



SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP
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11TH UN FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES, NOV 2018 AGENDA 5

Minority women and children affected by statelessness: advancing gender equality in nationality laws

I would like to make use of my time on this special platform to address the impact of statelessness on persons victims of gender inequality.

We cannot ignore the intersectional aspect of statelessness if we want to genuinely work on concrete ways of improving citizenship laws.

Persons belonging to a gender minority are twice as likely as the rest of the population to be negatively affected by discrimination and exclusion in situations of statelessness.

A stateless single mother faces the threat of refusal, rejection, non-existence under much wider spectrum of inequalities when applying for having her identity recognized than a single childless man.

Are we aware of what women and children have to go through to gain the right of having their existence recognized? It gets worse where some countries are prejudiced against single mothers or see them game for exploitation.

Providing legal documentation is a way of ensuring protection. For a refugee child receiving her first ever identity card – a Proof of Registration card (PoR) – can literally save her life. What about stateless children?

Are we aware of the non-existence limbo in which they fall into when they try to prove to the world they actually exist? States do.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We need to speak more about gender inequality issues in citizenship laws and urge a change in state policies with better understanding of single mothers and humane approach to children.

This feeling of *belonging to somewhere* might not be something we can measure in numbers. And yet, a piece of paper is sometimes the only fragile line between ending and saving a life or between exploited and having dignity. The bigger the inequality the more fragile the life line.

Eugenia Portioli



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