

In relation to Access to justice (art. 6), paragraph 20 states:

20. Information on measures adopted to ensure access to justice to victims of racial discrimination. Statistics disaggregated by ethnic or national origin of the alleged victims, on complaints for acts of racial discrimination, racist hate speech and racist hate crimes as well as on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions of perpetrators and the reparations provided to victims.

² To access the report, see:

<https://salam-dhr.org/voices-from-the-stateless-bidoon-community-in-kuwait-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/> or <https://www.institutesi.org/resources/nothing-but-a-pen-and-a-word-voices-from-the-stateless-bidoon-community-in-kuwait-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

³ This text is derived from Submission to the Human Rights Committee 139th Session of the Committee on Civil and Political Rights. Kuwait: End discrimination of stateless persons by establishing a transparent pathway to citizenship, by SALAM DHR, ISI and associated with others, <https://www.institutesi.org/resources/a-joint-submission-on-kuwait-discrimination> accessed 20 July 2026

11. The results of this study indicated that, taken together, scores, hundreds or even thousands of stateless people suffered tremendous economic and psychological hardship during the pandemic, including in the course of successive lockdowns during which they faced unstable employment; did not have access to broadly analogous forms of socio-economic support as that accorded to citizens. Accordingly, the impact of Covid-19 on Kuwait's stateless Bidoon community was proportionally more widespread and more intense than that experienced by counterparts with Kuwaiti citizenship.
12. SALAM DHR and RRC are concerned that the role and character of the Central Agency, or System is contrary to the object and purpose of the Treaty. The GoK has asserted broadly equal treatment between citizens and members of the stateless community in respect to health, education and other social services, but GoK fails to set out or explain that its administrative model is a parallel one, akin to apartheid era South Africa, whereby the state and its agencies, under the general coordination of the Central System, or Agency, oversees the provision of services to the stateless community as a community apart. Insofar as the stateless constitute over 100 thousand people, the overwhelming majority of whom are Kuwait-born, this is neither fair nor equal: the Central Agency, or System (*Jihaz al-Markezi*), the autonomous state body established to oversee all stateless-related administrative matters:
 - Issues user and health insurance cards. They failed to say that, in practice, their legal status has prevented or delayed access to medical services, as set out in the report;
 - Promotes access to education and “free education”. They generally omit to say that most stateless children are educated in parallel, private schools which generally have lower educational and professional standards than state schools, from which stateless children are prohibited from attending, even though many thousands are also Kuwait-born; they also fail to detail the explicit caps or restrictions put on access to state-funded higher education institutions faced by stateless persons.
 - Provides official documents. However, the evidence of the 2021-2 report showed that the GoK falsifies, on an industrial scale, personal documentation. The withholding or confiscation of documents, the coerced enforcement of fraudulent documents, and the actions from the Central System that directly target Bidoon community members to forcibly deny their connection to Kuwait, flies in the face of the CERD.
 - During Covid, members of the Bidoon community were not legally allowed to lodge complaints or make use of the judicial apparatus to find protection, and/or reparations. The known action against the population comes from arbitrary arrest of Bidoon people and Human Rights (HRs) defenders for protesting, suspension of salaries to stateless people working in public institutions, their exclusion from the formal labour market, and the forced and indiscriminately lockdown of the Bidoon community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This demonstrates the unequal institutional design that has facilitated the reinforcement of discriminatory practices which contradicts the obligations present in articles 14, 16, 19 and 21 of the ICCPR in favour of accountability, transparency, peaceful assembly, and the respect for the rule of law.
13. SALAM DHR and RRC, drawing on “*Nothing But a Pen and a Word: Voices from the Stateless Bidoon Community in Kuwait During the Covid-19 Pandemic*”, urge the Committee to call on the GoK to:
 - Re-assess and re-evaluate its entire approach in respect to its engagement with the Bidoon community, including by committing to abide by internationally binding human rights treaties, such as by taking objectively verifiable measures to implement treaty body recommendations;
 - Take steps to end all discriminatory and arbitrary restrictions and limitations currently applied to stateless Bidoons, in keeping with contemporaneous measures regarding their legal status;
 - Immediately abolish the Central System and bring its functions under state bodies applicable to citizens;
 - In consultation with national and international civil society, as well as intergovernmental bodies and experts, determine and publish clear, objectively verifiable assessment criteria for Kuwaiti citizenship; and
 - Create an independent pathway in line with international standards that enables non-citizens in Kuwait to apply for citizenship, with a right of appeal where rejected.