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**For the attention of:**

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**Citizenship to the protesting stateless Kurdish Syrian**

[NAME OF ORGANISATION] wishes to draw your attention to the worrying situation of the stateless Kurdish refugee family and the new hunger strike of four family members since Monday, 14 May 2018. The four hunger strikers have stated that, as of Monday, 21 May 2018, they will extend their protest to a thirst strike as well.

As you are aware, the Hassan-Janbali family are Ajanib (stateless Kurds from Syria), living in Cyprus since 2006. As a result of the Cypriot authorities’ unwillingness to grant them full refugee status, since 2014 the family have mounted a number of protests, staged outside the Ministry of Interior and subsequently outside the Presidential Palace as well. Their first protest from October 2014 to August 2015, along with other Kurdish refugees, ended when one family member was granted Cypriot citizenship and the Minister of Interior proposed that the remaining family members submitted citizenship applications one year from then, when they would meet the residence time requirements for citizenship.

Although these applications were submitted as required, on 27/3/2017, the Ministry of Interior rejected them collectively rather than individually as provided by national and international legal instruments, on totally unjustified and arbitrary grounds. At the same time, however, the Ministry admitted that the family were *“in effect enclaved, without passports and without any perspective for better conditions”*. As conveyed to the family by the UNHCR, the former Minister of Interior admitted to the UNHCR Director that this decision had been incorrect and he had given directions for the review of the applications.

As the present Minister of Interior refused to take on his predecessor’s pledge, on 7 April 2017, the family was inevitably led to as yet another protest, this time outside the Presidential Palace, appealing for the President’s intervention. On 6 June 2017, their protest escalated with a 67-day hunger strike by two family members, which was suspended on 11 August 2017 as a sign of good will in response to promises of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior that their applications would be reviewed.

However, ten months afterwards, these promises are still not realised and the Minister of Interior maintains his intransigence and is in effect punishing the family for exercising their inalienable and legally protected rights to peaceful assembly and protest.

In agreeing with the positions of various agencies and fora, such as the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs, the Commissioner for Children’s Rights, the UNHCR in Cyprus, national NGOs and political parties, we are of the opinion that, in failing to review the citizenship applications of the Hassan-Janbali family and thereby excluding them from accessing and enjoying their fundamental human rights, the Cypriot authorities have also failed to meet their international and European obligations.

In view of the grave risks to the health and lives of the protesting refugees, [NAME OF ORGANISATION] calls on the Minister of Interior/President of the Republic of Cyprus/Cypriot competent authorities to put an end to the lengthy ordeal they have been subjected to and recognise their right to life and human dignity by reviewing their applications for citizenship forthwith.