

# Bidoon tribes of Iraq and Kuwait ratify the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations

WHEREAS we, the representatives of the Bidoon tribes of Iraq and Kuwait, declare:

- A. Since time immemorial the lands that are now known as Iraq and Kuwait have been the sacred homelands of the Bidoon tribal nations. Bidoon Indigenous nations of Iraq and Kuwait have their own distinct identities, cultures, languages and traditions.
- B. The Bedoon or Bidoon (Arabic: بدون Bidūn Arabic: بدون جنسية, 'without nationality') today are stateless people in several Middle Eastern countries, but particularly in Kuwait, where there is a large population of stateless people who lack access to many of the country's basic services. In 1995, there were 300,000 stateless Bedoon according to international sources.
- C. Most stateless Bedoon of Kuwait belong to the northern tribes, especially the Al-Muntafiq tribal confederation. A minority of stateless Bedoon in Kuwait belong to the 'Ajam community.
- D. Since 1986, the Kuwaiti government has refused to grant any form of documentation to the Bedoon, including birth certificates, death certificates, identity cards, marriage certificates, and driving licenses. The Bedoon also face many restrictions in employment, travel and education. They are not permitted to educate their children in state schools and universities.
- E. By 1995, the al-Sabah ruling family had deported 150,000 stateless Bedoon to refugee camps in the Kuwaiti desert near the Iraqi border with minimal water, insufficient food and no basic shelter, and that they were threatened with death if they returned to their homes in Kuwait City. As a result, many of the stateless Bedoon fled to Iraq, where they remain stateless people even today.
- F. According to a 1995 Human Rights Watch report, "The Kuwaiti government policy of harassment and intimidation of the Bedoons and of denying them the right to lawful residence, employment, travel and movement, contravene basic principles of human rights. Denial of citizenship to the Bedoons clearly violates international law. Denying Bedoons the right to petition the courts to challenge governmental decisions regarding their claims to citizenship and lawful residence in the country violates the universal right to due process of law and equality before the law."
- G. Immediately after the 1991 Gulf War many stateless Bedoon from Kuwait migrated to Iraq, most with no recognized nationality or official papers. There are currently tens of thousands of Kuwaiti stateless Bedoon living in Iraq.
- H. Bidoon nations of Iraq and Kuwait have the inherent right to determine our own form of autonomous self-government within tribal territories including grazing lands traditionally managed by our tribes, with access to drinking water for Bidoons and their herds.
- I. There is an ongoing need for Bidoon tribes to work collectively to protect and advance their rights across the lands of Iraq and Kuwait.
- J. The International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations recognizes and affirms the inherent rights of self-determination for Bidoon tribes and all Indigenous nations, including the right to enter into nation-to-nation agreements with one another for their mutual interest and benefit; and establish courts, tribunal and other legal mechanisms under the authority of our own governments.
- K. Because Indigenous Bidoon people throughout Iraq and Kuwait are viewed as stateless people by both Iraq and Kuwait, Bidoon leaders on May 21st 2022 made the decision to establish and

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declare autonomous self-government and to ratify the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations in order to support a tribal government to work collectively to protect the rights of Bidoons as Indigenous people.

- L. An interim Executive Council was formed on May 22 2022 to discuss and finalise this document ratifying the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations.
- M. Ratifying the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations will support other efforts to foster collaboration among Bidoons of Iraq and Kuwait, and protect the right of Bidoons to govern ourselves according to Bidoon traditions.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT:

1. Bidoon tribes of Iraq and Kuwait hereby endorse and ratify the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations and all its provisions and conditions.
2. Bidoon tribal governments of Iraq and Kuwait hereby declare their intent to implement the terms of the International Covenant on the Rights of Indigenous Nations, which shall be considered as an integral part of modern Bidoon law and serve as an international treaty supporting our right of autonomous tribal self-government.
3. This resolution shall be the policy of Bidoon tribes until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by Bidoon tribes of Iraq and Kuwait on June 14, 2022 CE.

Abdul Hussein  
Sheikh

