

Jinsiyati Campaign Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Interior Ministry processes overdue nationality applications 2

After nine-year legal fight, the victory was short lived! 2

Citizenship rights thwarted as a result of political bickering 2

Director General of General Security flaunts his sexism and racism 3

“As a woman in Lebanon, I am a second-class citizen...” 3

Sodeco Street flaunts a mural in support of women’s right to nationality 3

Nationality March towards the Popular Mock Court 4

Mobilizing Students Around The Nationality and EWR Causes 4

Press Statements and Communiqués—2010 5

ISSUE 3 – 2010

JAN – DEC 2010

Lebanon’s Decree 4186 on Courtesy Residency Goes Into Force!

After three months of its approval, the recent decree number 4186 that gives foreign husbands and children of Lebanese women a courtesy residency became in force in September 2010.

‘My Nationality is a Right for Me and My Family Campaign’ has been monitoring the decree implementation, since its endorsement by the Cabinet on April 21st and release in the official gazette on June 9.

Hence, the campaign issued a press statement on September 3 in which calling all Lebanese women married

non-nationals, to settle their families’ legal status by heading to the Directorate of the General Security.

It is to be noted that Whilst the campaign hailed this decision of decree’s endorsement for being positive, it nevertheless issued a communiqué in May 2010 urging the cabinet to reform the nationality law. It indicated that the proposed decree fails to address women’s citizenship rights and equality in social entitlements.

The campaign also sees that it remains totally insufficient if not inappro-

priate as it fails to address other key problems and challenges facing Lebanese women married to foreigners namely securing work and employment, access to social entitlements as well as political representation.



MPs Take Steps to Amend Nationality Law

Najjar: primary issue on table is rights of Lebanese women married to foreigners

Parliament took the first steps on March 5 to introduce long-awaited amendments to citizenship laws for women married to foreigners, as Justice Minister

Ibrahim Najjar said “it’s no longer possible to avoid this topic.”

Najjar pledged that discussions on the matter would take place “with all frankness, even though arriving at the goal won’t be swift.”

Najjar was speaking at a meeting of Parliament’s

Committee on Modernizing Legislation, and was joined by his colleagues in the Cabinet, Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud and Minister of State Mona Ofeish.

<http://bit.ly/9YJm5q>

March 2010

(Daily Star, Akhbar, Saffir, Nahar, Mustaqbal)

Interior Ministry processes overdue nationality applications



Since August 2009, the Interior Ministry has sorted out some 7,000 nationality applications dating back to 1968, according to a statement it released on February 3, 2010.

The applications concerned more than 24,000 people and the ones that met necessary requirements were referred to the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The Interior Ministry completed 4,241 applications out of a total 7000, while the department of personal Status has been working on the others.

The Interior Minister work

was an implementation of alw number 67/1968 and came in accordance with the obligations mentioned in the current and previous policy statements.

Applications compliant with the conditions were processed, and transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform concerned parties.

February, 2010 (Al-Akhbar, Daily Star, Al-Nahar)

“Our laws are unfair and completely disregard women... however, I lost a battle but not the fight”

Samira Soueidan

After nine-year legal fight, the victory was short lived!

Samira Soueidan thought she had won a major battle when a judge ruled she could pass on her Lebanese citizenship to her children.

Her victory was short-lived, however, as the decision was first appealed by the Committee of Judges in Nov. 2009, then overturned by

the Appeals Court on May 18, 2010 in a move that left human rights activists disappointed.

That day was critical for Samira Soueidan, who came out of the Palace of Justice disappointed, but not surprised. “I lost the battle but not the fight”.

It is to be noted that on April 13, the nationality campaign called on for a sit-in in front of the Palace of Justice - Jdaydet Al-Matn under the slogan: ‘stop your political and sectarian bickering against citizenship rights... to maintain civil peace’.

Citizenship rights thwarted as a result of political bickering

The Nationality Campaign expressed its concern vis-à-vis the report submitted by the Lebanese government to the Human Rights Committee which convened in Geneva on November, 10, 2010. The Nationality Campaign released a detailed press communiqué in which it outlined its reservations, observations and recommendation on the said report notably in relation to the mecha-

nisms of compiling the report, the fact that it was oblivious of the subsequent and critical recommendations put forward by the UPR committee and the expected role of independent civil society organizations in ensuring that human and women’s rights are upheld. The Nationality Campaign raised concerns that 82 recommendations submitted to Lebanon from different countries were either rejected or indefinitely

concerned on pretext that ‘there is no consensus on such issues’. These issues are of fundamental importance as they underline the institutionalization of discrimination against women and impede any substantive progress towards gender equality.

To view the full press statement:

www.lkdg.org/webfm_send/32

Director General of General Security flaunts his sexism and racism



On May 8, General Wafic Jezzini, Director General of General Security

commented on the Ministry of Interior, Ziad Baroud's suggestion to issue Complimentary Residency permits to non-

Lebanese spouses and children of Lebanese women. According to Jezzini, the Minister's suggestion is in blatant infarction of the labor laws. Jezzini also added that non-Lebanese men tend to enter Lebanon illegally and then "marry rich old widows or spinsters" in order to live off them.

Jezzini insisted that "granting complimentary residency permits to the non-Lebanese spouses and children of Leba-

nese women would lead to 'social problems' and would encourage these people to enter Lebanon on the pretext of tourism or work and then stay in Lebanon indefinitely". ADD SOURCE

The Nationality Campaign issued a stern press statement responding to Jezzini urging the latter to not to make blanket racist and sexist statement but rather focus on securing women's citizenship rights through transparent and workable standards and proecures.

To view the full press statement: <http://bit.ly/d1xnTt>

"As a woman in Lebanon, I am a second-class citizen..."

... as I do not enjoy the same rights as men. I cannot be considered the legal guardian of my children, if I marry a foreigner I cannot pass my nationality to my husband and children, and I need permission from my father or husband to do anything. If they do not approve of my choices, they can stop me.

In Lebanon, there is always conflict looming, and most of the time, our sectarian political system is at the core of the tensions. So maybe it is actually the time to bring up all the issues that are usually pushed aside because "it is not the time." At the very least it is time to

consider the option of instituting a civil personal-status law. Such a law would allow citizens to refer to the state as the only authority in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance, currently the domain of confessional courts, which rule in line with religious guidelines. <http://bit.ly/dbpWGT> Now Lebanon

As a woman in Lebanon, I am a second-class citizen...

Sodeco Street flaunts a mural in support of women's right to nationality

Passers by on Sodeco street have seen a mural which depicts the the violation of Lebanese women's rights to pass on their nationality to their non-Lebanese spouses and children. This naïf freeze portrays the injustice inflicted on women in the most direct and visible way.

It is remarkable that the streets of Beirut can carry such demands rather than host bloodsheds or the numerous pictures of local leaders. For once, the people have taken over the walls of their city to tell their stories and share their aspirations in a

country that continues to fail them. Translated from Assafir Newspaper April 2010 <http://bit.ly/ccOKuO>



Nationality March towards the Popular Mock Court



Activists and women who are married to foreigners march during a nationality campaign

Hundreds of people protested against Lebanon's discriminatory nationality law Sunday, June 20, holding a mock court hearing to decry what they called the absurdity of denying women equal citizenship rights.

Around 400 people braved the blistering midday heat to march from the

Interior Ministry in Beirut's Sanayeh neighborhood to the Corniche. Protestors held banners calling for gender equality sang and chanted: "We want nationality rights for all Lebanese women."

At the mock court hearing, an actor posing as a Lebanese politician in an expensive suit puffed on a cigar as he spoke nonchalantly about how the government cared about its citizens. "May they rest in peace," said another actor dressed as a judge, referring to human rights in Lebanon.

"Women are entitled to as many rights as men, just as they are expected to have the same responsibilities" June 20, 2010

<http://bit.ly/92tSoD>



A girl, left, carries a banner in Arabic that reads: "citizenship starts with the mother and continues with her children,"

Mobilizing Students Around The Nationality and EWR Causes



Talk at the USJ—HUVELIN Campus with students to discuss the nationality issue in Lebanon

A panel discussion was held on Friday December 3rd at the Saint Joseph University to address the issue of women's right to nationality and full citizenship. The panel came as part of a full day activities to celebrate the International Volunteer Day. These activities - among which were petition signing, side discussions, film screening - aimed at mobilizing students around the nationality and EWR causes.

Two women concerned - Amale Kharrouby (married to French), and Kalfadan Hachem (married to Palestinian) - participated in the panel to share with students the hardships they face due to their inability to pass on their nationality to their families. "I am a Lebanese citizen, and I can not stand the fact that I gave birth to my child, but I can not give him my nationality!" Amale Kharrouby.

Many students showed support and solidarity by signing the petition, distributing flyers, wearing the pins. "I want to become a member in the campaign, as I fully respect and support this cause" a student told the campaign team.

Other students, however, voiced out political concerns, as to the naturalization of Palestinians, demographic balances, and made arguments as to the importance of



being 'realistic' and 'pragmatic' in approaching such issue in Lebanon. "I respect this cause, but I think that we should be pragmatic in approaching the issue in Lebanon, given the politically charged situation around it. Green Card for example was a good alternative; I wonder why your campaign refused MP Nehmtalla Abi Nasr suggestion about it" Maurice - Student at USJ. On the other hand, the campaign team along with the women concerned argued for full, inclusive and active citizenship for Lebanese women.

Press Statements and Communiqués—2010

Between Women's right to nationality and citizenship rights in Lebanon	http://bit.ly/bxTDat	26-Jan-10
Open Letter to the Minister of Interior about Facilitating the General Security Measures	http://bit.ly/aEZDp0	15-Feb-10
Excuse us Mr. Abi Nasr: the Issue is not Demographic and Sectarian Balance, but Rather Rights and Citizenship!	http://bit.ly/diAWrU	19-Feb-10
His Excellency MP Mr. Abi Nasr: The Solution is in Citizenship, not a colored ID!	http://bit.ly/c56YjJ	24-Feb-10
Open Letter to Women of Lebanon: together we Make a Difference!	http://bit.ly/bT3K5X	8-Mar-10
Stop Sectarian bickering against women's right... to maintain civil rights	http://lkdg.org/ar/node/3456	13-Apr-10
The First Step towards the State of Rights and Equality...	http://bit.ly/92ilws	22-Apr-10
General Security is required to redress Lebanese women, not to interfere in their personal affairs!	http://bit.ly/d1xnTt	18-May-10
Statement by the Nationality Campaign on the Judicial decision in the case of Samira Soueidan:	http://bit.ly/b4BG4m	18-May-10
Equality without Reservation: for full and equal citizenship rights for women	http://lkdg.org/ar/node/3713	13-Jun-10
Gender Justice for the People, by the people	http://lkdg.org/ar/node/3745	20-Jun-10
Lebanon's Decree 4186 on Courtesy Residency Goes Into Force	http://bit.ly/cVc6HF	3-Sep-10
After 17 years on amending its nationality code... Tunisia fully enforces equality by amending the law to be in harmony with spirit of CEDAW convention		15-Sep-10
Communiqué in response to Maitre Nizar Saghie	http://bit.ly/9IQdmg	30-Sep-10
Critical Observations and Recommendations in relation to Women's Rights as Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Inclusive Citizenship		29-Oct-10
The absence of political consensus disrupts the rights of the citizens: Statement on the outcome of the universal periodic review		25-Nov-10
Joint statement from NC and EWR/Lebanon to CSW 55th session in NYC		18-Nov-10