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

Written statement* submitted by the Kham Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, 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.

[23 August 2016]

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

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Bahrain: Witness by Denationalized and Forcibly Exiled Citizen

Introduction:

The mentality of the ruling power in Bahrain expects all the people to be followers and loyal to the government, and it keeps all the rights for the government to use any tool and technique in order to oppress the opposition community including citizenship revocation. It is well-known fact that the Shi'a community which forms the majority of the population (65 to 70 %), is oppressed and denied most of its right under international law. This paper presents my personal case which is only a case out of thousands of instances of human-rights violation in Bahrain.

Biography:

I am, Masaud Jahromi, from a well-educated family in Bahrain who used to serve the society from different aspects. I hold PhD degree in Network Engineering from Kent university @ Canterbury-UK, Master degree in Control & Information Technology from UMIST-UK, and Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering from Bahrain university. I have joined Ahlia University as a faculty member in February 2003. In addition to my profession, I am involved in serving Bahraini society through cultural and social activities. Although, I am a member of the political opposition community, I have never been involved in any political activities.

Five months of Custody:

On 14th April 2011, with no prior notification or provided justification, the police and security forces brutally broke into my family compound at 2.30 am when everyone was asleep, I was violently taken from my bed, beaten and detained. I was in custody for 5 months, tortured for almost first 2 weeks, kept in solitary custody for more than 2 months, denied access to my family or a lawyer for the first 3 months; and suspended from the university for 10 months just because "*I have participated in February 2011 rallies*".

The King's Decree of Citizenship Revocation:

Since February 2012, I was away from the media practicing my daily live with minimum publicity; and like most of the people awaiting promised governmental reforms in the wake of parliamentary elections in 2014. On 28th January 2015 the King via the Interior Ministry revoked the citizenship of 72 Bahrainis including myself. It is not the first time that Bahrain government has resorted to the use of citizenship as a tool of oppression. In 2013 a similar list was published and the citizenship of 32 Bahrainis were stripped including ex-parliament members. Although, the new list of 72 people includes the names of individuals from very diverse backgrounds, including both political and human-rights activists as well as journalists, apolitical cultural figures, and an academic; they are common in a single fact that all do not participate in 2014 election.

Statelessness Problem:

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) says "*everyone has the right to a nationality*" and that "*no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality*". This means internationally the right to citizenship/nationality is clearly stated, so what is the interpretation of the king's decree of citizenship revocation? How the Bahraini government practices this crime over years and via a royal decree or a political decision, tens of native Bahraini citizens becomes statelessness?

Applying Foreign Residence Law:

Bahrain government insisted to apply foreign residence law over native Bahraini citizens who become stateless! We were given two choices: either correct residence status or leave the country! Of course both choices were not possible; we are stateless that means we have no other nationality to get official residential visa, and our travel document (passport) were withdrawn so practically we cannot leave Bahrain.

Appealing Citizenship Revocation Decision:

The royal decree of revocation claims that those on the blacklist have had their nationalities revoked for allegedly causing harm to the kingdom's safety and stability, and for threatening national security. A Bahraini government cabinet member stated that each and individual of the 72 people listed has the right to appeal the citizenship revocation decision. In spite of the capricious nature of the process and the strong likelihood that I will not gain any positive outcome, I have appealed the decision.

On 7th December 2015 the court decided to reject my appeal according to amazing fact that the government has the full right to estimate and consider what harms its interior and foreign security and basically issuing or revoking citizenship are not subject to judicial control!!!

Question to the owners of conscience: is it possible to have such blacklisted people with the claimed crimes and just revoked their citizenship without any investigation or trial?!

Deporting Native Citizens:

On 6th March 2016, the court rejected my appeal and considered the deportation is the final decision and should be implemented. I was trying to postpone the implementation as my wife was sick for almost 4 months and I was looking after my 12 years old son who has to attend the school until 28th June 2016. This is why I have approached the Bahraini National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) two weeks before the court hearing session seeking their assistant. However, on 7th March I have received a call from the passport department asking to visit them for just 5 minutes!

As a final try I went to the NIHR office and discussed the updates with them. They advised me to approach the implementation judge immediately and apply to postponed the implementation. Unfortunately, in order to receive the judge decision regarding my request, I was receiving continuous calls from the passport department. It was almost 3 pm when I have recognized that the court has no power to accept my request and decided to visit the passport department. I have been forced to leave my wife with her sickness situation and putting huge responsibility on her: taking care of a 12 years old boy and a three years old girl.

The final decision of Bahrain government is to deport all the statelessness people to a country that issues on arrival an entrance visa to anybody holds Bahraini passport. The critical issue here is that the passport given to the deported person is not the Bahraini regular passport, it is a Bahraini travel document with one-year validity and in fact the mentioned nationality is Bahrain resident.

Conclusion:

If the situation remains as it is and United Nation kept blinded toward instances of human-rights violation in Bahrain, definitely the Bahraini government will issue more royal decrees of citizenship revocation against the peaceful opposition community in future.

The Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.
