

Dear, Madame Chair!

My name is Alexander Bekmurzin. I am a Russian linguistic minority from south Kyrgyzstan and currently work with the the Osh branch of «International Center Interbilim».

In December 2016 a constitutional reform took place in Kyrgyz Republic. As a result, the constitution has undergone a wide range of changes that have had a drastic impact on the human rights realm. One of the most controversial amendments is Article 50 allowing for deprivation of citizenship.

Several months ago, the Ministry of Justice initiated a draft law introducing new provisions to the National Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Citizenship, under which, individuals, who have been convicted of crimes related to mercenary activities, terrorism and extremism-related crimes and participation in armed conflicts on the territories of other countries, could be deprived of their citizenship.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that on an average, 90 percent of persons convicted of extremism related crimes make up ethnic minorities. I wonder if it is a sheer coincidence or not?!

Madam chair, many of these convicted “terrorist” are migrant workers who found themselves in the wrong places and at the wrong time. Therefore, deprivation of citizenship might entail restrictions on enjoyment of economic and social rights, not only for individuals who are to be deprived of their citizenship, but also for their families – especially women and children. Who will keep and feed them?

I would like to recommend to the – Kyrgyz Republic to take the following actions:

- First, to introduce new amendments to the constitution to repeal the deprivation of citizenship clause which targets largely persons belonging to minorities; and
- Second, to ratify the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

Thank you Madam Chair!