

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain

Submission by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
NGO in General Consultative Status with ECOSOC

To the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) concerning the State of
Bahrain's fidelity to the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

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Suppressing a Majority: How Protected Groups are Subjugated in Bahrain

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1. Introduction

In response to the Bahraini government's *List of Issues Prior to Submission of The Combined Eighth to Fourteenth Periodic Reports of Bahrain*, ADHRB has found that despite the introduction of selective legislative and institutional measures aimed at eliminating racial discrimination, the phenomenon is still extensive and widespread in the country. This is predominantly due to the lack of practical implementation, as well as the lack of enforcement of these suggested measures. The government continues to persecute the indigenous Baharna and Ajam communities of Bahrain, the indigenous people of Bahrain, while actively promoting a divisive sectarian narrative.

While the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD) does not explicitly proscribe religious discrimination, a violation will be found when the discrimination involves an ethnic element.¹ This is the case for Bahrain's ethnic groups of Shia religious heritage; the Ajam, and the Baharna. "Ajam" and "Baharna" are not legally defined terms under Bahraini law. "Baharna" is a local term used to define the original inhabitants of the land, who account for 70%² of Bahrain's 1,350,000 population (estimate in July 2015).³ The "Ajam" are an ethnic group in Bahrain of Persian background, who possess Bahraini citizenship. In 2015, it was estimated that there were around 100,000 Ajam individuals in the country.⁴ The Baharna and Ajam have been ruled by the al-Khalifa dynasty since it conquered the island nation in 1783. Since then, the Baharna and Ajam have suffered relentless discrimination based on their intersection of faith and heritage. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (the Committee) itself has previously noted that many groups in Bahrain face various forms of discrimination, "in particular the Shia, who may be distinguishable by virtue of their tribal or national origin, descent, culture or language."⁵

2. Ineffective Prevention of Discrimination Through Labour Law

The Kingdom of Bahrain ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILOs) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention in 2000.⁶ According to the Convention, discrimination includes

¹ CERD, General Recommendation No 32: The meaning and scope of special measures in the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 6 October 2009, CERD/C/GC/32; 17 IHRR 306 (2010) at para 7.3

² Geneive Abdo, *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of Shi'a-Sunni Divide*, Oxford University Press: 2017, 117-118.; Shirin Sadeghi, "The Fabrication of Bahrain's Shiite-Sunni Divide," Huffington Post,

³ Central Intelligence Agency. "Bahrain." cia.gov. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 30 May 2016. https://web.archive.org/web/20160530185649/https://www.cia.gov/library/publications//the-world-factbook/geos/print_ba.html

⁴ Toorani, Mohamed. "The Ajam of Manama." *The Ajam of Manama*, 30 Oct. 2015, intlhistory.blogspot.com/2015/10/the-ajam-of-manama.html?m=1

⁵ CERD/C/BHR/CO/7 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, OHCHR, 14 April 2005, para. 16

⁶ International Labour Organization Convention No. 111 access at https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256

any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion or nationality. Despite its ratification, a 2018 Individual Case Analysis (CAS) conducted on Bahrain's compliance with this Convention revealed that concerns regarding its implementation.⁷ The concerns identified by workers included cases of suspension, dismissal and punishment imposed on employees in the wake of the 2011 pro-democracy protests. There are currently 64 unresolved cases of violations of labor rights for individuals who engaged in the 2011 protests.⁸ Additionally, worker-members of the ILO have described incidents of discrimination against women in certain professions. Overall, concerns persist that the true situation is unknown due to the fear of reprisals should individuals make incidents of discrimination public.⁹

The ratification of the ILO Convention is flanked by similarly ineffective domestic legislation. Nominally, the Employment and Labour Law in Bahrain, based on the Legislative Decree No. 36, regulates the relationship between employer and employee, as well as cases of discrimination and injustice.¹⁰ The Employment and Labour Law prohibits discrimination towards employees on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity and religious belief. Therefore, cases of discrimination in the workplace are taken to the Labour Court or settled by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.¹¹ This situation is concerning given that cases of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion and ethnicity are not settled by independent and impartial institutions. Furthermore, compensation which are supposedly safeguarded by Employment and Labour Law,¹² are subject to the analysis of governmental bodies which in themselves perpetuate institutional biases towards certain groups in society.

According to ADHRB,¹³ the security forces are largely responsible for the promotion of anti-indigenous rhetoric, through their engagement in systematic discrimination towards the Baharna ethno-religious group. Despite being the country's majority, the Shia community and the Baharna indigenous group represent only 3% of the personnel in the security forces, portraying clear cases of bias and discrimination in favour of the Sunni minority.¹⁴ As a branch of the Bahraini government, the security forces indicate Bahrain's to comply with international labour standards. Therefore, the Labour Law of the Private Sector (Law No. 36/2012) must be amended to include the definition of discrimination as stated in Article 1 of the ILO's Convention. The Bahraini legislature must also amend Legislative Decree No. 48/2010 to meet the international labour standards of the ILO, in order to provide adequate legislative protection against discrimination in the work place. Simply, the lack of the government action in order to safeguard its workers from discrimination is in violation of Article 5 of the CERD, which guarantees the right to work in just and favorable conditions.

⁷Ibid

⁸Ibid

⁹Ibid

¹⁰ Kingdom of Bahrain's Labour Law No.36 (2012) access at: <http://lmra.bh/portal/en/page/show/199>

¹¹Ibid

¹²Ibid

¹³ "ADHRB at HRC39 calls for the integration of the Shia Baharna in Bahrain's security forces", 12 September 2018 access at: <https://tinyurl.com/szngpzu>

¹⁴ Ibid.

3. Discrimination of Migrant Workers

In 2016, over 75% of the Bahraini workforce was made up of foreign workers.¹⁵ These workers continue to be subjected to another form of government-condoned discrimination - the *Kafala* system; an immigration system in which employers sponsor their migrant workers to live and work in the country. This system allows employers to exert significant control over their employees,¹⁶ leaving non-Bahraini citizens at risk of severe abuse and discrimination, and with a lack of sufficient protection. Examples of abuse include the confiscation of passports and mobile phones, in order to trap migrant workers with their employers with no means of escape.¹⁷ Migrant workers also frequently receive wages that are significantly lower than those promised to them before they moved to Bahrain. Additionally, many pay preliminary fees which are worth months of their prospective wages in order to secure positions in Bahrain, causing them to arrive in the country with substantial debt. This situation is worsened by practices such as wage withholding, and contract substitution, all of which heighten a migrant worker's risk of falling into de facto debt bondage.¹⁸ In 2017, 500 Indian workers claimed that they had not received their salary for several months and that they were forced to live on food handouts.¹⁹ Similarly, in 2019, migrant workers began protesting against the non-payment of wages. Further underscoring the exploitative nature of the migrant worker system are the long hours that they are forced to work, with the ILO reporting that the average workweek for a domestic worker in Bahrain is 108 hours.²⁰

Migrant workers are further forced into terrible living situations. Many migrants have no option but to live in unregistered labour camps - whose number now exceeds the number of registered camps in the country. Unregistered camps do not adhere to any laws or regulations, resulting in grave human rights abuses and threats to safety.²¹ For example, in February 2015 three Bangladeshis died in a fire that broke out in a building in an unregistered labour camp in Mukharqa.²² The building in question did not adhere to fire regulations and resulted in the preventable deaths of the three men. Furthermore, despite being registered

¹⁵ "Dashboard: Issue 2016Q1," Labour Market Regulatory Authority, 2016,

http://blmi.lmra.bh/2016/03/mi_dashboard.xml AND Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*

¹⁶ ADHRB. Living As Commodities. ADHRB, Washing D.C., 2016, https://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ADHRB_Commodities_Web.pdf. Accessed 20 Mar 2020.

¹⁷ ADHRB. Living As Commodities. ADHRB, Washing D.C., 2016, https://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ADHRB_Commodities_Web.pdf. Accessed 20 Mar 2020.

¹⁸ International Labor Organization, International Labor Conference, One hundredth Session, Geneva, June 2011:

Provisional Record, Twenty-first sitting, 2011, accessed 19 April 2017,

<http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@>

[ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_158275.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_158275.pdf), 34.

¹⁹ Bhattacharjee, Kallol. "No Pay, 500 Indians Suffer in Bahrain." *The Hindu*, The Hindu, 23 Mar. 2017, www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-pay-500-indians-suffer-in-bahrain/article17621271.ece.

²⁰ Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, and CARAM-Asia, "The Situation of Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Bahrain: Report submitted to the 42nd session of the CEDAW Committee October 2008," <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/bchrbahrain42.pdf>

²¹ Unnikrishnan, Raj. "Illegal Labour Camps Surpasses Number of Registered Facilities." *GDNOnline*, 28 July 2018, www.gdnonline.com/Details/383971/Illegal-labour-camps-surpasses-number-of-registered-facilities-

²² Ibid

with the government, one in ten registered camps have also been reported as unsafe.²³ As such, the assurances provided under Bahrain's Labour Law for certain standards of living are not adequately enforced.²⁴

The situation of female migrant workers in Bahrain is similarly precarious, particularly in relation to human trafficking. While Bahrain is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), it fails to adhere to its obligations under Article 6 which requires State Parties to "take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women."²⁵ Bahraini law does not explicitly prohibit the traffic of persons, which contributes to the vulnerability of female domestic workers. The trafficking of persons entails various illegal actions on the part of the employer, including the retention of passports, illegal confinement, and the exploitation of labour. According to the International Federation of Human Rights (IFHR),²⁶ half of migrant workers are subjected to inhumane treatment and illegal arrangements, including the granting of "free visas."

On its surface, Bahraini domestic legislation offers some protection for migrant workers. There are inspection agencies whose purpose is to address malpractices involving migrant workers, and the Ministry of Labour who has the capacity to receive individual complaints.²⁷ Recently, the government announced the launch of a range of new services to assist migrant workers in distress.²⁸ Further, it is claimed that two new offices will soon be opened at the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) to assist workers in need.²⁹ These bodies are said to provide migrant workers with translators and assistance in compiling documents. However, the effectiveness of these new services remains to be evaluated. Although, even without an evaluation of the efficacy of these new institutions, the institutions themselves portray their ineffectiveness through their requirement for migrant workers, who are typically socially isolated, to advocate for themselves. Similarly, the recent establishment of a government call center to offer advice to migrant workers is merely a symptomatic treatment of the problem - abuse will persist so long as the exploitative *Kafala* system continues to exist.

²³ *One in 10 Labour Camps in Bahrain 'Unsafe'*, 11 Apr. 2015, www.tradearabia.com/news/MISC_279490.html.

²⁴ International Labor Organization, International Labor Conference, One hundredth Session, Geneva, June 2011:

Provisional Record, Twenty-first sitting, 2011, accessed 19 April 2017, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_158275.pdf)

[ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_158275.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_158275.pdf), 34.

²⁵ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979 access at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

²⁶ "The Situation of Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Bahrain" FIDH, October 2008, access at: <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/bchrbahrain42.pdf>

²⁷ "Complaints Related to Conflict Between the Employee and Employer Registration Request." *Kingdom of Bahrain - EGovernment Portal*, <https://tinyurl.com/rntscta>.

²⁸ "Bahrain to Launch New Services to Help Migrant Workers in Distress." *Migrant Rights*, 17 Jan. 2020, www.migrant-rights.org/2020/01/bahrain-to-launch-new-services-to-help-migrant-workers-in-distress.

²⁹ Labour Market Regulatory Authority. "New Service to Help Distressed Expatriate Employees." *Media Centre*, 25 Dec. 2019, blog.lmra.bh/en/2019/12/25/new-service-to-help-distressed-expatriate-employees/.

There are also no regulations which facilitate family reunification of migrant workers in Bahrain, nor is Bahrain a signatory to international conventions regulating the reunification of migrants. Moreover, the national authority responsible for migrants, the LMRA, has not addressed the issue of family reunification for migrant workers.³⁰ While Bahrain is a member state of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it has not ratified the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention of 1975 (No. 143) which upholds the rights of migrant workers and addresses the issue of family reunification.³¹ Similarly, Bahrain has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.³²

Overall, the plight of migrant workers is ignored by the Government of Bahrain, who falsely refer to the equal rights of migrant workers and citizens outlined in their Labour Laws. Migrant workers are a protected category under the CERD, and are specifically protected by Article 5 from unequal payments or unjust remuneration. As such, the situation of migrant workers in Bahrain also violates Article 2 of the CERD, which requires State Parties to implement the right policies in order to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms.

4. Discrimination of Domestic Workers

Domestic workers, referring to migrant workers who work in Bahraini households, are also deprived of protections in the country's Labour Laws. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the wages of domestic workers are below average, with an average wage of BD70 (\$186) per month. This is combined with abusive working environments and long working hours, which are commonplace in the country.³³ Bahrain's Labour Law of 1976 upholds the rights of national and migrant workers but does not account for the protection of domestic workers.³⁴ Due to their unprotected status, domestic workers frequently fall victim to sexual abuse, violence and other forms of inhumane treatment. In 2012, the National Assembly enacted a new private sector law which extended the rights of domestic workers to better working conditions.³⁵ However, according to HRW, despite the extension of the Labour Law to domestic workers, not all types of abuse are prohibited. There remains many unsettled issues such as maximum weekly work

³⁰ The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) access at: <https://lmra.bh/portal/en/home>

³¹ "Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)" International Labour Organization (ILO), 24 jun 1975 access at: <https://tinyurl.com/v3qa5qp>

³² International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, United Nations OHCHR, 18 December 1990 access at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx>

³³ "Migrant Worker Abuse in Bahrain and the Government Reform Agenda" Human Rights Watch, October 2012 access at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/bahrain1012_brochure_LOW_0.pdf

³⁴ "The Labour Law for the Private Sector, 1976" Government of Bahrain, 1976 access at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/668/The%20Labour%20Law%20for%20the%20Private%20Sector.pdf>

³⁵ "The promulgation of the labour law in the private sector" Government of Bahrain, 2 August 2012 access at: <http://lmra.bh/portal/files/cms/shared/file/labour%20law%202012.pdf>

hours, overtime pay, and days off.³⁶ Therefore, the changes in the Labour Law failed to address key issues that contribute to the violation of domestic workers' labour rights.

The treatment of domestic workers constitutes a violation of Article 5(i) of the CERD, which requires State Parties to ensure rights to work, free choice of employment, just and favorable conditions of work, equal pay for equal work, and to just remuneration. The Bahraini government falls far short of the basic level of workplace protection, with abusive conditions still vastly prevalent in the country.

5. Discrimination During the Citizenship Process

In an effort to transform the Baharna and Ajam majority into a subjugated minority, the government has recruited mass numbers of foreign Sunni immigrants to work in the country, to whom they grant immediate citizenship.³⁷ It is estimated that between 2002 and 2016, between 95,000 and 120,000 foreigners were naturalized.³⁸ Given Bahrain's current population of 1.5 million (of which approximately 750 thousand are Bahraini citizens), this policy is rapidly altering the demographic landscape of the country.³⁹ According to the Bahraini Citizenship Act of 1963, the government should grant citizenship only to residents who have lived in the country for 15 consecutive years if they are Arab nationals, or 25 consecutive years if they are not.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, this process is being calculatingly sped up for non-Baharna.⁴¹ Favored by this process are foreign recruits that serve in the military and police forces.⁴² Notably, these foreign recruits are often made up of cultures amenable to the ruling Al Khalifa family, originating primarily from Sunni Bedouin tribes in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and Jordan, although many also come from Pakistan.⁴³

Meanwhile, Bahrain, in violation of its commitments under the CERD, has engaged in a targeted campaign of denaturalization of Baharna and Ajam citizens. Since 2012, 990 people have lost their nationality.⁴⁴ This practice of targeting the Baharna and Ajam runs counter to Bahrain's commitments under Article 2 of

³⁶ "Migrant Worker Abuse in Bahrain and the Government Reform Agenda" Human Rights Watch, October 2012 access at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/bahrain1012_brochure_LOW_0.pdf

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ "Political Naturalization in Bahrain Costs over 20 Percent of State's Budget." *ALWAGHT*, 9 Feb. 2016, alwaght.com/en/News/42527/Political-Naturalization-in-Bahrain-Costs-over-20-Percent-of-State's-Budget.

³⁹ "The World Factbook: Bahrain." *Central Intelligence Agency*, Central Intelligence Agency, 4 Mar. 2020, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ba.html.

⁴⁰ "Bahrain: Bahraini Citizenship Act - 1963." *GLMM*, 6 Aug. 2014, gulfmigration.org/bahrain-bahraini-citizenship-act-1963-2/.

⁴¹ Baker, Aryn. "What Lies Beneath: Bahrain's 'New Citizens' Fuel Unrest." *Time*, Time, 11 Mar. 2011, world.time.com/2011/03/11/what-lies-beneath-bahrains-new-citizens-fuel-unrest/.

⁴² Sadeghi, Shirin. "Intricacies of Bahrain's Shia-Sunni Divide." *Bahrain | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 2 Sept. 2011, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/08/2011829104128700299.html.

⁴³ al-Shehabi, Omar. "Demography and Bahrain's Unrest." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 16 Mar. 2011, carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/16/demography-and-bahrain-s-unrest/gbpy.

⁴⁴ "Bahraini Court Revokes 138 Individuals of Their Citizenship and Sentences 69 to Life in a Mass Trial." *Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy*, 16 Apr. 2019, birdbh.org/2019/04/bahraini-court-revokes-138-individuals-of-their-citizenship-in-a-mass-trial/.

CERD.⁴⁵ Whilst the citizenship for 551 individuals was reinstated in April 2019, a legal path to restoring nationality does not currently exist and instead depends on the King's discretion.

The denaturalized join a substantial population of indigenous inhabitants of Bahrain who remain stateless. An example of these inhabitants are the Bidoons: a community of individuals who have historically lived in the country, but for various reasons, never acquired Bahraini nationality. Currently, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) estimates there to be between 2,000 and 5,000 Bidoon families living within the Bahrain border.⁴⁶ Even though they are officially eligible for naturalization, the Bahraini government has let them live in a situation of protracted statelessness. As a result, they are deprived of the basic rights of Bahraini citizens, and cannot access many of the services offered by the government.

In its response to its List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR), the Bahraini government maintained that the Bidoons no longer exist.⁴⁷ While Bahrain has taken some steps to grant nationality to many Bidoon, such as naturalizing 7,012 individuals in 2008,⁴⁸ reports by international and civil society actors such as the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion⁴⁹ and the Minority Rights Group,⁵⁰ indicate that a population of 2,000-5,000 remains. Additionally, it must be noted that fewer rights are attached to naturalized citizenship, for example, the lack of access to political rights for the first 10 years following naturalization. Moreover, the children born to Bidoon fathers and Bahraini mothers remain stateless due to discriminatory legal provisions. As Bahraini women are not entitled to pass on their citizenship to their children, citizenship must originate only from the father. The failure to resolve these problems not only leaves thousands of individuals in a precarious legal situation,⁵¹ but also creates a self-perpetuating cycle of statelessness.

It can therefore be said that Bahrain fails to meet international legal standards concerning nationality and stateless individuals. Namely, the failure to grant citizenship to children of non-Bahraini fathers violates Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which each provide the right to acquire nationality.⁵²

⁴⁵ Art 2, UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, 21 December 1965, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 660, p. 195,

⁴⁶ Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, *Stateless in Bahrain*, 2014 access at <http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/Stateless%20in%20Bahrain%20-%20Final.pdf>

⁴⁷ para 92 Combined eighth to fourteenth periodic reports submitted by Bahrain under article 9 of the Convention, due in 2007 - GE. 18-09371 (E) 220719 (*1909371*) date received 3 April 2019

⁴⁸ UNHCR, MENA report on Statelessness, 2010, access at <http://www.unhcr.org/4ce63e079.pdf>

⁴⁹ Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion. *The World's Stateless*. Wolf Legal Publishers (WLP), Oisterwijk, The Netherlands, 2014, <https://files.institutesi.org/worldsstateless.pdf>. Accessed 20 Mar 2020.

⁵⁰ "Bidoon - Minority Rights Group". Minority Rights Group, 2020, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/bidoon/>.

⁵¹ *Stateless in Bahrain*, BCHR, 2014, <http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/Stateless%20in%20Bahrain%20-%20Final.pdf> and Blitz, B. Lynch, M, *Statelessness and the Benefits of Citizenship: A Comparative Study*, 2011, Edward Elgar Publishing

⁵² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) access at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

The preferential treatment of Sunni foreign nationals that receive fast-tracked citizenship, as well as the treatment of the Bidoon communities, constitute violations of Article 5(iii) of the CERD regarding the right to citizenship. The right contained in the CERD requires not only for State Parties to ensure the right to citizenship, but that this right be provided in a non-discriminatory way. By fast-tracking the nationality process to foreign nationals as a means of altering the country's demographic makeup, the government has weaponized the nationality process to discriminate against the Baharna and Ajam. In addition, no new governmental measures have been introduced to ensure the Bidoon have a path to nationality.

6. Conclusion

Overall, the Government of Bahrain continues to purposefully discriminate against migrant and domestic workers through state sanctioned Labour Laws and through its naturalization process. Combined, these actions directly violate Article 1 of CERD. The government has consistently failed to properly implement the provisions of the CERD into domestic Labour Law, and have disregarded their obligations under the Convention to adequately prohibit racial discrimination. Legal recourse avenues concerning employment disputes lack independence and impartiality, and in many areas of employment, racial and ethnic discrimination still runs rampant. The most notorious of these offenders being Bahraini security forces who, through its hiring practices and actions of the police force, have engaged in a campaign of anti-Baharna and anti-Ajam persecution.

Government-condoned discrimination via the *Kafala* system perseveres in the country, forcing migrant workers to continue to work in unsafe and exploitative conditions. The condition of unregistered labour camps remains perilous, with dangerous environments putting migrant workers' sanitary and health conditions at risk. In addition to this are the long arduous hours that migrants are forced to work, which are often severely underpaid. Moreover, Domestic workers continue to be deprived of the protections outlined in Bahrain's Labour Laws, and are frequently forced to work in unfavorable conditions with low wages and long working weeks. Left in their unprotected status, domestic workers often fall victim to sexual abuse and violence. The failure of Bahrain's Labour Laws to address these issues contributes further to the violation of domestic workers' rights.

The Government of Bahrain has shown a persistent pattern of behavior aimed at changing the population composition of the country. Bidoon families eligible for citizenship are discriminated against and continue to be left stateless, whilst foreign citizens are favored and offered a fast track to citizenship.

ADHRB has found that this behaviour results in Bahrain's violation of Articles 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the CERD. Not only has the government failed in its commitment to eliminate and combat racial discrimination in the country, but it is guilty of instigating racially motivated attacks against individuals and groups protected under Article 1 of the CERD. Racially motivated discrimination is systematically perpetuated by the government against the ethno-religious groups of the Baharna and Ajam, alongside rampant societal subjugation of both migrant and domestic workers. There have been no improvements in protecting migrant workers from the exploitative working system and the government has done little to eradicate human trafficking from the country. Moreover, the Bidoon population remains discriminated against and

unrecognized by the Bahraini state, and therefore unable to fully enjoy their rights due to their lack of citizenship.