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**21st Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Kuwait
Statement by Austria**

28 January 2015

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Kuwait to the UPR.

Following up on our recommendation made in the first UPR, we have noted that the legal and social situation of those over 100.000 long-time residents of Kuwait who are stateless remains dire. They continue to face serious restrictions and hurdles, ranging from employment to health care and access to education.

Regarding free speech and the media, we are concerned about existing restrictions, reports of increased surveillance of the Internet, as well as the repression against individuals who are voicing criticism against public officials in the exercise of their right to freedom of expression, including on social media. Recent reports about the withdrawal of citizenship for Kuwaitis who are being critical of the government are very troubling.

Austria also remains concerned about the imposition and execution of the death penalty; we would like to ask whether the government is considering to impose a moratorium on the death penalty or to limit the number of offences for which it is imposed as a first step.

Austria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. To urgently take measures to grant legal status/residency to over 100.000 stateless persons ("Bidoun"), to end their discrimination and to ensure their protection under the labor law;
2. To review existing laws including the Law on Press and Publication to ensure freedom of expression in accordance with international standards, and to allow for a plurality of views without repression such as the stripping of citizenship;
3. To eliminate discrimination against women, including in the Nationality Act so as to enable Kuwaiti women to pass on their nationality to their children to the same extent as men, and in the Personal Status Laws; and to intensify measures to enhance the participation of women in public and political life, including in decision-making positions;
4. To adopt legislation for the protection of domestic workers to guarantee their rights in accordance with international standards, and investigate and prosecute abuses and violence against domestic workers;
5. To enhance the cooperation with civil society as well as their role in monitoring the implementation of human rights;
6. To withdraw its reservations to CAT, ICCPR and CEDAW as well as its general reservation to CRC and to ratify the Rome Statute, the Optional Protocol to CAT and CEDAW.

Thank you!