

Report

Press Conference on Citizen Draft Bill, 2016



January- 2017



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Date, Venue & Participants

On January 17th, 2017, Council of Minorities (CoM) organized a Press Conference on “Citizen Draft Bill 2016” at Press Club VIP Launch in Dhaka. The press conference was attended Mrs. Taslima Yesmin assistant professor, department of law university of Dhaka, Supreme Court lawyer Mr. Tajul Islam, Urdu Speaking People Youth Rehabilitation Movement (USPYRM) president Mr. Sadaqat Kahn, Mr. Imaran Khan Secretary of Urdu Speaking Student Movement and Mohammadpur camps representatives also attended the press conference.

Context of the Press Conference

The Citizenship Draft Bill 2016 has been approved by the cabinet on 1st February, 2016. If passed in the parliament, the bill will replace the existing Citizenship Act 1951 and the Bangladesh Citizenship Temporary Provisions Order 1972. In August 2016 CoM has hosted a workshop on the critical reflection on draft citizenship bill and generated some recommendations against the draft bill-2016. The context of the press conference was critical reflection on draft citizenship and recommendations of the bill.

Objective of the Workshop

The purpose of the press conference organised by Council of Minorities was to exposition of critical reflection the draft bill and proposed the recommendations against the draft bill-2016 to inform and raise voice through media before it is placed in the parliament for enactment.

Press Briefing

The press conference started with an introductory speech about the bill and objectives of the press conference by Mr. Tajul Isalm Supreme Court lawyer and then after his speech Khalid

Hussain, Chief Executive of CoM has presented keynote paper on critical reflection the draft bill and proposed the recommendations against the draft bill-2016.

After the keynote media personals raise question and the questions are as below:

- How the Urdu Speaking Community will be effected by this bill
- How many community will be effected after enact this bill
- Did we submit any memorandum about this bill to home ministry and law ministry
- Do we have any propose recommendations
- How can we motivate the law ministry to think about and review the bill again
- What are our next steps in this regards

Chief Executive of CoM Khalid Hussain and Taslima Yesmin assistant professor department of law university of Dhaka has briefly answer their questions and she said the propose bill was not acceptable and properly planed and she explained that the draft included some citizens in second class category and it will also create the risk of statelessness situation within Bangladesh.

Khalid Hussain said to the media that “we welcome a new citizenship law in Bangladesh for the citizens of Bangladesh however the law should include the people as citizens not should be exclude the citizens to become as stateless” and he also said that there is some site of the bill and we want to review of this draft bill before the enact in the parliament and also this bill after the law should shown the respect to the constitution of Bangladesh.

Mr. Sadakat Khan president USPYRM said “ after long time we have recognized as citizens of Bangladesh and now we all Urdu Speaking camp dwellers are voter and we conceder our self as Urdu Speaking Bangladesh and it would be not good to take away our citizenship after enacted this bill” he also said honourable prime minister is very much positive to rehabilitated the camp dwellers in Bangladesh and already prime minister

office issued the letters to the district commissioner office to find the vacant land near by Dhaka city for Mohammadpur and Mirpur camps dwellers.

Follow-up Advocacy

After the press conference we have to do below activities as a part of our advocacy on draft citizenship bill-2016

- Submit memorandum along with a set of recommendations to the home ministry and law ministry
- Distribution of fliers to members of parliaments and civil society
- Compile a media toolkits to distribute the editors of the print media to publish report on draft bill
- Compile a comprehensive brief report and distribute to civil society

Council of Minorities (CoM)

Council of Minorities (CoM) is a human rights organization with a special focus on establishing the rights of minorities and indigenous people. Established in 2012, CoM envisions a peaceful, poverty-free and xenophobia-free world where people, especially minorities and indigenous people, the powerless and marginalized will have equal opportunities to live with dignity and hope. CoM is trying to ensure social, cultural, political, constitutional and economic rights of the minorities and indigenous people through partnership, networking, and advocacy and lobbying with the Government. CoM promotes and fosters mass awareness on minority rights and duties; creates social awareness against social stigma, discrimination and xenophobia through performing arts, drama and documentary films; enhances the capacity of minorities and indigenous people to organize training, seminars and workshops on their rights; and organises summits and fellowship programs for minority people

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