



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-seventh session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 August 2014]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.14-14565 (E)



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## **Bahrain: Stripping of Nationality a Weapon for Political Suppression**

As you may know, in 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012, the Bahraini authorities stripped 31 Bahraini citizens, including myself a former Member of Parliament and Ex Elected Councilor, of the Bahraini citizenship. Out of the 31 there are, 2 Former Members of Parliament, 4 Religious Leaders, 8 Political Activist, 2 Human Rights Activist, 2 Media Activist, 2 Businessmen, 1 Lawyer, and 1 Woman.

The vast majority became instantly stateless with no alternative citizenship, a ban on travel, sacked from their previous jobs, no longer able to use public services like health care, housing and unemployment benefits, social allowances, or claim various citizenship benefits, and their newborns were as well barred from claiming the Bahrain citizenship. All of us have expressed the struggle and strain it has caused to both our family and our professional lives.

Attempts by us to exhaust the domestic legal system to reverse the decision was tried, with the last avenue, one of the 31 submitting a formal appeal to the court, was dismissed on 29th April 2014.

One of the stripped citizens, Ayatollah Najati a religious scholar, was threatened, harassed and later forcibly deported from Bahrain to Lebanon on the 23rd of April 2014.

Most recently on the 14th and 15th of July 2014, the stripped citizens that have remained in Bahrain have been called in for investigation regarding their legal status and updating their information, and later on taken to court accused for illegal stay in the country!

Overall, the stripping of nationality of Bahraini citizens has been condemned by many caring and active human rights organizations, such as UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Unfortunately, the wider international community did not mount enough pressure against the Bahraini authorities to reverse this unlawful decision.

Hence, it comes as no surprise that the Bahraini authorities have again decided to use this effective tool of suppression, the stripping of nationality, against more Bahrainis.

The latest targets of this oppressive violation are 9 Bahrainis who were politically active in the popular 2011 uprising, and were initially charged for the offences of “illegal gathering” and “attempting to escape prison”.

Their case was heard by Judge Ali Al-Dhahrani on 6th August 2014. The judge inexplicably decided to charge them under Bahrain’s controversial and newly-modified terrorism laws. “

This allowed the judge more extreme powers. He decided to promptly revoke all their citizenships, and charged 4 with life sentences, with the remaining being sentenced between 5 to 10 years.

The mother of Ali Hassan Adam claims that her son, who studies abroad in Pun has never been politically active in his life, and was arrested along with the other political activists simply because he was present on the day of the arrests.

I hope this time around, we can together mount significant and effective pressure against the Bahraini Government to rescind these unlawful decisions, and stop the use of stripping citizens of their citizenship as a weapon against dissent and political opposition.