



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Kuwait - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 4 January 2016

What id documents, including birth certificates, are issued to the Bidoon

In June 2015 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on events of 2014 including noting that:

“The government continued to discriminate against bidoon in some areas. Some bidoon and international NGOs reported that the government did not uniformly implement a 2011 decree approving provision of some government services and subsidies, including education, employment, medical care, and the issuance of civil documents, such as birth, marriage, and death certificates, to bidoon” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Kuwait*).

A document issued in June 2014 by the *UNHCR* states:

“There are concerns about the number of stateless children being deprived access to public services including education, health care, and employment upon reaching the age of majority employment. Additionally, sources have provide information that many people of concern are denied access to public services and are not being issued with legal documents, including those related to vital events such as birth and marriage certificates” (UNHCR (June 2014) *Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: State of Kuwait*, pp.2-3).

In April 2015 *Defenders for Medical Impartiality* states in a document that:

“In Kuwait, individuals must possess certain documentation in order to attain medical services, but the government has made it increasingly difficult for the Bidoon to receive even legitimate birth certificates” (Defenders for Medical Impartiality (29 April 2015) *Statelessness and Health: Kuwait and the Bidoon*).

France 24 in November 2014 states:

“In the 1990s, Kuwaiti authorities launched a campaign encouraging Bidoon to pursue foreign nationality. This would allow them to gain the status of expatriates, and thus benefit from certain rights. At the time, a bona fide passport market developed. Advertisements were posted in shops and even government buildings. Supposedly-legal offices opened across the country offering passports from Djibouti, Eritrea, Liberia, and other countries. The price varied according to country, from 1,000 dinars for a passport from an African country, to 5,000 dinars for a Canadian passport. Those who had purchased these false passports did not realise they were counterfeit until they tried to renew them. Consequently, the Kuwaiti administration refused to provide their children with birth certificates. Today, the administrative body charged with taking care of the Bidoon – the Agency of Illegal Residents – has prohibited the children from enrolling in school [according to a Kuwaiti member of parliament, an additional 3,000 or so students are likely to be affected as well]” (France 24 (20 November 2014) *Stateless children deprived of education in Kuwait*).

A report issued in November 2014 by *Global Voices Online* points out that:

“The Kuwaiti state refuses to issue birth certificates to stateless children, denying their very existence from the moment of their birth” (Global Voices Online (16 November 2014) *Kuwait Sentences 1,000 Bidoon Children to Illiteracy*).

In November 2014 the *Islamic Human Rights Commission* states in a report that

“The Bidun's statelessness has effectively rendered them second-class citizens in the Gulf emirate subject to systematic discrimination. Bidoons are not allowed to access the country's free state healthcare and education systems. Public sector employment is off-limits and many find it impossible to obtain birth, marriage or divorce certificates. Often referred to as 'illegal residents' Bidoon are also prevented from owning property on account of their lack of citizenship” (Islamic Human Rights Commission (10 November 2014) *Press release: Kuwait 'citizenship offer' to stateless Bidoon is contemptible*).

A document published in June 2014 by the *International Coalition for the Rights of the Stateless* notes:

“...until 2011, newborn stateless children were not immediately registered and still do not have the right to obtain a nationality. Kuwait has claimed in UPR in its first session that it issues birth certificates for all children. Group 29 has documented that since 1998 the issuance of birth certificates requires adding an assumed country of origin (Saudi, Iraqi, etc.), which led parents to refuse receiving these certificates. This has resulted in depriving no less than 11,000 stateless children [xiii] from birth certificates. Kuwait started issuing birth certificate in retroactive manner in response to the prime minister's resolution 409/2011 through procedures that include establishment of descent, DNA testing, and resorting to court, and The System's approval, a procedure that takes more than two years” (International Coalition for the Rights of the Stateless (14 June 2014) *UPR Report to the Human Rights of state of Kuwait*).

A compilation of COI material issued in February 2014 by the *United Kingdom Home Office* includes noting:

“Civil ID cards are issued to Kuwaiti citizens and legal foreign residents only. The bidoon, identified as illegal residents, are not entitled to receive them” (United Kingdom Home Office (3 February 2014) *Country information and guidance: Kuwait, February 2014*, p.20).

This report also notes a source which states:

“Some bidoon claimed they had to seek clearance from the Kuwaiti authorities to obtain birth, marriage and death certificates, or forfeit their claim to Kuwaiti nationality...The Kuwaiti government stated that it did not deny such individuals access to civil Documents” (ibid, p.21).

An article published in the *Kuwait Times* in October 2014 states:

“...bedoons are not given birth certificates. They are given a birth slip at the hospital - a paper stating that the mother delivered a healthy child. In normal scenarios, this

slip is submitted together with the marriage certificate and other legal documents in order to obtain a birth certificate for the child. For bedoon parents, who have few or no legal documents, obtaining a birth certificate is impossible" (Kuwait Times (14 October 2014) *600 bedoon children denied admission to local schools – Kids without birth certificates crammed in makeshift classrooms*).

Commenting on the bidoon, a report released in January 2015 by *Human Rights Watch* states:

"The government issues them one-time travel documents at its discretion" (Human Rights Watch (11 January 2015) *Kuwait: UPR Submission 2014*).

References

Defenders for Medical Impartiality (29 April 2015) *Statelessness and Health: Kuwait and the Bidoon*

<http://defendmedicalimpartiality.org/node/36>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

France 24 (20 November 2014) *Stateless children deprived of education in Kuwait*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refdaily?pass=52fc6fbd5&id=546ef52e8>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

Global Voices Online (16 November 2014) *Kuwait Sentences 1,000 Bidoon Children to Illiteracy*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/kuwait-sentences-1000-bidoon-children-illiteracy>

This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

Human Rights Watch (11 January 2015) *Kuwait: UPR Submission 2014*

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/11/kuwait-upr-submission-2014>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

International Coalition for the Rights of the Stateless (14 June 2014) *UPR Report to the Human Rights of state of Kuwait*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/upr-report-human-rights-state-kuwait>

This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

Islamic Human Rights Commission (10 November 2014) *Press release: Kuwait 'citizenship offer' to stateless Bidoon is contemptible*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/press-release-kuwait-citizenship-offer-stateless-bidoon-contemptible>

This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

Kuwait Times (14 October 2014) *600 bedoon children denied admission to local schools – Kids without birth certificates crammed in makeshift classrooms*

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/600-bedoon-children-denied-admission-local-schools-kids-without-birth-certificates-crammed-makeshift-classrooms/>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

United Kingdom Home Office (3 February 2014) *Country information and guidance: Kuwait, February 2014*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/kuwait-country-information-and-guidance>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

UNHCR (June 2014) *Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report - Universal Periodic Review: State of Kuwait*

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/54c236a34.html>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Kuwait*

<http://www.refworld.org/publisher,USDOS,,KWT,559bd55ce,0.html>

Accessed Monday 4 January 2016

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld