

# KUWAIT

Stop destroying Kuwaiti families and society  
with mass, arbitrary citizenship revocations  
that fly in the face of human dignity; Kuwaiti  
and international law



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## **Kuwait - Stop destroying Kuwaiti families and society with mass, arbitrary citizenship revocations that fly in the face of human dignity; Kuwaiti and international law**

Six months after ignoring requests to meet with officials and to change arbitrary government measures that violate Kuwaiti and international law, the government of Emir Mishal Al-Sabah continues to damage and harm Kuwait families and society through a citizenship revocation campaign that is destroying the fabric of Kuwait.

This briefing provides a summary update of developments and advocacy since December 2024. Successive advocacy actions have not deterred the government from carrying out ongoing human rights abuses.



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## Kuwait's citizenship revocation campaign – overview: January–June 2025

On **23 November** and **3 December 2024**, three organisations, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR), Hawiati - the MENA Statelessness Network (HAWIATI) and Rights Realization Centre (RRC), sent a memorandum to the Government of Kuwait (GoK). The organisations requested the specific and objectively verifiable criteria that the Government of Kuwait was using to conduct their citizenship revocation campaign and information as to how the campaign adhered to international law. Its questions and concerns became the basis for a [20 December 2024 statement](#).

The organisations sent the memorandum to the Amiri Diwan, the Diwans of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister; the Ministries of Interior and Justice and the Legal Advice and Legislation department of the Government of Kuwait (GoK); as well as to the Embassy of Kuwait to the United Kingdom (UK) and its Mission to the United Nations at Geneva. The Embassy of Kuwait to the UK acknowledged receipt of the text but no authority of the GoK responded to the substance of the memorandum, nor commented on the public on the subsequent public statement.

Without ongoing, regular capacity to monitor Kuwait's Office Gazette, our organisations have not been able to assess the number of people the GoK has stripped of their citizenship. Based on press reports, many cited below; and interviews with impacted persons, we believe that the social impact of the campaign has been widespread, impacting on over half the families and population of Kuwait. According to one report in December 2024, the GoK had stripped the citizenship of over 12,000 people in the last three months of the year.

The pace and scope of the GoK citizenship revocation campaign in 2025 has been rapid and equally or more widespread as in 2024.

On **13 February 2025**, Zaid Benjamin reported that the authorities had stripped 33,200 of their nationality.

On **16 February 2025**, Arabi21 [reported](#) that more than 9,464 revocations in one act, of which 9,418 women, "including those who acquired it through family dependency. It was also revoked from 38 individuals, and three others. Two decisions were also issued to

revoke the citizenship certificates of four men and one woman.” ‘Family dependency’ is thought to refer to nationality conferred through patrilineal descent and can be multigenerational.

On **20 February 2025**, at the pre-sessional meeting of the United Nations’ Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a global, peer-based human rights review process, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, drew attention to longstanding human rights challenges in Kuwait, such as in relation freedom of expression, but also citizenship issues.

On **9 March 2025**, Chloe Cornish and Ahmed Al Omran in the [Financial Times](#) reported that the GoK had stripped the citizenship of 42,000 people over the previous six months. They reported that the Kuwaiti daily news platform Al Jarida had estimated that the GoK had stripped 32,715 people of their citizenship since the May 2024 suspension of the National Assembly, adding that Al Jarida asserted that “A further 9,464 people have subsequently been added to the tally”, without specifying the time frame. The Financial Times observed that “In a country with just 1.5mn citizens, the revocations affected nearly 3 percent of the entire population, meaning most Kuwaitis knew a family that was affected.”

On **11 March 2025**, the Kuwaiti Cabinet issued resolution 207/2 of 2025 that formalised the creation of a ‘grievance committee’ in order to appeal against the revocation of citizenship. Without citing precise dates, the 9 March 2025 [Financial Times](#) article stated, on the basis of a Kuwait News Agency report, that more than 14,000 people had [applied](#) to have their case reviewed. The structure and independence of the body appeared, at best, opaque.

On **9 April 2025**, an opinion piece in Amwaj likewise reported that “Roughly **42,000** Kuwaitis have lost (sic - emphasis added) their citizenship since September 2024”. Amwaj cited the case of Faisal: when he “checked in at Kuwait’s international airport late last year, he was a jet-setting young businessman with one of the Arab world’s strongest passports. But he never got on the plane, and when he left the airport, he was no longer Kuwaiti. Faisal said he was temporarily detained before boarding and had his passport taken, becoming one of about 42,000 Kuwaitis to be stripped of their citizenship in just over six months.”

At the **7 May 2025** session of the UPR, NGOs once again expressed concern over due process in relation to the citizenship revocation campaign. A GoK representative [asserted](#) that:

*“[S]ome citizens had obtained citizenship after ministerial violations and with the knowledge of the elected National Assembly, which had decided to accept the status quo. Despite this, he added that all the current government was doing was correcting a technical error by revoking citizenship after 40 years”*

On **22 May 2025**, [Shafaq News](#) reported that more than 1,292 individuals had been stripped of their Kuwaiti citizenship, pending final approval by the Cabinet. This news platform stated that the GoK revoked the nationality of:

- 1017 people, comprising one group of 967 and another of 50, for “reasons involving the country’s national interest”;
- 189 people who had obtained it through ‘fraudulent’ means, including false statements and forged documents, but also, a result, those who acquired nationality through patrilineal descent;
- 73 individuals, for ‘misrepresentation’ (not defined) and document falsification, along with those patrilineally descended from those named;
- Eight individuals holding dual nationality, which is not [permitted](#) under Kuwaiti law;
- Four, under Article 8 of the Nationality Law which provides for the the withdrawal of citizenship when it concerns the higher interest of the state; and
- One person for actions considered to undermine allegiance to the state, but not specified.

The report stated that these measures were in keeping with GoK [efforts](#) to review and regulate citizenship status in line with national law.

On **29 May 2025**, the Kuwait daily news platform, [Qabas reported](#) that women whose citizenships (obtained under Article 8 of the earlier Nationality Law) were revoked under Article 13 of the December 2024 amendment of the same - in the name of an undefined public interest - will be allowed to travel for up to four months, between 1 June and 30 September 2025, with a one year grace period, to 31 May 2026, in order to regularise their legal status, as long as they start to regularise it during the grace period, by seeking to obtain from the embassy of their previous nationality, a restoration of that citizenship and the country’s passport. If the impacted women failed to start this process within the grace period, they face forfeiting their legal status and associated benefits in Kuwait.

Following this process, the GoK was to issue to the individual a new civil identification document.

On 1 May 2025, [Kuwait Times](#) reported the initiation of an online appeal scheme in relation to the revocation of nationality. It states that the:

*Head of the grievances committee Ali Al-Dhubaibi said appeals will be accepted in two phases. The first phase, starting Sunday, 4 May 2025, covers cases published in the official gazette **Kuwait Al-Youm** between February 20, 2024 and April 30, 2025. Affected individuals will have 60 days from 4 May to submit their appeal via the committee's official link: [www.cmgs.gov.kw](http://www.cmgs.gov.kw). The second phase will cover any future decrees or decisions issued after April 30, 2025, with a 60-day appeal period beginning from the date of publication in Kuwait Al-Youm.*

The 1 May 2025, [Kuwait Times](#) report stated that the GoK had revoked the nationality of a further 434 individuals “for various reasons”, including:

- 275 for having obtained nationality through “false information, documents and forgery”;
- 154 individuals whose fathers or themselves, had “been naturalized for doing great services to the country or had been in the country before 1965 due to ‘the state’s supreme interests’”; and
- Five for “holding the nationality of a third country”

On **3 June 2025**, representatives of Kuwait’s Development Fund [met](#) with representatives of the St Kitts and Nevis government. While reports of the engagement suggested that the meeting sought to help the Kuwaiti delegation better understand the needs of its counterparts, the GoK has, in previous years and decades, undertaken such engagement in order to obtain from the target state the sale of the state’s citizenship, as the GoK did around 1999-2001 with Central American states and in YEAR, with regard to the Comoros Islands and its sale of “economic citizenship”. In these other instances, the person who obtained the passport was able to maintain it for the duration of its validity when the corrupt, inoperative and illegal character of the Kuwait-led arrangement proved impossible to continue. On the basis of the previous conduct of the GoK, on 6 April 2025 Hawiati and SALAM DHR wrote to the High Commission of St Kitts and Nevis in London



and sought express assurance that they would not sell their citizenship to the GoK. The government of St Kitts and Nevis has not responded.<sup>1</sup>

On **5 June 2025**, in a post on the platform X, Zaid Benjamin [reported](#) that the authorities had revoked the citizenship of 153 members of the Shammar and Anza (Aniza) tribes in Kuwait, including those who acquired nationality through patrilineal descent. His report stated that: “

“Among those whose citizenship was revoked were members of the Jarba clan, a prominent branch of the Shammar tribe, and the Al-Hathal family, linked to the Anza tribe.[...] Although the decree did not specify the reasons, previous decisions have cited dual citizenship, often Saudi citizenship, as a primary reason, as Kuwaiti law prohibits the combination of Kuwaiti citizenship with any other nationality.”

On **6 June 2025**, the [New Arab](#) reported that “This is not the first time Kuwait has revoked citizenship from descendants of tribal leaders [since] a previous decision involved withdrawing nationality from the grandchildren of Sheikh Mahroot bin Fahd Al-Hadhil, the former sheikh of the Anaza tribe.”

## The Government of Kuwait's justification of citizenship revocation

The character of the GoK's citizenship revocation measures appears rooted in an imagined sense of nationality identity or a supposed Kuwaiti 'purity': the Emir has been [reported](#) as asserting in a televised address in March that the policy served to return “Kuwait to its original people, pure and free from impurities ”in an effort to restrict citizenship to those with deep blood ties to Kuwait and reshape the national identity.”

A [25 May 2025 report](#), citing unnamed analysts, stated that the policy “aimed at restricting nationality to those with blood ties to the tiny, oil-rich nation, reshaping Kuwaiti identity and potentially trimming its electorate after years of political crisis”.

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<sup>1</sup> A member of SALAM DHR and HAWIATI also posted about it: <https://x.com/drewerydyke/status/1929981887981711528> , <https://x.com/drewerydyke/status/1929982574127935666> , <https://x.com/drewerydyke/status/1929983386388418695>



The government has indicated that the citizenship revocation campaign was a matter of sovereignty: according to a [29 April 2025 report in Amwaj](#), “[t]he Emir made it clear to the judiciary that stripping citizenship was ‘a matter of executive privilege rather than legal adjudication,’ essentially telling the courts to avoid meddling in the royal initiative—to which they “swiftly complied.”

In this sense, the citizenship revocation campaign carries a mainly political focus: [Amwaj](#), quoting Dr. Sean Yom, an Associate Professor at Temple University, states that the measures constitute “executive aggrandizement through repression”, where the Emir and his supporters allegedly “assert their power” over the state and the political opposition. Yom reportedly stated that the Emir and his government now possess a “political cudgel to punish any future voice of dissent,” characterizing the interior minister as a figure who believes that “even Kuwaiti citizens who dare to criticize the Kuwaiti state while living or studying abroad deserve to be de-nationalized.”

The [29 April 2025 Amwaj report](#), citing Yom, referred to an “authoritarian deepening and illiberalism,” where “citizenship was always the gateway to participation” in the political process; where, following the dissolution and indefinite suspension of Kuwait’s National Assembly in May 2024 for “constitutional revisions”, Kuwait has become less democratic and pluralistic as “many conservative officials and princes were put into key leadership roles”, able to “reform laws and policies.”

Dr. Sean Yom asserted that “Some of these individuals have long desired to ‘prune’ the size of the Kuwaiti nation” and [they] blamed “rambunctious citizenry for the chronic problems previously afflicting politics”, in reference to Kuwait’s historically engaged National Assembly and elements of civil society. “Given that over 800,000 Kuwaiti citizens were eligible to vote in 2024, removing 50,000 or even 100,000 voters from the ranks of the adult electorate allows officials to better monitor opposition and regulate political life.”

## Interim Impact: Assault on Right to Participate in Public Life

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Kuwait is a state party, provides for the right of every citizen to take part in public affairs. The May 2024, arbitrary and summary [suspension](#) of the National Assembly has, in effect, silenced

domestic civil society and has, [citing Giorgio Cafiero](#), “moved [Kuwait] in an authoritarian direction.”<sup>2</sup>

There also appears to be an economic driver for the citizenship revocation campaign. A [9 March 2025 report in the Financial Times](#) stated that government critics have asserted that the citizenship revocation campaign fans “nationalist sentiment to distract from Kuwait’s economic stagnation, which many argue has proved difficult to fix, partly because 80 per cent of the state budget goes to social welfare and the public sector.” The article noted that this reduces infrastructure investment or other major projects. The report stated that since the government provides to citizens “generous services”, then “reducing the number of citizens will bring down funding requirements.”<sup>3</sup> Scholar Courtney Freer, stated in the same article, that “Kuwait appears to be trying to avoid putting in place austerity measures, as well as speed up nationalization of its workforce by deporting expatriates. All of these measures make diversification away from reliance on oil less urgently needed,”

Throughout 2024, the authorities asserted that those targeted had obtained Kuwaiti nationality through bribery, fraud and deception, forbidden under pre-existing legislation. The [9 March 2025 Financial Times article](#) likewise stated that “The campaign claimed to be targeting foreign criminals who fraudulently obtained the large social welfare payments given to citizens” and that “It initially received similar levels of public support to that enjoyed by anti-immigration politicians in parts of the west. Kuwaiti officials have [claimed](#), as Giorgio Cafiero [reported](#) in April 2025, that the citizenship revocation campaign “targets foreigners who acquired nationality illegally”, including by way of bribery or fraud. Cafiero also observed, however, that “the state is also withdrawing citizenships from naturalized Kuwaitis as well as political opponents”

Beyond citing bribery and fraud the government has not, since implementing its citizenship stripping campaign, set out the legal analysis that culminated in the implementation of the policies nor their legality. They are not subject to effective, independent oversight or, it seems, due process. In the absence of a response to the memorandum sent to the Kuwaiti authorities in November 2024, and discernable

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<sup>2</sup> Amwaj, 9 April 2025 - Giorgio Cafeiro: Mass citizenship stripping in Kuwait cements authoritarian turn, critics say, at <https://amwaj.media/en/article/mass-citizenship-stripping-in-kuwait-cements-authoritarian-turn-critics-say> accessed 9 June 2025

<sup>3</sup> 2025.04.09 - Amwaj (opinion piece) - Mass citizenship stripping in Kuwait cements authoritarian turn, critics say  
Peninsula - Giorgio Cafiero

information otherwise, Hawiati, SALAM DHR and RRC believe that the government rejected legal guidance relating to the legal measures it has implemented in order to strip people of their citizenship: while the decision and its implementation are flawed, the Supreme Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship, the oversight body for the initiative, operates in the [absence](#) of any judicial oversight or effective appeals process.

The erosion of participation in public life has spread to other sectors of society: the [9 March 2025 Financial Times report](#) noted that:

“Student elections and votes for co-operative councils have also since been halted. The suspension of democracy has met with little resistance at home or abroad, marking a shift for Kuwait, which has no political parties but does have deeply embedded democratic practices.”

Cited in the same report, commentator Kristin Smith Diwan, senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington said that:

“Previously Kuwaitis mobilised to defend their democratic institutions, and outside powers intervened to support them; today, Kuwaitis are intimidated by the citizenship revocations, and the United States is silent. [T]here did not seem to be an ‘international appetite’ for challenging Kuwait.”

## Social and Gendered Impact of Citizenship Revocation

With the November 2024 entering into force of the amended Kuwait’s Nationality Law, which abolished naturalisation by marriage for women, in the course of 2025, the authorities applied, retrospectively, provisions under which thousands of women had lawfully obtained nationality through marriage in previous years, and many of whom (exact numbers are not known) had duly renounced their original nationality in favour of Kuwaiti, in order to abide by Kuwaiti law.

In the first quarter of 2025, when, as stated in a [9 March 2025 report](#), “it emerged that about two-thirds of those made stateless were women who gave up their previous citizenships to naturalise, a decade after legally marrying Kuwaiti citizens” sentiment quickly shifted on the nation’s active social media [...]” in December reassured those legally naturalised by marriage that their pensions and other benefits would be restored.

The state then issued them with civil IDs that read “to be treated as Kuwaiti” in the nationality section.

On 1 May 2025, [Kuwait Times reported](#) that, according to statistics on that date, “the number of Kuwaitis who were stripped of their citizenship during the past year [exceeded] 35,000 people, [and that] about 29,000 of them [were] foreign women who became Kuwaitis after getting married to Kuwaiti husbands.”

In other words, on this basis, as of 1 May 2025, 82.8% of the revocations comprised non-Kuwaiti women married to Kuwaiti men.

According to a [25 May 2025 New Arab report](#) between 1993 and 2020, a total of 38,505 non-Kuwait women married Kuwaiti men; GoK’s measures abolishes their basis for naturalisation and the citizenship granted to all such wives since 1987.

Assuming, according to credible reports, that the GoK has revoked the citizenship of over 40,000 individuals, and the impact will have been considerable: the the state will have withdrawn from those individuals, access to:

- Healthcare
- Primary and secondary school education
- Government employment;
- Government pensions;

A 9 March 2025 [Financial Times report](#) reminds readers that non-Kuwaitis cannot own land or be majority business owners, and their driving licences are invalidated; and that they forfeit other social welfare payments.

A [25 May 2025 report by AFP and New Arab](#) explores the human cost of the measures. It cited the revocation of the nationalities of public figures, like the singer Nawal al-Kuwaitia (“The Kuwaiti”) and actor Dawood Hussain, but also businesswoman, Amal, “who had been Kuwaiti for nearly two decades” yet, overnight was rendered stateless. Another woman - Lama - stated that “They went after mothers, the heart of the family,” adding: “We are the mothers and grandmothers of the children of this country.”

In contrast to those who can be depicted as merchants of fraud or deception, women married to Kuwaitis are seen as ‘innocent women’. In one instance, the government

suspended, for more than six months, the pension payments of a woman married to a Kuwaiti man, while a bank loan was frozen, following her career working as a civil servant. "What kind of message are we conveying by inciting racism and treating them unfairly?" the Kuwaiti husband said.

## The Kuwaiti government has ignored repeated appeals to review citizenship revocation measures

Following Hawiati, SALAM DHR and RRC's **November 2024** memorandum, which expressed concern about the basis and process of the citizenship revocation campaign - which the government ignored - international civil society and intergovernmental bodies have expressed further concern.

On **10 February 2025**, HAWIATI, SALAM DHR, the MENA Rights Group and the Global Movement Against Statelessness convened an online seminar in English and Arabic to raise awareness and express our collective concern over the government's conduct, in English and Arabic.<sup>4</sup> See below for an account of this event.

On **11 and 12 February 2025**, nine human rights groups called on Kuwait to end the campaign of mass citizenship stripping and to repeal the December 2024 amendments to the Nationality Law.<sup>5</sup>

NGO representatives, notably the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), criticised the GoK's conduct at the **20 February 2025** pre-sessional meeting of the UPR. The GCHR representative did likewise at the **7 May 2025** UPR session itself; a GoK representative rejected the criticism.

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<sup>4</sup> Held as an open, public discussion on the social network, X, formerly Twitter, SALAM DHR's Drewery Dyke chaired the event. Danah Abdulaziz Aracena, United Stateless,US, shared personal experiences of statelessness; Falah Sayed, MENA Rights Group, Geneva, addressed the legal implications of the GoK's measures; Rasha Amaar, MUWATIN (news platform) discussed social dimensions of citizenship, as a journalist; Sam March, Global Movement Against Statelessness spoke about international advocacy and Yoana Kuzmova, HAWIATI the MENA Statelessness Network, provided an overview of the situation in Kuwait.

<sup>5</sup> These organisations were HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement, Minority Rights Group, MENA Rights Group, DAWN, MENA Statelessness Network (Hawiati), Rights Realization Centre, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights, Global Movement Against Statelessness and ALQST for Human Rights. See, for example: <https://minorityrights.org/kuwait-citizenship-stripping/> or <https://menarights.org/en/articles/kuwaiti-government-must-end-campaign-mass-citizenship-stripping-and-repeal-recent>

In **May 2025**, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [expressed](#) its concern “after tens of thousands of Kuwaitis were stripped of citizenship, many of them women”. The OHCHR spokesperson stated that: “We are deeply concerned about Kuwait's recent nationality revocations, particularly of individuals who renounced previous citizenships, and about the extension of such revocations to their dependents,” adding that:

*"Stripping people of their nationalities has a serious impact on their economic, social, cultural, and political rights [and that] [t]heir inability to challenge these decisions in court also raises serious concerns [as] this risks further marginalisation and social exclusion in Kuwait. Anyone found to have obtained citizenship by forgery or fraud also loses their Kuwaiti nationality, along with their descendants. Retroactively revoking citizenship... and extending this to their descendants, raises serious human rights concerns."*

The OHCHR urged the GoK to "review the nationality law to ensure it complies with international human rights standards and consider sustainable solutions to prevent statelessness".

On **2 June 2025**, the [Gulf Center for Human Rights](#) published a briefing that set out aspects of the legal flaws and human impact of the arbitrary measures. Entitled Citizens' rights continue to deteriorate as government escalates stripping of nationality, it made a variety of recommendations echoed below.

A **2 June 2025** [opinion piece](#) by Adnan Humaidan in Arabic, in Arabi21 decried the apparent injustice and arbitrariness of the citizenship revocation campaign. He asserted that:

*"The problem is not just the numbers, nor even the names targeted, but rather the methodology, timing, and consequences. For the right to citizenship to become a tool in the hands of the authorities, granted and withdrawn according to political moods or security considerations, this touches on the very essence of the social contract between the state and the citizen, and sows doubt in people's minds about the stability of their future and identity."*

## **Adnan Humaidan, appealing to the humanity of the GoK, calls out:**

*“And what about the children of naturalized citizens? What about the women who were naturalized more than three decades ago under the marriage law? What about their children who know no other homeland than Kuwait? What will be said to them when they ask: Why are we no longer Kuwaiti? For what crime was the "bidoon" life suddenly imposed on us? By what logic are we being punished by decisions we do not understand and whose motivations we do not know?”*

The writer concludes the piece by acknowledging “the state's right to regulate its affairs and prosecute those who commit forgery or violate the law” but he asserts that “all of this must be done according to fair standards, clear legal guarantees, and a careful separation of cases”. “When the withdrawal of citizenship becomes a political tool”, he writes, “it threatens the very structure of the state, creates a rift in societal trust, pushes skilled individuals toward emigration or withdrawal, and instills fear even in the hearts of those whose citizenships have not yet been affected”. He terms the impact “A devastating national loss that is difficult to compensate for, regardless of the pretext.” He calls on the GoK to “[R]eturn to a state of law, not a state of whims, to a state of rights, not a state of purges.”

## **Role of the Interior Minister**

GCHR has noted the television interview in **March 2025**, when the Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Kuwaiti Nationality Investigation Committee, Fahad al-Yousef, **stated** that anyone who legally acquired citizenship but resides outside Kuwait and criticises prominent figures in Kuwait deserves to have their citizenship revoked.

HAWIATI and SALAM DHR have, moreover, recorded testimony from individuals who claim that Interior Minister, Fahad al-Yousef, has personally ill treated them. While one or two people appear to have referenced their experience on social media, others - who do not wish their identity to be divulged - are afraid to speak out, fearing reprisals.



## **Intergenerational and ‘dependency’-related revocation of citizenship violates human rights law and ignores basic human dignity**

The GoK has revoked citizenship on an intergenerational basis, including that of women, children and an unknown number of adults based on ‘dependency’. If the GoK finds, according to the procedures of the current campaign, that a grandfather or father obtained citizenship in previous years by fraud or bribery the government revokes the citizenship of all those who derived their status from him. This summary, catch-all application does not take into consideration whether any of the descendants have any meaningful connection to the state from which the person may have come.

Applied to children, the policy could violate Article 7 of the [Convention of the Rights of the Child](#), to which Kuwait is a state party. It states that the child shall have (1) [...] the right to acquire a nationality and that (2) States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The GoK citizenship revocation campaign is mired in legal, ethical and moral ambiguity. Implemented without adequate popular or legal consultation, it has arbitrarily impacted the lives of many thousands of people, most of whom are women who appear to have followed existing law at the time of their marriage and naturalisation as Kuwaiti. The character of the wrong-headed measure is one of a capricious reaction than a duly considered, even bold measure permitted under national or international law. For these reasons, echoing other organisations that have made the same or similar calls, our organisations call on the GoK to:

- Suspend the citizenship revocation campaign and arbitrary decision-making and opaque appeals associated with it pending a thorough, independent review of the measures to ensure that the GoK abides by international human rights law to which it is a state party;
- Enable all individuals facing a revocation of citizenship decision arising from the current campaign, or those impacted as part of the longstanding stateless (Bidoon) community to have access to the courts or another form of independent tribunal with

the force of law to challenge decisions made by the authorities and to make the case for their recognition as Kuwaiti nationals;

- Ensure that all those impacted by citizenship-related decisions in Kuwait be able to access the rights and freedoms protected by virtue of Kuwait's accession to the International Covenants on Civil and Political and Rights as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including in relation to expression, association and assembly; property ownership, access to education and healthcare; and
- Take particular caution in stripping children of citizenship where they have no meaningful association with any other state or access to any other citizenship.

## Appendix 1 - Seminars on 6 April and 10 February 2025: summary report

**X Space : @Hawiati\_MENA**

### KUWAIT: REVOCATION OF ARTICLE 8 WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP



**Yoana Kuzmova**  
Law Instructor & Researcher (HAWIATI)



**Drewery Dyke**  
Researcher (SALAM DHR)



**Ahmad Benswait**  
Phd Researcher in Legal Anthropology

Chair

**Live on:**  
<https://twitter.com/l/spaces/1BdGYqkNAAoGX>

**Date:**  
**Sunday 6 April 2025**

**Time:**

- 8:30 PM London
- 10:30 PM Kuwait

**HAWIATI**  
الشبكة الإقليمية حول أوضاع اللاجئين  
MENA Statelessness Network

Civil society organisations have conducted awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives to amplify the voices of individuals speaking out in relation to the injustices of the Government of Kuwait's nationality stripping campaign.. The GoK has not, to the best of our knowledge, engaged with or responded to any of them.

On 6 April 2025, Activist and researcher, Ahmad Benswait chaired a [public discussion](#) convened by Hawiati, the MENA Statelessness Network and SALAM DHR. Over 23 thousand people were aware of the event and 690 joined the event. These included speakers from the longstanding Bidoon community but also women impacted by the Kuwaiti

government's decisions. A small number of these women contacted the organisers

privately in relation to their situation, since they did not feel safe in speaking openly about their plight: the government had already deported one such woman to another country.

On 10 February 2025, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR) joined representatives of United Stateless, MENA Rights Group, the Global Movement Against Statelessness and Hawiati - the MENA Statelessness Network to address the situation in Kuwait, in English and Arabic.<sup>6</sup>

Participants explored the link between the May 2024 suspension of Kuwait's National Assembly with the general degradation in the human rights situation in Kuwait.

**Danah Abdulaziz Aracena** linked her personal experience of statelessness and drew attention to the impact on children trapped in legal limbo without access to basic rights like education and healthcare, excluded from essential services.

**Falah Sayed** outlined the legal dimensions of Kuwait's citizenship revocations, citing over 10,000 cases in January 2025 alone. She emphasized that these decisions lack judicial oversight and violate several legally binding international human rights conventions ratified by Kuwait. She pointed to the politically motivated revocation of Salman Khaldi's nationality as an example of this alarming trend and called for an immediate restoration of citizenship from political dissidents. Kuwait's citizenship stripping lacks judicial oversight, accountability, and transparency, leaving individuals vulnerable to human rights violations and undermining the rule of law. Additionally, the nationality law's provisions, particularly regarding the stripping of citizenship from naturalised wives, violate international conventions, prompting Falah to call for immediate suspension of this practice and reforms to address statelessness.

**Sam March** stressed the need for global advocacy to raise awareness and build international solidarity, acknowledging that direct pressure on Kuwait's government may not halt the revocations but could minimise the cases and mitigate their impact.

**Yoana Kuzmova** highlighted the lack of legal recourse for affected individuals within Kuwait's legal system and warned that Kuwait's actions mirror destabilizing citizenship policies seen

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<sup>6</sup> Held as an open, public discussion on the social network, X, formerly Twitter, SALAM DHR's Drewery Dyke chaired the event. Danah Abdulaziz Aracena, United Stateless, US, shared personal experiences of statelessness; Falah Sayed, MENA Rights Group, Geneva, addressed the legal implications of the GoK's measures; Rasha Amaar, MUWATIN (news platform) discussed social dimensions of citizenship, as a journalist; Sam March, Global Movement Against Statelessness spoke about international advocacy and Yoana Kuzmova, HAWIATI - the MENA Statelessness Network, provided an overview of the situation in Kuwait.

elsewhere. She explained that what we have seen over the last year in Kuwait is the suspension of parliament, which was the primary body regulating the infringements on the right to citizenship in Kuwait. She described the amendments as a politically disempowering tactic with severe consequences for families and civil society, whose overall thrust is to erode all citizens' rights, dignity, and security as Kuwaitis.

**Rasha Amaar** recounted cases where individuals, including wives and children of Kuwaiti nationals, have had their citizenship revoked. She emphasized that even those with no criminal history are being targeted, deepening the crisis and fostering a sense of alienation. She also stressed that many children, wives of Kuwaitis and individuals are having their nationality revoked, despite having been previously naturalised. She urged the government to cease weaponizing citizenship against its people and for a solution to be found for the people who have been affected by these unjust laws for a solution to be found for the people who have been affected by these unjust laws.

- *"Statelessness is a human rights issue. What is happening in Kuwait adds to a global crisis."* – Danah Abdulaziz Aracena
- *"These amendments turn citizenship into a political weapon against dissent."* – Falah Sayed
- *"We are witnessing an onslaught against citizens who, until now, saw themselves as Kuwaitis by right."* – Yoana Kuzmova
- *"There is a severe and deep crisis in Kuwait, where people are feeling unwelcomed in their own home country"* – Rasha Amaar

One participant in the 'space' expressed dismay at the retroactive application of the measures and asserted that this violates Kuwait's own laws and international law. Another noted that while Kuwait had previously denied citizenship to groups like the Bidoon, the current campaign is unprecedented and facilitated by the May 2024 National Assembly suspension. Others recognised that GoK officials were, at the time, discussing the creation of an appeal panel, but expressed concern over its independence and that it simply could be the same body that stripped people of citizenship in the first place. Others expressed powerlessness and anger at the impact on families and the looming multi-generational crisis.

## Appendix 2 – The challenge of reconciling Kuwait's conduct with its reported international support for UNHCR

On 24 May 2025, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, [reportedly](#) lauded Kuwait's "support for refugees throughout the world, affirming that this backing would turn much more crucial in the shadow of current difficult challenges facing the nations."Filippo Grandi reportedly made the statements following the first strategic dialogue held between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the State of Kuwait, with a high-level Kuwaiti delegation headed by the Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The report cited

"Kuwait's keenness on backing international aid for the refugees and the needy throughout the globe" but made no mention of the government's perpetuation of statelessness with respect to the long term Bidoon community nor the human rights violations unfolding in the current citizenship stripping campaign.

/end/

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