



Report for the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's (CERD) review of Kuwait in the 118th session (10-25 August 2026)

Joint submission by: Northern Arabia's Surviving Indigeneity (NASI) and SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR), in collaboration with persons affected by racial discrimination in Kuwait.

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Section 1: Introduction

1. On 10 March 2025, a Kuwaiti woman of Egyptian heritage was forcibly deported from Kuwait after speaking on X/Twitter against the Kuwaiti government's revocation of her Kuwaiti citizenship without due process or an effective right to appeal, which she had acquired in 2006 after renouncing her Egyptian citizenship as per the stipulations of Article 8 of Kuwait's 1959 Nationality Law. Less than 24 hours after Ms Al-Sayed posted online, the official X account of Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MOI) posted the following statement: "*A woman whose Article 8 Kuwaiti citizenship had been revoked was arrested after she criticized government decisions on social media. She was referred to the Deportation and Temporary Detention Affairs Department, pending deportation to her country of origin.*" ^[2] Alongside this statement, the MOI included a 3-second voice clip of Ms Al-Sayed's speech, which has been viewed 2.2 million times. It drew jeering commentary, including racist slurs and mockery of Ms Al-Sayed's Egyptian accent and cultural background.
2. While the ultimate basis for revoking Ms Al-Sayed's Kuwaiti citizenship was her Egyptian ethnic/national origin, the decision undermined her fundamental human rights. She was terminated from her job at the Kuwait Ministry of Information on the grounds that she is no longer recognised as Kuwaiti. She has been dispossessed of all her property in Kuwait and deprived of her pension and social security, to which she had contributed for over a decade. She has been forcibly deported to a country she is not a citizen of and separated from her two Kuwaiti daughters.
3. The systematic violations of Ms Al-Sayed's human rights following the revocation of her Kuwaiti citizenship are not an anomaly. They are part of an ongoing, systematic campaign in Kuwait that authoritative international legal expert sources have described as "arbitrary" and "reminiscent" of the interwar and post-Second World War period,

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² Ministry of Interior – State of Kuwait [@Moi_kuw]. (2024, March 9). *A woman whose Article 8 Kuwaiti citizenship had been revoked was arrested after she criticized government decisions on social media.* X (Twitter). https://x.com/Moi_kuw/status/1898769373789028673

where ethnic, religious, national minorities, and displaced persons lost or were excluded from the right to citizenship en masse. [3]

4. In addition to systematic discrimination faced by South Asians and other marginalised ethnic minorities in Kuwait,[4] urgent attention to the alarming pattern is needed, one where Kuwaitis have been arbitrarily and coercively denaturalised, allowing their fundamental human rights to be curtailed. This pattern has historically targeted ethnic minorities who have inhabited Kuwait for generations but were later on classified as “foreigners” and excluded from the right to Kuwaiti nationality. These systematic gaps are recorded in British archival communications (FO 371/148912 /9) in 1960, which noted how access to the right to Kuwaiti nationality and civil and political rights attached to it was designed to exclude specific ethnic groups. In his response to the last Political Agent to Kuwait Sir John Christopher Blake Richmond on the concerning drafting of Kuwait’s nationality law of 1959, British diplomat Sir Richard Beaumont wrote: *“We share your concern at the restrictive nature of the revised Kuwaiti nationality law with its inherent danger that there will come into existence a generation/born in Kuwaiti nationality who will clearly resent an under-privileged existence in what is and has always been their home.”* [5]
5. When Kuwait’s Nationality Law was implemented as of 1961, semi-nomadic Bedouin people (now known as “*Bidoon Jinsaya*”, meaning “without nationality”) were singled out by urban members of the nationality committees, who were given a prerogative (by Decree-law no. 4/1960) to use “dialect, appearance, and other physical characteristics to identify Kuwaiti nationality”. This criterion was based on ethnocentric beliefs that Kuwaiti urbanites were superior to the nomadic and semi-nomadic neighbours, who were deemed “foreigners”. The Bidoon were excluded from the right to Kuwaiti nationality based on ethno-sectarian criteria, including their names and other linguistic and cultural identity markers, such as accent, dialect, costume, tattoo, etc. Among those affected by this type of racial discrimination was one of the authors of this report, Ahmad Benswait, who documented his mother’s experiences in an article that he published on Melbourne Law School’s Critical Statelessness Studies Blog. [6]
6. The historical background of Kuwait’s racially based deprivation of nationality is important because it reveals a pattern of structural discrimination. It allows us to see how Kuwait’s recent mass naturalisation campaign has further exacerbated racial discrimination in the country. [7]
7. In 2022, the MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati) noted that “Bidoon in Kuwait have faced treatment tantamount to persecution. In 2010, the Kuwaiti government mandated the “Central Apparatus” for the Remedy of the Situation of Illegal Residents to solve the Bidoon problem in 5 years. 12 years have now passed, and the problem seems to have worsened as the Central Apparatus’ conduct, is – at best – flawed and –

³ Fripp, E. (2025, October 21). *The Resurgence of Large-scale Deprivation of Nationality: The Case of Kuwait*. <https://opiniojuris.org/2025/10/21/the-resurgence-of-large-scale-deprivation-of-nationality-the-case-of-kuwait/>.

⁴ Partners for transparency. (May 2026). Report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) regarding Kuwait’s review. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FCSS%2FKWT%2F69512&Lang=en

⁵ Beaumont, R. A. (1960). Internal Political Situation: Kuwait. Arabian Gulf Digital Archives. (p. 09). <https://www.agda.ae/en/catalogue/tna/fo/371/148912/n/9>.

⁶ Benswait, A. (2021). Critical sociolinguistic ethnography as a lens to statelessness: a case from the Bidoon community in Kuwait [Blog post]. <https://law.unimelb.edu.au/centres/statelessness/critical-statelessness-studies-blog/critical-sociolinguistic-ethnography-as-a-lens-to-statelessness-a-case-from-the-bidoon-community-in-kuwait>.

⁷ New Lines Magazine, “Kuwait Is Stripping Its People of Citizenship at an Unprecedented Rate”, 17 April 2026, <https://newlinesmag.com/essays/kuwait-is-stripping-its-people-of-citizenship-at-an-unprecedented-rate/>.

at worst – serving to marginalise and reduce the existence of the stateless community.”^[8]

8. In its concluding observations report on Kuwait in 2026, the UN Human Rights Committee claimed it was “alarmed by allegations received about the falsification of documents, by the central system for the remedy of the situation of illegal residents, to arbitrarily change the legal status of stateless persons; cases of Bidoon people being classified under foreign nationalities when requesting identity papers; and Bidoon university students being required to register for identity documents that would force them to accept a false nationality.”^[9]
9. Until the 2025 Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations Human Rights Council, the government of Kuwait has refused to recognise the legal existence of the Bidoon as. Instead, the government of Kuwait has insisted that all the Bidoon are illegal residents, even though the majority of them were born in and are native to Kuwait.^[10]
10. The historically stateless/Bidoon Kuwaiti people in general do not have legally protected human rights whatsoever and their access to basic needs is defined as ‘benefits’ that are discretionary and conditional on participating in the process of issuing/renewing the Review Card that is issued by CARIRS, which has been noted in the United Kingdom’s (2024) Country Policy Information Note (CPIN) on the Bidoon of Kuwait (11.2. *Renewal of review cards*) as “arbitrary and non-transparent”.^[11] In 2019, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that even disabled stateless/Bidoon persons are denied rights such as education, healthcare, housing, and employment as per Law No. 8/2010 concerning Rights of People with Disabilities.^[12]
11. Despite being native to Kuwait, the Bidoon have for decades faced administrative coercion to acquire foreign nationalities from government-linked agencies providing cheap and often counterfeit passports, and those who boycotted or refused this scheme faced severe consequences. The Kuwaiti government would recognise the (counterfeit) passports that were issued to the Bidoon by the foreign agencies as ‘official,’ but when the passports expired, the affected families would get stuck. While they technically could not be deported, Bidoons who acquired counterfeit/foreign passports were eventually treated as foreigners in breach of Kuwait’s residency law.
12. In 2015, the Kuwaiti government attempted to force the Bidoon into becoming foreigners through an official, cash-for-citizenship deal with the Comoros, however that deal failed as it was exposed as ‘unlawful, abused by “mafia” networks.’^[13] After the Comoros deal failed, the Kuwaiti government proposed a legislation for the Bidoon that was described by Amnesty International (2019) as ‘cruel’ as it “would in effect compel

⁸ The MENA Statelessness Network (Hawati). (2022). Statement of Solidarity with the stateless Bidoon in Kuwait. https://hawati-mena.org/statements/Hawati_Statement_18_04_2022.pdf.

⁹ UN Human Rights Committee. (2023). CCPR/C/KWT/CO/4: Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kuwait [p. 03]. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/ccprckwtco4-concluding-observations-fourth-periodic-report-kuwait>.

¹⁰ CIVICUS. (2025, Aug. 29). Kuwait: Deliver on UPR 4th Cycle promises: end repression, support civil society. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/united-nations/geneva/7844-kuwait-deliver-on-upr-4th-cycle-promises-end-repression-support-civil-society>.

¹¹ Home Office (2024). Country Policy and Information Note -Kuwait: Bidoons. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be08e10a079b65ea323eb2/KWT+CPIN+Bidoons_1.pdf

¹² Law No. 8 of 2010 concerning Rights of People with Disabilities. https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=89501; OHCHR. (2019). Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities examines the initial report of Kuwait. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/09/committee-rights-persons-disabilities-examines-initial-report-kuwait>

¹³ Lewis, D. & Ahmed, A. (2018, March 24). *Comoros passport scheme was unlawful, abused by "mafia" networks – report*. Reuters. <https://www.com/article/world/comoros-passport-scheme-was-unlawful-abused-by-mafia-networks-report-idUSKBN1GZ37H/>.

the Bidun to abandon their long-standing claim to Kuwaiti nationality in order to safeguard their socioeconomic survival in the short term.” ^[14]

13. In 2022, The MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati) noted that *“Bidoon in Kuwait have faced treatment tantamount to persecution. In 2010, the GoK mandated the ‘Central Apparatus’ for the Remedy of the Situation of Illegal Residents to solve the Bidoon problem in 5 years. 12 years have now passed, and the problem seems to have worsened as the Central Apparatus’ conduct, is – at best – flawed and – at worst – serving to marginalise and reduce the existence of the stateless community.”* ^[15]
14. In its (2023) concluding observations report on Kuwait, the UN Human Rights Committee was *“alarmed by allegations received about the falsification of documents, by the central system for the remedy of the situation of illegal residents, to arbitrarily change the legal status of stateless persons; cases of Bidoon people being classified under foreign nationalities when requesting identity papers; and Bidoon university students being required to register for identity documents that would force them to accept a false nationality.”* ^[16]
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16. The stateless/Bidoon Kuwaiti people in general do not have legally protected human rights whatsoever and their access to basic needs is defined as ‘benefits’ that are discretionary and conditional on participating in the process of issuing/renewing the Review Card that is issued by CARIRS, which has been noted in the UK (2024) CPIN on the Bidoon of Kuwait as “arbitrary and non-transparent”. ^[18] In 2019, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that even disabled stateless/Bidoon persons are denied rights such as education, healthcare, housing, employment as per Law No. 8/2010 concerning Rights of People with Disabilities. ^[19]
17. In September 2025, official communications by Kuwait’s Department of Immigration circulated on social media revealing a coordination between the Kuwaiti government and African and Caribbean countries to impose a new foreign citizenship deal similar to the failed “Comoros deal” onto the Bidoon. This deal came after Kuwait’s First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef had revealed that such a deal had been underway. ^[20]

¹⁴ Amnesty International’s (2019) report titled Kuwait: Rising Signs of Despair among Bidun Highlight Cruelty of Draft Law: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde17/1362/2019/en/>.

¹⁵ The MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati). (2022). Statement of Solidarity with the stateless Bidoon in Kuwait. https://hawiati-mena.org/statements/Hawiati_Statement_18_04_2022.pdf.

¹⁶ UN Human Rights Committee. (2023). CCPR/C/KWT/CO/4: Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kuwait [p. 03]. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/ccprckwtco4-concluding-observations-fourth-periodic-report-kuwait>.

¹⁷ CIVICUS. (2025, Aug. 29). Kuwait: Deliver on UPR 4th Cycle promises: end repression, support civil society. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/united-nations/geneva/7844-kuwait-deliver-on-upr-4th-cycle-promises-end-repression-support-civil-society>.

¹⁸ Home Office (2024). Country Policy and Information Note -Kuwait: Bidoons. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be08e10a079b65ea323eb2/KWT+CPIN+Bidoons_1_.pdf

¹⁹ Law No. 8 of 2010 concerning Rights of People with Disabilities. https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=89501; OHCHR. (2019). Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities examines the initial report of Kuwait. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/09/committee-rights-persons-disabilities-examines-initial-report-kuwait>

²⁰ Kuwait’s Network News [@NetworkKw]. (2024, December 25). First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef: A law for stateless persons is expected to be approved within two months. X. <https://x.com/NetworkKw/status/1871860902141579529?s=20>.

18. The infrastructure rendering individuals and communities stateless and maintaining their marginalisation has existed in Kuwait for decades. Those mechanisms are now being used at an unprecedented rate and scope on new targets. As described by Professor Nathan Brown, an expert on the Middle East, in March 2025, the current denaturalisation campaign affecting Kuwaitis has already been formally recognised as “unprecedented” in scale and pace.^[21] For greater context on the situation in Kuwait, the next section provides information on fundamental structural developments that may be in breach of different articles of the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), cases of social groups that are most affected by these developments and observations on the Kuwaiti government’s approach, in terms of reporting to the CERD Committee. To warrant clarity and focus, this report addresses these cases in relation to Articles 1-6 of the CERD where applicable.

Section 2: Methodology

19. In addition to data from publicly available sources, testimonies were provided to members of NASI, including Ahmad Benswait, WH and MM. Interviews were conducted with recently denaturalised Kuwaitis, including Salwa Al-Sayed, families from Shammar and Ajman tribes of Kuwait. In addition, over 200 testimonies were collected via email and X/twitter, along with data from interviews conducted by Ahmad Benswait in his capacity as a country expert on Kuwait, assessing asylum claims in the UK by affected Kuwaiti persons and families.

Section 3: Structural developments in Kuwait since May 2024

20. Racial discrimination in Kuwait has intensified following the new Emir’s suspension of the National Assembly and constitutional provisions imposing checks and balances on the powers of the executive in May 2024.^[22]
21. The suspension of Kuwait’s parliament on 10 May 2024 was first justified as an exceptional measure to address corruption and prepare for economic progress.^[23] However, these measures have normalised large-scale nationality revocations through decree-laws by the Emir of Kuwait, who “*banned courts from reviewing citizenship cases, declaring the matter to be his “personal prerogative”, leaving tens of thousands stateless overnight.*”^[24]
22. In a televised address to the nation in March 2024, the Emir of Kuwait explained that the current nationality revocation campaign aimed to preserve the Kuwaiti national identity, and he vowed to “hand over Kuwait to its original people, clean and free of the

²¹ Al-Jasser, O & Brown, N. (2025, March 13). Will Kuwait’s Parliamentary Democracy Be Restored, Reformed, or Repudiated? <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/03/kuwait-parliament-suspension-emir-democracy?lang=en>.

²² Benswait, A. (2025, May 9). A Crisis of Statelessness: Inside Kuwait’s Mass Revocation of Citizenship. <https://dawnmena.org/a-crisis-of-statelessness-inside-kuwait-mass-revocation-of-citizenship/>.

²³ Chay, C. (2024, June 3). With Parliamentary Suspension, Kuwait Has More to Gain Than Lose. Arab Reform Initiative. <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/with-parliamentary-suspension-kuwait-has-more-to-gain-than-lose/?tztc=1>.

²⁴ Ridley, Y. (2025, Sep. 4). Kuwait is facing an unprecedented crisis that threatens its stability. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250904-kuwait-is-facing-an-unprecedented-crisis-that-threatens-its-stability/>.

impurities that have clung to it.”^[25] According to the Global Citizenship Observatory, this statement was considered by many observers as “racially and ethnically charged.”^[26]

23. On 17 December 2024, the Kuwaiti government passed Decree-law No. 116/2024, which expanded the Executive Authority’s power to revoke nationality and removed any safeguards against statelessness, exacerbating the situation of Kuwait’s decades-long stateless population by cancelling the possibility of naturalisation based on residence in the country since 1965 or even before.^[27]
24. While large-scale nationality revocation in Kuwait has affected various social groups, the Global Citizenship Observatory (2026) notes that the campaign has disproportionately targeted Kuwaitis from semi-nomadic tribal/Bedouin backgrounds and people of “different” national origins who had acquired second-class Kuwaiti citizenship (via naturalisation) on discriminatory and hierarchical grounds.^[28]
25. While the Constitution of Kuwait (particularly Article 27) protects Kuwaiti citizenship against arbitrary revocation, the current executive authority appears to have been overriding this provision. In March 2025, the Emir publicly warned members of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against interfering in matters related to nationality, which he described as ‘the core of state sovereignty.’^[29]
26. While Kuwait’s parliament previously addressed issue regarding the 1959 Kuwaiti Nationality Law’s ethnic and national origin discriminations between those who have Kuwaiti citizenship as descendants of the “original founding citizens” and those who acquire it via naturalisation through Law No. 44 of 1994 which conferred on children and grandchildren of naturalised Kuwaiti citizens “Kuwaiti by original status,” the suspension of Kuwait’s elected legislative authority allowed the Kuwaiti government to unilaterally pass decree-law amendment no. 52/2026 on 13 April 2026, which repealed Law No. 44 of 1994, reinstating discrimination between Kuwaiti citizens based on their origin, and affirming that “*all nationality-related decisions are sovereign acts not subject to judicial review.*”^[30] The number of those affected by decree-law amendment no. 52/2026 includes an estimated 50% of Kuwaiti citizens who have been demoted from Kuwaitis by origin to ‘naturalised Kuwaitis’ who may have their Kuwaiti citizenship revoked more easily, meaning they may be considered at risk of statelessness given the government’s recent nationality deprivation campaign.
27. Law No. 38/1980, promulgating the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, also known as the “Debtor’s Imprisonment Law” has been enacted in tandem with the denaturalisation campaign. Amendments to Law 38/1980 allow for individuals who

²⁵ Benswait, A. (2025, May 9). A Crisis of Statelessness: Inside Kuwait's Mass Revocation of Citizenship <https://dawnmena.org/a-crisis-of-statelessness-inside-kuwaits-mass-revocation-of-citizenship/>; Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) [@kuna_ar]. (2025, March 23). *His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah: I assure you, my fellow citizens, that you are a part...* [Image attached] [Post]. X. https://x.com/kuna_ar/status/1903840740737941825.

²⁶ The Global Citizenship Observatory (2026). *Country report: Kuwait*, EUI, RSC, [Global Governance Programme]. <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/94609>.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Al-Khuwailidi, M. (2025, Mar 16). *The Emir of Kuwait warns members of the judiciary against exploiting their positions for personal gain*. Asharq Al-Awsat. <https://tinyurl.com/24dnk7x2>

³⁰ KPMG. (2026, Apr. 23). Kuwait – Amendments Introduced to the Kuwaiti Citizenship Law. <https://kpmg.com/xx/en/our-insights/gms-flash-alert/2026/flash-alert-2026-111.html>; Kuwait Times. (2026, April 13). Kuwait amends nationality law. <https://kuwaittimes.com/article/42295/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-amends-nationality-law/#:~:text=Under%20the%20amendments%2C%20original%20Kuwaitis,inside%20or%20outside%20the%20country.>

cannot pay their debts to be arrested. ^[31] Denied access to employment, pensions, bank accounts and their properties, these newly stateless Kuwaitis have limited or no means to pay such agencies or creditors, placing them at risk of arrest. Multiple testimonies were collected from denaturalised Kuwaitis, who claimed that they have had their rights, properties, pensions, and bank accounts seized by Kuwaiti authorities. Many of these individuals reported being intimidated by the Kuwaiti government, which they claimed circulated memos to almost all institutions, including banks and hospitals, e.g., to block their access and funds etc. unless they agreed to “adjust their status” by acquiring other foreign nationalities. Affected parties particularly worried that the revocation of their Kuwait nationalities maybe linked to the amendments of the residency law no 114/2024 with unlimited power to enforce inflated fines and deportation of whole families ^[32] Moreover, they claimed to be frightened of the Kuwaiti government’s (2025) reinstitution of the Debtor’s Imprisonment Law, which breaches the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Kuwait is party. ^[33]



Document provided by a stateless Kuwaiti. No longer able to own a business and their Kuwaiti bank account frozen. They are being threatened with legal action for failing to pay creditors, which can result in arrest and imprisonment.

28. Following a country visit to Kuwait in September 2025, independent United Nations experts, namely the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, warned on 18 June 2026 that the Kuwaiti government’s use of large-scale nationality

³¹ Lexis Mideast, Jasem Al-Jasem, *Amendments to the Civil and Commercial Procedure Law: Cassation Appeals (English/Arabic)*, 6 August 2025, [https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/pn/Kuwait/Amendments to the Civil and Commercial Procedure Law Cassation Appeals/en](https://www.lexismiddleeast.com/pn/Kuwait/Amendments%20to%20the%20Civil%20and%20Commercial%20Procedure%20Law%20Cassation%20Appeals/en)

³² Abdullah, A. (2024, Dec.18). New Foreign Residency Law Issued Under Amiri Decree No. 114/2024. <https://www.arazzaqlaw.com/new-foreign-residency-law-issued-under-amiri-decree-no-114-2024/>.

³³ Boshehri, A. (2025, Apr. 7). Kuwait reinstates debt imprisonment as an enforcement measure. <https://www.mcysan.com/kuwait-reinstates-debt-imprisonment-as-an-enforcement-measure/>.

deprivation disproportionately harmed women and children.^[34] As this report will show in the cases involving potential breaches of Articles 2-7 of the ICERD below, women who are denied the right to Kuwaiti nationality, especially stateless women, are susceptible to increased victimisation, especially by influential, well-connected males to whose authority denaturalised women have now been subjected.

Section 4: Cases involving potential breaches of Articles 2-6 of the ICERD

29. In an interview with a denaturalised Kuwaiti woman to assess her disputed asylum claim in the UK, she testified that she had experienced “sexual harassment” by two officials at the Central Apparatus for Remedying Illegal Residents Status (CARIRS) in Kuwait on the basis of her nationality status. According to the affected woman, the two officials habitually blackmailed vulnerable stateless/Bidoon women, and in her case, the officials subjected her to ‘sextortion’ when she needed a ‘Review Card,’ which is issued by and at the prerogative CARIRS, to use for seeking essential healthcare. According to the woman, when she approached CARIRS for the Review Card, the officials made things almost impossible for her, however, they then asked her to contact them on their mobile numbers after work hours. When the woman contacted them, the officials offered to issue her Review Card in exchange for spending ‘intimate time with them’ which she refused and hence was denied the Review Card and the healthcare that she needed.
30. The forementioned woman’s testimony is consistent with the reputation of CARIRS’s officials harassment of vulnerable stateless/Bidoon women, as documented by a Bidoon activist recognised as a prominent human rights defender, namely [Abdulahkim al-Fadhli who exposed CARIRS officials’ blackmailing of vulnerable Bidoon women](#), though none of the officials was indicted, partly because the victims were afraid to raise their voices in Kuwait.
31. In general, vulnerable stateless/Bidoon women in Kuwait are prone to what the [International Association of Women Judges describe as ‘sextortion,’](#) which “occurs when a person with entrusted authority abuses this authority to obtain a sexual favor in exchange for a service or benefit which is within their power to grant or withhold.”^[35] As noted in a relevant asylum case cited by the UK-based solicitor Danielle Cohen in 2024, “[female Bidoons face additional forms of unfair treatment in legal and social circles, for example, Bidoon women and girls are reported to face sexual harassment from Government officials when attempting to obtain documentation.](#)”^[36] In [a case that was documented and revealed by former Kuwaiti MP Hussein Al-Qallaf on Al-](#)

³⁴ United Nations. (2026, June 18). Kuwait: Nationality withdrawals disproportionately harming women and children, warns UN expert. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/06/kuwait-nationality-withdrawals-disproportionately-harming-women-and-children#:~:text=GENEVA%20%E2%80%93%20The%20Special%20Rapporteur%20on,nationality%20initiated%20in%20March%202025.>

³⁵ Eldén, Å., Calvo, D., Bjarnegård, E., Lundgren, S., & Jonsson, S. (2020). *Sextortion: Corruption and gender-based violence*. Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA). <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1968652/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

³⁶ Cohen, D. (2024, January 9) Bidoon Women in Kuwait. <https://daniellecohenimmigration.com/bidoon-women-in-kuwait/>.

[Qabas TV in 2020](#), a Bidoon woman was arbitrarily imprisoned under the influence of a Kuwaiti male citizen to whom she refused to submit to his sexual demands. ^[37]

32. In addition to women affected by the cancellation of Article 8 of Kuwait's nationality law, mass nationality revocation in Kuwait has affected thousands who had acquired Kuwaiti nationality lawfully through naturalisation as per Article 5 of the 1959 nationality law on the basis of providing 'honourable services' to the country since the 1960s. Among those is Kuwait's renowned Quran reciter and goalkeeper, Ahmad Al-Tarabulsi, who led Kuwait's national football team into the 1980 Asia Cup and the 1982 World Cup, and served in Kuwait's military as a colonel for decades. Others include internationally respected journalist and a citizen of the United States and Kuwait of Palestinian descent Ahmed Shihab-Eldin; female singer Nawal El Kuwaitia; Professor Riad Tarzi, a pioneer in cardiac surgery and organ transplantation expert; Dr. Mithqal Al-Sartawi, an orthopaedic surgeon specialised in joint surgeries; and security personnel who died or were injured protecting Kuwait's former ruler from an assassination attempt in the 1980s. But the campaign did not stop at naturalised Kuwaitis, as it has also affected people who had acquired Kuwaiti nationality as per Article 1 of Kuwait's nationality law on the basis of being part of Kuwait's native population at least since 1920. In this case, the Kuwaiti government justified the revocation on grounds of fraudulent acquisition, though this is a unilateral verdict without due process or recourse to effective appeal, judicial review, or any other independent adjudication authority.
33. By scrapping Article 3 of Kuwait's 1959 Nationality Law, which recognised as a Kuwaiti national any person born in Kuwait whose parents are unknown, the Kuwaiti government has created foundlings as a new case of statelessness. In this case, the affected persons are likely to suffer more prejudices and hardships than the Northern Bedouins of Kuwait (also known as 'the Bidoon'), who were deliberately excluded from the right to Kuwaiti nationality and all fundamental human rights attached to it, based on ethnic and sectarian reasons. The Bidoon typically live as connected families, clans and tribes whose individuals can rely on social networks of solidarity. In the case of foundlings, the affected individuals are likely to lack solidarity and face social stigma. Other cases of statelessness created by the Kuwaiti government's use of mass deprivation of nationality include denaturalised Article 8 whose so-called countries of origin no longer exist, such as the Soviet Union, are in a state of war, such as Ukraine, Sudan, Lebanon, Iran and the Palestinian Territories, or where women face extreme gender-based prejudices, such as Afghanistan.
34. Mass arbitrary deprivation of Kuwaiti nationality constitutes systematic targeting of particular social groups based on their identities. These are particularly women affected by the cancellation of Article 8 of the Kuwait Nationality Law. These women have been targeted based on their gender. The Kuwaiti regime considers them "less pure" than original Kuwaitis and no longer worthy of recognition on the basis of "honourable services", foundlings and even political dissidents. As the nationality revocation measures are applied collectively to the male head of the family, his spouse, his children and his grandchildren are denaturalised in the process. This constitutes a form of collective punishment. In many cases, the revocation of Article 5, or Article 1, is based on specific targeting or allegations of fraud against deceased persons posthumously.

³⁷ AlQabas TV. (2020, December 18). *Mr. Hussein Al-Qallaf recounts his story of helping a stateless woman who was unjustly imprisoned*. Retrieved on 20/01/2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NkwP1uH1Ks&t=11s>.

Article 2: Failure to Eliminate Racial Discrimination

35. International legal experts assessed that “[t]he current campaign of nationality deprivation in Kuwait instantiates a wider resurgence of practices reminiscent of the interwar period.”^[38] Other historians of nationality deprivation and statelessness with whom I discussed the matter agreed that the current Kuwaiti regime’s use of nationality law to confiscate properties, funds, assets and even educational credentials of Kuwaiti citizens of particular ethnic, religious, or national backgrounds may be comparable to the 1930s Nuremberg Laws where the systematic targeting of the Jewish community with arbitrary deprivation of German citizenship facilitated “confiscation of wealth; “extension” of denaturalization to family members; voiding of the doctorate and other academic degrees; and deprivation of all annuity claims.”^[39]
36. On 10 June 2026, the Saudi Arabian newspaper *Al-Eqtisadiah* (the Economic) reported that allegations of fraudulent acquisition of Kuwait nationality in the 1960s resulted in the Shia Kuwaiti businessman Mahmoud Haider, being detained, along with many members of his family, while his \$1.6bn assets were seized by the Kuwaiti regime.^[40] Kuwaiti dissidents, among other human rights defenders interviewed on conditions of anonymity, believed that Mr Haider’s case was another example of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law being used to create the pretext for confiscating people’s properties. Moreover, Mr Haider’s Persian ethnicity was likely a factor in his targeting. Both can be used to characterise him as “foreign” or “disloyal”.
37. Under the direct supervision of the Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, a large-scale eviction campaign has been launched to “monitor and apprehend residency violators” in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.^[41] The Kuwaiti government has claimed that there will be “no leniency towards illegal properties” and the evictions in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area are the first in a larger campaign, which could target thousands of non-citizens.^[42]
38. As noted in the case of Ms Al-Sayed, non-citizens who so much as mention their hardship in Kuwait, much less criticise the government, risk being arrested, interrogated, subjected to ill-treatment, and deported. Several individuals interviewed claimed they have not made public the conditions they live under, as non-citizens, fearing reprisal from authorities. In April 2026, American-Kuwaiti journalist Ahmad Shihab-Eldin was detained by Kuwaiti security forces after documenting and sharing a friendly fire incident in Kuwait during the ongoing conflict with Iran.^[43] Although he was acquitted of the charges, he was deported from Kuwait.
39. In the cases of Ms Al-Sayed and Mr Shihab-Eldin, their “foreign” identities were instrumentalised by the government of Kuwait to have them deported. For Ms Al-Sayed, her classification as Egyptian by the Kuwaiti government is speculative, if not

³⁸ Fripp, E. (2025, October 21). *The Resurgence of Large-scale Deprivation of Nationality: The Case of Kuwait*. <https://opiniojuris.org/2025/10/21/the-resurgence-of-large-scale-deprivation-of-nationality-the-case-of-kuwait/>.

³⁹ Bennett, P. W., & Peglau, A. (2014). The Nazi Denaturalization of German Emigrants: The Case of Wilhelm Reich. *German Studies Review*, 37(1), 41–60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43555850>.

⁴⁰ Ahmed Al-Abki, A. (2026, June 10). *Allegations of Kuwaiti citizenship fraud threaten Mahmoud Haider’s \$1.6 billion investment empire*. *Al-Eqtisadiah*. <https://shorturl.at/PaoxR>.

⁴¹ Alanba. (2026, Jul 16). Under the direct supervision of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, and with the participation of the four military agencies, an extensive security campaign is being carried out. <https://www.alanba.com.kw/1367824>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The Guardian, “Detention of Journalist in Kuwait Raises Questions About Crackdown on Freedom of Speech”, 14 April 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/apr/14/detention-journalist-ahmed-shihab-eldin-kuwait-crackdown-freedom-speech-iran-war>

fabricated. Ms Al-Sayed reports that she is not an Egyptian citizen, having relinquished her former nationality to become a Kuwaiti. She was deported to Egypt from Kuwait with an ersatz document and currently lives in Egypt, stateless and destitute, unable to legally work as a non-citizen of the country.

Article 3: Apartheid and Segregation

40. In the early 2000s, the current director of CARIRS, Saleh al-Fadhalah, was a member of Kuwait's National Assembly, where he inveighed against the Northern Bedouins as people of the north *to* Kuwait (i.e., Iraq) whom he claimed, "We know [them] from their accents, looks, tattoos." In 2011, CARIRS's media advisor proposed a more hostile, ethno-sectarian approach to the Northern Bedouin, stating that "90% of the Bidoon belong to the "Mintifij clans" in the south of Iraq, and a large percentage of them are Shia, and this factor has to be in the mind of the decision-maker."
41. The reports on the CERD archive reference discrimination in terms of access to healthcare. [44] Non-citizens in Kuwait are required to pay for health insurance to cover the cost of healthcare. However, they are still charged additional fees for admission, diagnoses and treatment at hospitals as non-citizens, despite their insurance contributions.
42. As part of Kuwait's current denaturalisation campaign, the government has undertaken mass biometric registration and DNA testing to inform decisions on granting, confirming or revoking Kuwaiti citizenship.⁴⁵ Biometric registration ended in 2024, with roughly 16,000 Kuwaitis, 90,000 traditionally stateless Bidoons and nearly a quarter million expats in the country missing the deadline and facing frozen bank accounts and restrictions on public services.⁴⁶ The criteria for determining Kuwaiti origin are opaque, yet they decide who does and does not have access to critical services in Kuwait.

Article 4 – Racist Propaganda

43. The Emir's language in claiming mass denaturalisations and potentially mass deportations as "cleansing" or "purifying"^[47] Kuwaiti society evinces a racialised duality between Kuwaitis and foreigners, with the former being "cleaner" and "purer".^[48] As a state party to the CERD, the Kuwaiti government is expected to condemn propaganda based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempts to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form.

⁴⁴ Alanba. (2016). Hospitals to treat Kuwaitis in the morning and expatriates in the evening this month. <https://shorturl.at/NeAdk>.

⁴⁵ Biometric Update.Com, "Kuwait Plans Biometrics and DNA Checks to Revoke or Confirm Citizenship", 21 April 2025, <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202504/kuwait-plans-biometrics-and-dna-checks-to-revoke-or-confirm-citizenship>

⁴⁶ Biometric Update.Com, "7% of Kuwait Residents Miss Biometric Registration Deadline, Face Service Freeze", 6 January 2025, <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202501/7-of-kuwait-residents-miss-biometric-registration-deadline-face-service-freeze>

⁴⁷ Benswait, A. (2025, May 9). A Crisis of Statelessness: Inside Kuwait's Mass Revocation of Citizenship <https://dawnmena.org/a-crisis-of-statelessness-inside-kuwaits-mass-revocation-of-citizenship/>; Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) [@kuna_ar]. (2025, March 23).

⁴⁸ His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah: I assure you, my fellow citizens, that you are a part... [Image attached] [Post]. X. https://x.com/kuna_ar/status/1903840740737941825.

Article 5 – No Equal Treatment Under the Law

44. The Kuwaiti judicial system has no authority over citizenship revocation, the practice being solely within the purview of the Executive, which answers to the Emir. Emir of Kuwait's inexorable exercise of nationality revocation on grounds of "state sovereignty" resonates with Kuwait's Court of Cassation decision no. 02/2022 which gave the executive authority unlimited power over all issues of nationality, overriding the Kuwaiti Constitution's (Article 27) provision protecting Kuwaiti nationality that is acquired through patrilineal descent (*jus sanguinis*) as opposed to naturalisation: "Kuwaiti nationality is defined by law. No deprivation or withdrawal of nationality may be effected except within the limits prescribed by law."
45. This decision was made on a historical case *Badriya Ahmed Abdullah Al-Matroud v. The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior* [2022] through which the claimant (Ms Al-Matroud) sought to reinstitute her Kuwaiti nationality which was revoked following the revocation of her father's Article 1 Kuwaiti based on allegations of fraud, which rendered the man and his (extended) family members stateless as per Article 21(bis A) of Kuwait's 1959 nationality law which states "A nationality certificate may be withdrawn if it appears to have been obtained by virtue of fraud or on the basis of a false declaration or on the basis of false evidence submitted by a witness. Such withdrawal shall be effected by Resolution of the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of the Interior. Kuwaiti nationality which has been acquired by any dependant of any such person may also be revoked." After her appeal against the revocation of her Kuwaiti nationality was allowed by decision no. 482/1988, which found the allegations of fraud against the appellant's father to be baseless, Ms Al-Matroud proceeded with a claim to reinstate her unlawfully revoked Kuwaiti nationality. However, Ms Al-Matroud's claim was eventually rejected as per a decision that is cited in the UK (2024) CPIN on Kuwait as follows: "in April 2022, Kuwait's Court of Cassation ruled that courts may not consider questions of nationality at all, as these are solely the province of the executive."
46. Denaturalised Kuwaitis cannot challenge or appeal their case. They are denied the right to equal treatment before the tribunals and all other organs administering justice. Hundreds of thousands of Kuwaitis lack official documentation and do not have the ability to leave the country. Most are officially denied the right to Kuwaiti nationality, even when they have no ability to acquire a different nationality. If undocumented, Bidoon have no right to formally marry or to inherit property. In addition, non-citizens have no right to public healthcare (including critical care, such as childbirth), public education or social services. Moreover, as shown in the case of Ms Al-Sayed, non-citizens do not appear to have the right to free speech or free expression. Numerous parties interviewed have expressed fear of discussing their denaturalisation, worried they will be arrested by Kuwaiti security forces.

Article 6 – No Legal Protection or Redress

47. With matters of citizenship revocation outside the jurisdiction of Kuwaiti courts, individuals have no means to seek adequate protection or remedies against acts of racial discrimination. Despite the existence of the Grievance Committee for the recently denaturalised, individuals interviewed have claimed the mechanism does not exist to provide redress but to coerce them into applying for another nationality.
48. On 11 March 2025, the Kuwaiti government announced the creation of the “Grievance Committee for Citizenship Cases”. Cabinet Resolution No. 207/2025 stated that it would operate under the Council of Ministers. Charged with addressing and evaluating “grievances from individuals affected by the loss or annulment of citizenship”. It is empowered “to invite experts to assist in its work”, and decisions will be made on the basis of a majority of accredited members.
49. On 1 May 2025 - two months after the formal announcement of the Grievance Committee - the Kuwait Times reported that the “appeals will be accepted in two phases” corresponding to specific dates and that impacted individuals had 60 days from 4 May 2025 to submit their appeals via the Council of Ministers’ website.^[49] The head of the committee, Ali Al-Dhubaibi, stated that affected individuals had to submit their grievances via the platform, using the required forms, on working days, between specific hours and that “appeals submitted outside the specified method will not be considered”.^[50]
50. On 8 May 2025, the Grievance Committee announced that it had received 5,148 grievances. In light of this, the head of the committee announced that it would “receive applications daily and around the clock, including official holidays”.^[51] In January 2026, the link to the Grievance Committee’s website was not even functional.
51. Denaturalised Kuwaitis have provided testimonies that they have been unable to procure legal representation. One interviewee claimed that when she was threatened with legal action by the Kuwaiti Legal Department under “Debtor’s Imprisonment Law”, her claimed he could not represent her defence and that “no lawyer in Kuwait will defend you”.

Section 5: Recommendations

52. The Kuwaiti government has selectively and partially adhered to the international human rights obligations to which it is a state party. Its reservations and interpretive declarations restrict - or seek to restrict - the application of international law. To support

⁴⁹ Kuwait Times, “Appeals Process to Open as Citizenship of 434 More Revoked, 1 May 2025, <https://kuwaittimes.com/article/27189/kuwait/other-news/appeals-process-to-open-as-citizenship-of-434-more-revoked/>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Al-Khaleej Online. (2025, May 8). More than 5,000 grievances regarding the withdrawal of Kuwaiti community. <https://shorturl.at/Y05Mu>.

and empower UN human rights standards and their treaty bodies, we repeat only a few treaty body recommendations. This highlights the chronic challenge of the Kuwaiti government's rejection of these recommendations in previous years. Accordingly, we call on the Kuwaiti government to:

- Immediately suspend the revocation of citizenship until the Nationality Law is aligned with international human rights standards and international best practice, including by working with the OHCHR and UNHCR in order to ensure compliance;
- Ensure that those affected by citizenship revocation can fulfil their basic needs, such as education, healthcare, housing, the right to dispose of their personal bank accounts, manage property, and obtain identity and travel documents;
- Reinstate the nationality of all those who were deprived of it without due process and the possibility to challenge its withdrawal before a court of law;
- Ensure a thorough and transparent mechanism, with an objectively verifiable, independent appeal mechanism, is established to guarantee fairness, justice and compliance with the law in cases of citizenship revocation, without official interference to use denaturalisation against ethnic minorities, opponents, or critics, and to provide those affected with a full opportunity to file complaints before a fair judiciary
- Accelerate the process of ensuring that no person becomes or remains stateless, by granting citizenship or by issuing identity documents to Bidoon and other stateless people in Kuwait. Where appropriate, guarantee the right of every child to acquire a nationality, and develop effective mechanisms to address the situation of Bidoon and stateless persons in the State party;
- Refrain from requesting or coercing Bidoon and other stateless people in Kuwait to accept another nationality, and ensure non-discriminatory access to justice, work, health, education and social services;
- Combat discrimination by introducing and implementing policies that criminalise hate speech and acts of ethnic and racial violence; and
- Reinstate the right of foundlings to acquire Kuwaiti nationality, which has been revoked by amendment 52/2026 of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law.