

Pre-Session on Oman Statement: 37th Session of the Universal Periodic Review

On behalf of the Omani Association for Human Rights, Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights and Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, I will focus on gender discrimination in the nationality law; children's right to a nationality; citizenship stripping and related human rights violations in Oman.

International law protects woman's equal nationality rights. However, **Oman is one of twenty-five countries that denies women equal rights to pass nationality to their children. The law also lacks adequate safeguards to guarantee nationality to children who would otherwise be stateless.**

Omani men confer nationality on their children automatically. Omani women cannot. The child of an Omani mother and foreign father is recognised as Omani by birth only if paternity is not confirmed. If paternity is confirmed, nationality may be granted if eight strict conditions - such as the mother being widowed, divorced or abandoned, and the child's continuous legal residence for 10 years – are met. **Women are also denied the equal right to confer nationality on their spouse.**

Gender-discrimination in nationality laws undermines women's equal citizenship, equality within the family and ability to choose a spouse, while also violating the child's right to a nationality.

Omani law, policy and practice related to citizenship deprivation is arbitrary, discriminatory, unlawful, and violates international standards. Omani citizenship may be withdrawn if a person joins a group that supports beliefs that, according to the state, harm the interests of Oman.¹ The Minister has full discretion and many activities have been deemed contrary to the state's interests. All public gatherings require official approval. Some private gatherings are also prohibited and can result in three years imprisonment and deprivation of nationality.²

Omani human rights defenders have also been subject to the withdrawal of passports and ID cards that in effect, amount to citizenship stripping. Many peaceful protesters were stripped of their right to legal personhood, having no right to travel, work, or access state benefits. Such systematic social, cultural, and political deprivations have resulted in a form of civil death.³

Stateless persons face wide-ranging human rights violations, including obstacles to accessing education, healthcare, social services, employment, property rights, inheritance, freedom of movement, and documentation. They are also at a greater risk of human trafficking, child marriage, arbitrary detention, and denied access to justice.

We urge reviewing States to make the following recommendations to Oman:

Amend the Nationality Law to:

- I. Ensure gender equality;**
- II. Protect every child's right to nationality without discrimination.**
- III. Protect everyone's right to a nationality and prohibit arbitrary deprivation of nationality.**
- IV. Prevent citizenship deprivation on the basis of persons exercising fundamental rights including expression, assembly and association;**

Additional recommendations are included in our [written submission](#)⁴.

Thank you.

¹ The Minister of Interior has full power to withdraw nationality of Omani citizens without and related duty to inform the individual and without the obligation to provide the person concerned the right of legal recourse.

² <https://ochroman.org/eng/2017/12/statelessness1/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ https://files.institutesi.org/UPR37_Oman.pdf