



# PARALEGAL EXPERIENCES

with Citizenship Rights in Kenya

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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As we reflect on the journey of bringing "Paralegal Stories" to life, we are humbled and deeply grateful for the tireless efforts and unwavering support of all those who have contributed to this endeavor.

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the paralegals of Nubian Rights Forum, Haki Centre, Paranet, and Haki na Sheria, whose dedication, resilience, and passion for justice serve as the driving force behind this project. Your stories illuminate the path toward a more equitable society, and it is an honor to amplify your voices.

We also appreciate Kevin Mwanza, our consultant, for supporting the paralegals in the writing process and steering the compilation of this project.

To the individuals whose narratives grace the pages of this collection, thank you for entrusting us with your experiences. Your courage in sharing your struggles and triumphs inspires us all to strive for a world where every individual is afforded dignity and respect.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the readers who journey alongside us through these pages. Your engagement with these stories serves as a testament to the transformative potential of collective action and solidarity.

Moreover, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those whose support, encouragement, and unwavering belief in the importance of this work have fueled its fruition. Your contributions, whether big or small, have left an indelible mark on this project, and for that, we are profoundly grateful.

Finally, we appreciate the support of KOICA Kenya for this publication and for our partnership to promote equality in access to citizenship rights and identification in Kenya.

In celebrating the paralegals of Kenya and the individuals whose stories illuminate the pages of this collection, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to championing justice and equality for all. Together, we can continue to shape a world where every voice is heard, every life is valued, and every person is able to access citizenship rights with dignity and equality.

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**Laura, Mustafa, Aisha, and Moses – Namati Citizenship Program**

# PREFACE

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In Kenya, many communities experience discrimination based on their geographic location, ethnicity, and religion. As a result, they do not have equal access to basic nationality documentation and basic government services. This is worse when one does not know their rights and entitlements under the laws of the country. While these laws are not perfect, knowledge of the protections they provide is beneficial. Where they may be lacking, awareness of the laws surrounding citizenship can guide Kenyan communities affected by discrimination who advocate to shape them better so that they offer enough protection.

To bridge this gap, Namati has been working closely with community-based organizations in areas that face gross discrimination to recruit and train community-based paralegals. These paralegals have been our foot soldiers who have handled over 30,000 cases from 2013 to-date. From these cases there have been many lessons learnt for the project team and the paralegals themselves. The continuous learning and reflections have also led to tremendous growth of the paralegals. In turn, the paralegals have transferred what they've learnt to the communities they work with who are now advocating for a more just system.

This impactful work led to the idea of this publication. It provides a platform for paralegals to reflect and share their stories of working in this field of legal empowerment. They self-reflect on how far they have come and how much they have grown. It also gives them a platform to reflect on their roles in seeking recognition for their communities and the movement around equality and non-discrimination in regards to Citizenship rights in general.

The stories in this publication are written by the paralegals themselves. They reflect on the laws that they have learnt and their experiences of working with their respective communities.

This publication is also a good indicator of the impact of our continuous paralegal capacity building. Some of these stories have been published on mainstream print media and others on blogs. This is a compilation of those and several more.

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»»» By Abdinasir Mohamud «««

## Helping Sahal: My Role in Resolving Double Registration

My client, Sahal Abdi, was a victim of double registration, an identity conundrum facing over forty thousand people in the Northeastern region of Kenya after they were erroneously registered in the refugee database.

Sahal first approached Haki Na Sheria after he learned that the organization was building a class-action suit for Kenyans who had ended up registered as refugees at the Dadaab Refugees Camp after they went there to seek food aid during a drought season.

These people – also known as double-registered persons – found themselves locked out of the right of being Kenyan citizens and could not access state services.

After my initial review of Sahal's case, I asked him to mobilize other double-registered persons to join our movement that would be used to spearhead an agenda to resolve the exclusion problem that had denied many of them their citizenship right.

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Together with five other paralegals, we collected and collated data that would help us know the actual number of double-registered persons in the database that lived around Garissa County. We managed to tally a total of about 580 people who had fallen victim to double registration.

We also used other platforms such as social media campaigns, community forums, and other gatherings to push for solutions. With our support, the community pushed the government to start vetting the victims in 2019 with a view of issuing victims citizenship documentation.

The government vetting process was slow and Haki Na Sheria decided to move to court to seek redress to unlock the dilemma facing these double-registered persons.

At this point, I helped Sahal set up a WhatsApp forum where he shared the progress of the court case with other double-registered persons and gave us feedback from the victims we represented. We also used the forum to ask victims to join our social media advocacy where we planned some social media activities, including Twitter Chats to help grow the movement and gain more public audience.

Despite being a trained teacher, Sahal could not secure employment from public schools or do lawful business, a challenge many double-registered victims face. They also face numerous challenges including lack of free movement.

Sahal is now the face of Haki Na Sheria's success since he not only got his identity card but is currently employed by the government.

Through the movement, we managed to have 15,000 people deregister and granted ID cards and still in court pushing for the remaining cases to be resolved.

Some of the former double-registered persons who got their identity cards in January 2021 have become community ambassadors and now advocate for the recognition of all double-registered persons as Kenyan citizens.

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\***Abdinasir Mohamud** is a paralegal at Haki Na Sheria based in Garissa



»»» By Ahmed Adan «««

## Access to Justice: Translating Constitution to Somali is Overdue

The Jubilation that marked Kenya’s adoption of a new constitution on August 27, 2010, which sought to fundamentally transform the backward economic, social, political, and cultural advancements of the county, has slowly fizzled out over the last decade due to several missed opportunities.

Twelve years later, the progressive Kenyan constitution is to date yet to be translated into any local language apart from the national language Kiswahili. One of the communities that have consistently felt left out is the Somali. Largely based in the northern part of Kenya, this community has been marginalized for a long time.

Security profiling cases among members of this particular community, arbitrary arrests, and harassment cases are common. The notion of “belonging” among Kenyan Somalis has been put into question time and again, not only due to the post-independence secession movement in the mainly Somali areas in the northeast but also because of the perception of Somalis as pastoralists or immigrants.

It is no surprise to many that the Kenyan constitution has not been translated into the Somali language.

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As a paralegal working in Wajir, the question I consistently get from the locals every time I quote the Constitution is "Why don't you provide a copy of the Constitution so that we are also aware of our rights?", "Is it a lack of resources? Or just a deliberate attempt by the government to keep people in the dark about their entitlements and what they should expect from their government?"

One key right is public participation in policy formulation and even in budgeting at both the national and county levels. The importance of public participation is captured in Article 118 of the same Constitution which mandates Parliament to facilitate public participation.

These fundamental constitutional establishments demonstrate a commitment of the government of Kenya to provide civic education to the populace as a means of creating a civically active citizenry fully aware of their entitlements and with the ability to demand these entitlements.

Civic education is a national government duty to make sure that people understand the Constitution and since the Constitution recognizes our ethnic diversities the government should strive to translate the Constitution into local languages especially pastoral languages like Somali.

Most of these provisions, however, appear to largely remain on paper because of a poor implementation culture ably demonstrated by the perennial lack of allocation of money to support the translations of the constitution and sensitizations and even support to statutory bodies meant to champion this process.

For a community like the Somali who have been marginalized for the longest time, the fact that the Constitution of Kenya is not available in their local language is just another factor that strengthens their belief that they will always be left out.

While Kenya has one of the highest literacy levels in Africa, many people among marginalized communities are still illiterate, with difficulties expressing themselves in English or Kiswahili, translating the constitution into the local languages would help them comprehend key provisions of the law. My community, due to the nomadic nature of our lifestyle, is one of those that have lagged behind in literacy.

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\***Ahmed Adan** is a paralegal at Paranet based in Wajir County.



»»» By Annette Opiyo «««

## An Outsider's Look at the Nubian Citizenship Struggle

I have been a paralegal at the Nubian Right Forum (NRF) for the past three years. The experience has been a roller coaster that has positively impacted my view on human rights issues facing my now-adopted community. I never knew that lacking citizenship documentation would be a problem that would give community members sleepless nights.

At NRF, I have had the privilege to help the Nubian community in its fight against discrimination when it comes to matters of citizenship and documentation. As fulfilling as this role is, I have had my fair share of challenges because, being an outsider, I am not considered part of this community.

Winning the community's trust, getting accustomed to the Nubian ways, and embracing the community's problems required me to take the initiative to understand how exactly I could help, even though I came from a different community that faces no documentation issues.

Paralegal work is a calling that needs one to have a big heart and passion to serve the community.

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Initially, entering the community and ensuring I gained their trust was a challenge because most of them had never worked with paralegals from other communities. After growing through training and frequent interactions with community members, I got to be accepted as part of the community and I can now freely and independently walk with them through the process without the help of another paralegal.

By understanding the community's problems and challenges, I became more passionate and interested in paralegal work. I have enjoyed every bit of being a paralegal and offering services to the Nubian community as one of them.

I look forward to working alongside the community until they achieve their goal of getting full recognition and ending their discrimination.

The 6th Schedule of the Kenyan Constitution provides clear provisions on who qualifies as a Kenyan citizen and the Nubian community and its members, as per this schedule, are lawful and rightful Kenyan citizens.

However, the Nubian community has for a very long time battled discrimination in accessing citizenship rights. Despite living in Kenya for decades pre-independence, they have struggled to access citizenship documentation to which they are entitled.

Successive governments have failed to address the community's issues and they have subjected them to unfair treatment in accessing identity documentation through the different regimes.

I am privileged to be part of the day-to-day journey of the Nubian children who are in the process of accessing identity documents from birth certificates to identity cards to passports.

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\*Annette Opiyo is a paralegal at Nubian Rights Forum.



»»» By Barke Khamis Mohamed «««

## How the Pemba Lost their Kenyan Citizenship

### PART 1

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Pemba People are a section of the Bantu community found in the coastal region of Kenya, Pemba Island in Tanzania, and Northern Mozambique.

Pembas in Kenya have been living in the Country for Centuries and are mainly found along the Coastal line of Kenya in Kwale, Kilifi, and some parts of Mombasa and Lamu Counties. They have peacefully co-existed with other tribes, including the Swahilis, Arabs, Asians, and Mijikenda along the Kenyan Coast. Assimilation with the Swahili for a long time has made Kiswahili their common language, although they have their own dialect.

During the Sultanate period in Zanzibar which lasted for 124 years (1840-1964), the Pemba people along the East African coastline were actively moving in search of better livelihood opportunities and they therefore took advantage of the free movement that existed between the Island of Zanzibar, Pemba and the 10-mile coastal strip which by then was governed by the Sultan of Zanzibar.

Before Kenya got its independence (October 1963), an agreement was made between the nation's first president Jomo Kenyatta, the prime minister of Zanzibar, and the Sultan whereby the Sultan of Zanzibar officially signed away a section which was the 10-mile coastal strip (an area stretching from Vanga near Kenya –Tanzania border to Kipini in Lamu) to Kenyatta. As a result, the Pemba people who had spread along the 10-mile coastal strip remained in the country.

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While they have historical ties with Pemba Island in Tanzania, Pemba people have existed and lived in Kenya even before independence. Their forefathers held both colonial and independent-Kenya Identity cards known as the Kipande.

However, upon Kenya attaining its independence in December 1963, not considering the long presence and existence of the Pemba people in the country and that they had lost their ties and blood relations with other Pemas in Pemba Island and Zanzibar, the government failed to recognize the Pemba as Kenyan citizen and perceived them to be Tanzanian.

Failure by the government to recognize the Pemba people of Kenya as citizens caused great anguish and inconvenience since Pemas were unable to register their children at birth, and because of this discrimination, they missed out on education, health, and other social services. They were excluded from employment, unable to register businesses or even open a bank account.

Pemba could not even own property unless through proxies, which was very risky. A number of Pemba people who tried this lost their money and property in the hands of proxies.

The mainstay of the Pemba people was fishing, but lack of documentation made this even harder because when found fishing in the Indian Ocean they were harassed, arrested, and sometimes detained and their fishing gear confiscated. They have been fishing in the Indian Ocean like thieves keen not to be found by authorities despite trying to make an honest living.

Their freedom of movement was restricted because they were likely to be arrested by law enforcement officers for failing to produce an identity card. Sometimes they were threatened with deportation on account of being illegally in the country. These challenges pushed Pemas to congregate and make a plan to advocate for our citizenship rights. This was the birth of the movement led by the community towards their recognition as an ethnic tribe and as bonified Kenyans.

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\***Barke Mohamed** is a former stateless person from the Pemba community based in Kilifi and a Paralegal at the Haki Center.



»» By Barke Khamis Mohamed ««

## A Community Approach to Pemba Citizenship Recognition

### PART 2

As indicated in Part 1 of this two-part story series, after years of struggling for decades to be recognized as Kenyan citizens, the Pemba community organized to fight for their rights to citizenship in Kenya. Barke Mohamed, a Pemba living in Kenya, details her community's efforts that helped them achieve recognition.

After years of facing several challenges related to lack of nationality documentation, the leadership of the Pemba community formed an association of Pemba people from across Kilifi and Kwale counties. The group was named the Pemba community of Kenya which attracted a membership of about 7000 people.

I, as the youngest member of the leadership, was chosen as the community secretary. Given my training and experience as a Paralegal at Haki Centre, I was tasked with organizing meetings within communities to educate Pemas on the importance of legal documentation – including birth certificates, national identity cards, and passports.

The constitution of Kenya, 6th Schedule, states that “every person who is a citizen immediately before the effective date (December 1963) retains the same citizenship status as of that date”, and that “citizenship is acquired by birth.” But despite this provision, several communities, including the Pemba who have been in the country way before independence, have remained undocumented for reasons that can only be termed as unconstitutional.

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A good number of people from the Pemba community had gone ahead to acquire Fake IDs so as to be able to access government services. Fake IDs are simply documents that do not bear the correct details of an individual but rather are acquired to help an individual navigate their day-to-day activities in light of the fact that they are stateless. In other words, a copying id is a fake id bearing false information.

Having empowered myself on the constitutional right of citizenship, I worked to educate the community on the importance of getting their own IDs that bear the correct details of our parents and highlighted the risks we had put ourselves into in the hands of proxies.

I also represented the community in several meetings that were facilitated by Civil Society Organizations and NGOs advocating to reduce the level of statelessness. Through these meetings and associations, the community was able to engage with the local government, including Chiefs, District Officers, Deputy County Commissioners, and County Commissioners.

After discussions with these various local government officers, I collected names of community members from different villages in the form of family groups (local register) which we submitted to the local governments in the regions where they resided. These registers were used by the authorities to identify who is a Pemba in their community.

In late 2018 when the government established the National Integrated Identity Management System (NIIMS) popularly known as Huduma Number, through Haki Centre, we took our message to the media via radio talks addressing the problems of discrimination in accessing nationality documentation and how the implementation of Huduma Namba would further marginalize the already discriminated Pemba Community and other minority groups in Kenya.

With the support from Haki Centre and Kenya Human Rights Commission, we engaged with Members of Parliament in Kilifi and Kwale Counties where a majority of the Pemba reside. We drafted a petition that was presented to the Kilifi County Assembly and culminated in a two-day consultative meeting with the Kilifi County Assembly Committee of Justice and legal affairs.

During the consultative meeting with Kilifi County Assembly Committee (July 2020), I presented to the house on challenges faced by the Pemba people due to lack of documentation, For instance, Pemba children cannot access education due to lack of birth certificates – a mandatory document for school enrolment and registration for national examinations. As a result, many in the community were economically disempowered due to a lack of access to formal employment.

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Two weeks after the consultative meeting, the Committee of Justice and Legal Affairs from the Kilifi County Assembly conducted a verification exercise for the submissions we made. At this stage, I acted as an intermediary between the committee, the area chiefs, and the Pemba community. The visit involved a brief meeting at the chief's office, after which I took committee members to a number of community members' homes to cement their understanding of the extent of the dire situation.

Meanwhile, we were also profiling the history of Pemba in Kenya. I took part in sourcing information from Pemba elders and local libraries to collect information regarding our origin, way of life, traditions, and culture to be used as evidence in the petition.

The petition was later taken to the National Assembly to the Parliamentary Committee where it was tabled in August 2021 and adopted two months later.

Despite the petition being adopted by the National Assembly, the government dragged its feet in recognizing the Pemba as citizens, and as a result of that, we continued advocating for our rights to acquire citizenship. We held a series of meetings between the local government and the Members of Parliament, including Hon. Owen Baya and Hon. Khatib Mwashetani, where we discussed the way forward after our petition was adopted.

We also held community forums within villages to empower people with information on the process of acquiring citizenship and informed them about the delay in the government recognizing the community. We could feel that disappointment was setting in among the Pemba who had high hopes after the petition was adopted by parliament.

The hope of the Pemba people living in Kenya was finally lifted about a year later when the announcement was made that the community had been recognized as one of the ethnic tribes and community members to be granted citizenship. This was later published in the Kenya Gazette notice (Jan. 30, 2023).

From a meeting with Hon. Baya, we decided to build a listing of all Pemba Children who had attained the majority age of 18 years old and wished to further their studies. This list would be used to fast-track and facilitate their national identity card registration.

Presently, the Pemba registration exercise is ongoing in the three coastal counties following the proclamation of the president and the gazette notice dated 30th January 2023. The exercise is approaching its tail end and so far about 6900 people have registered in Kilifi, Kwale, and Mombasa.



## My Experience Using Radio as a Community Outreach Tool

»» By Abdul Hakim Sudi ««

After finishing my studies, I always wanted to work with the community and closely followed the work of the Nubian Rights Forum in Kibra. In 2021 I submitted my application to join NFR as a paralegal and a few weeks later I received a confirmation email offering me an opportunity to work as a paralegal at the organization. This was a dream come true!

As a Nubian, this was a great opportunity to serve my community in a course I believe would make a positive difference in their lives. I have always admired paralegals in how they work to support the community in the process of applying for documentation. I felt that as a paralegal focusing on citizenship rights, I would do various activities such as conducting a community forum, door-to-door outreach, and individual support for fellow community members to navigate the system and not lose hope even when they are discriminated against.

After the paralegal training and a few months of fieldwork, my focus quickly turned more to hosting weekly radio shows at a community radio station – Pamoja FM. I was given the responsibility to host the radio shows on behalf of NRF as a tool to educate the community and the larger Kibra community on their citizenship rights and entitlements.

The crime rate in Kibra has always been high due to the high poverty rate, especially among youth who lack identification cards. Due to a lack of IDs, many young community members lack jobs and easily fall prey to peer pressure to use drugs and join criminal gangs.

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This inspired me to take up the challenge of reaching out to these youths using radio to empower them on their rights and also campaign against drug abuse and crime even when they face hurdles.

My journey as a radio host has not been easy, but over the years as at the beginning I was very shy and had self-doubts but with continuous appearances on shows, my confidence and courage have improved.

On my first radio show, I was invited by one of our paralegals for a one-hour evening discussion on gender equality and how access to citizenship helps in fighting the scourge of violence against women in marriages. I was nervous but I had to go since it was another form of passing a message to my community.

I did my research well so that I was ready with facts and possible answers in case a question was directed at me. I knew being an evening show most of the people would be home from work and would tune in to the show.

The whole discussion went well and I was excited about it. Being my first radio show and having such a platform was a step forward in my career as a paralegal.

I was, however, a bit disappointed that we did not receive any phone calls or messages from listeners. I did not know whether we delivered the message wrongly or maybe the community members were not tuned in at that time. My only consolation was that my objective of using radio as a platform of communication with the community had been achieved.

The second radio show was hosted at the same radio station during the morning hours and on a weekday. The topic of discussion was the importance of citizenship documentation. This was another opportunity for me to convey the message to the listeners on behalf of the organization and in a much better way as compared to the previous one. The show was a success; we received five phone calls and two messages from listeners tuning in from different parts of Kibra.

One of the callers was a listener appreciating the efforts of the paralegals in educating and empowering the community members on their citizenship rights and entitlements. That comment boosted my morale and I was ready to take on even more radio shows.

As time went by I realized that though I did not receive many phone calls, the listeners were still tuned in and could get the message I was passing. During field activities, community members would come to me with questions about shows that had taken place weeks and months before.

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\*[Abdul Hakim Sudi](#) is a paralegal at Nubian Rights Forum.



>>> By Makka Yusuf <<<

## The problem with Kenya's digital id system - Huduma Namba and a Citizens Petition against it

Ahmed Khalil Kafe commonly known locally as Nguluks is a Kenyan born on the 18th of March 1946. He hails from the Nubian community; one of the minority and marginalized communities in Kenya since 1902, Ahmed has been living in Kibra (meaning forest) ever since he was born to date. He studied at Kibera primary school famously known as old Kibera which was gifted specifically to the Nubian soldiers in Kenya by the British for their children's education. When he reached the age of 18 he applied for an Identity card and was issued with the first generation ID famously referred to as Kipande back then.

In 1965 Nguluks joined the Kenya police and served until 1972, but in 2000 unfortunately, he lost his Kipande and that's when his miseries officially started because every time he tried to replace it at the registrations office, he was told that he couldn't do so because he lacked supporting documents. He struggled to register for the document for over 20 years with no success. Nguluks was unable to register for a number of things including National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) which he badly needs due to his health complications. A sim card and even the monthly upkeep stipend given to the elderly by the government. The very same government he served and protected left him at his point of need.

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In January 2019 when the Kenyan government introduced Huduma Namba and every citizen was ordered to get registered or risk being locked out of accessing government services, it was a big blow to Nguluks because he lacked the one very important document which was required to register into Huduma Namba an ID card. For one to register into the Huduma Namba system, they were required to have a national identity card for people who are 18 years and above, and birth certificate for the ones who are below 18 years. Even though he didn't have an ID card Nguluks still decided to go to the registration centers and find out how he could be registered, there he was told that without an ID card he couldn't.

As a paralegal and also a Nubian working and living in Kibra, this is just one among the many challenges that the Nubian community face. I've been able to witness discrimination by the government towards Nubians first hand every day as far as application for citizenship documentation is concerned. Nubians face a lot of challenges when applying for an ID card which is crucial and very important document and mind you, they "ONLY" have 2 days in a week to make the application, the days being Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 am to 12 pm compared to other Kenyans who can apply for an ID everyday from Monday through to Friday from 8am to 4pm every week. As if that is not enough, they're asked to produce a lot of supporting documents to submit with their application, such as both of our grandparent's ID cards or Death certificates.

The community is also subjected to countless number of vettings through their application processes, the first vetting is done by the Nubian elders on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the second one is the national vetting which is done once every month. If the national registration vetting committee is not satisfied with information and documents submitted by a Nubian applicant, and if they happen to be above the age of 23 years, they're then sent for the DSIC vetting (District Security Investigations Committee) which does not have any specific day or date set for this vetting. To add salt to the injury, vetting is not an agenda in the DSIC meeting but just an AOB, an applicant can wait up to one year before they are called for this vetting. If a Nubian applicant is lucky, they can get their ID cards after 6 months to one year of application.

It is because of all these discrimination aspects that the Nubian Rights Forum (NRF) through its paralegals started grassroots leadership development through advocacy. This was to empower the community members living in Kibra not only Nubians, but other ethnic communities through community forums to sensitize them on the upcoming Huduma namba and the risks that it poses to Kenyans and minority communities such as the Nubians.

This was also because the government didn't bother to carry out any public participation so as to get views from its citizens ignoring the fact that this new digital ID will have a direct impact in their lives especially the minority and marginalized communities like mine (Nubians), the Kenyan Somalis, the Galjil, the Arab Swahilis etc who stand the risk of becoming stateless due to exclusion. Another issue that was of concern was how people's data was going to be protected since the government wasn't very clear about it. The advocacy, sensitization and empowerment of the community members was done in all the villages within Kibra thus also mobilizing them to take up the matter of concern and be in a position to question the government and hold them accountable since they'll be the one's most affected by this new bill.

When Huduma Namba was petitioned in court by NRF in 2019, we were able to mobilize community members, Nguluks being among them, who were now empowered and aware of the discrimination and dangers of Huduma Namba, were very active and always present whenever the case was being mentioned or heard. I remember one time during the court case hearing, our matter was to be heard in the afternoon but because the court room was filled to the maximum by members of the community, the magistrates decided to start by handling the Huduma Namba case first. I think it was because they felt that the pressure was too much for them. "Lol"!

Nguluks, who was one of our witnesses in the Huduma Namba case, was later called by the registrar (government) to go and apply for his ID card only after testifying against the government. But even after being issued with the waiting card, he still had to wait for 2 years before he was issued with the document. What if he hadn't testified in court?

Digital ID is not a bad thing since the whole world is moving digitally, and Kenya doesn't want to be left behind. The government shouldn't move hurriedly without first addressing the challenges and discrimination that have been in existence for a very long time, and the risk of exclusion faced by the minority and marginalized communities in the country. Secondly, the government should put proper infrastructures in place like roads, hospitals, registration offices, electricity and internet so that even people from rural areas can be able to easily access these services. This way when the country moves digitally in matters of ID card, no one will be left behind struggling to get essential government services due to lack of documentation.

Nguluk's case is just one among the many other cases of the Nubians' struggles in getting citizenship documents. It is also clear that when people are brought together to fight for a cause, chances of success are very high compared to fighting individually.

The spirit of Ubuntu! Should always be upheld "I am because we are"

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\*[Makka Yusuf](#) is a paralegal at at Nubian Rights Forum.



»» By Mariam Hussein ««

## Nubian Rights Forum: Building Solutions for Citizenship Documentation Issuance

Nubians have been in Kenya as early as 1900. They were settled in different strategic towns by the British imperialists during the colonial era, as they served under the King's African Rifles. Nubians were settled in Kibera, located in Nairobi, Kenya. Today, Nubians still face challenges that have been largely ignored by subsequent governments since independence.

They have been subjected to being a lesser community in Kenya and have therefore faced a discriminatory process in the system of issuing identification documents, such as identity cards, birth certificates, and passports. This has left many Nubians excluded from scholarships and jobs, leaving the majority of them below the poverty line.

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The Nubian Rights Forum is a community-based organization located in the heart of Kibra in Nairobi. It was founded in 1993 and registered in 2003, with a focus on land rights and the citizenship rights of Nubians and other minority groups in Kenya's largest informal settlement.

The Paralegal program started in 2013 with the intention of assisting the community in acquiring citizenship documents. This is because there have been too many hurdles in the process that require a basic understanding of citizenship documents as a constitutional right.

Some of the challenges include differences in application processes and documents that are not specified in the Registration of Persons Act. Additionally, there is the vetting of Nubians at the discretion of the registrar, among several others.

Below are the measures we have used to find solutions for individuals facing these challenges:

### **1. Negotiating with the Nubian Vetting Elders:**

These are elderly Nubian men who possess vast information about Nubians all over Kenya. They are responsible for identifying applicants and swearing an affidavit for the applicant to initiate the process of obtaining an identity card. For example, when an application lacks an important document for the process, such as a birth certificate, we advise them to use an antenatal card or a school leaving certificate as alternative documents to establish the date of birth.

### **2. Compiling Collective Cases:**

Similar problems that applicants encounter during the application process, such as a significant number of applicants who have not undergone national vetting for an extended period of time, indicate a lack of fair administrative actions that require formal communication to address discrimination. We then formulate a collective case.

### **3. Follow-up with the National Registrations Bureau (NRB):**

After compiling common cases, we decide to approach NRB officials. These officials are usually part of the second security vetting panel and are well-positioned to provide possible solutions for applicant cases or schedule security vetting for applicants who are 24 years old in the ID application process.

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#### 4. Writing Petitions and Taking Legal Actions:

The Nubian Rights Forum has successfully presented evidence of the discriminatory system to parliament and the courts to advocate for measures that facilitate the citizenship application process. We have managed to bring together these applicants with common issues, gather application evidence, and subsequently submit these to lawmakers and judges. However, despite all efforts, the struggle for these fundamental rights persists.

#### 5. Mobile Registration:

We have conducted mobile ID and birth certificate registration, bringing registration services to people in various villages in Kibra. These efforts target youths who are hesitant to visit NRB offices due to the presence of police officers.

#### 6. Joining Forces with Minority Groups:

By collaborating with minority groups that share similar issues, we have been able to amplify the problem of discrimination, which affects not only Nubians but also various minority and marginalized communities across Kenya.

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\***Mariam Hussein** is a paralegal at Nubian Rights Forum.



»»» By Mariam Hussein «««

## Habiba's Story: A Two-Decade Struggle for Recognition

Habiba Abdi, a 38-year-old mother of four, finally received her identity card in February after two decades of struggling with the application process. She belongs to the minority Borana tribe, which faces challenges in obtaining citizenship documents in Kenya.

Born, raised, and schooled in Kibera, Nairobi County, Habiba underwent an unconstitutional vetting process before being issued an identity card, despite her lifelong connection to the area. According to Chapter 3 of the Kenyan constitution, every citizen is entitled to the rights, privileges, and benefits of a Kenyan passport and any registration or identification documents issued by the state.

For the past twenty years, she had been striving to acquire an identity card, but without success. The absence of an identity card deprived her of numerous opportunities. Her four children were unable to apply for birth certificates, which are mandatory for school enrollment in Kenya. During the Covid-19 pandemic, she couldn't access government-provided financial aid for the impoverished. Additionally, she was unable to open a mobile banking account, or a commercial bank account, or even engage in basic transactions through Mpesa. Seeking employment or accessing government offices for public services was also out of reach.

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Habiba's plight underscores the discrimination experienced by millions of minority and marginalized individuals when trying to obtain registration documents. In Kenya, minority Muslim communities often endure exhaustive vetting processes.

Most of her non-Muslim peers of the same age have made significant strides in life due to their ability to obtain identification cards at an earlier stage compared to Habiba.

In Kenya, an identity card holds immense significance; without it, one is practically invisible. Her entire life, she remained confined to Kibra, fearing arrest. She had never even visited Nairobi City.

Her quest to obtain an identity card began in 2003 when she reached the legal age of 18 in Kenya. Starting the application process, she initially anticipated a straightforward procedure, only to be confronted with a nightmarish experience. Raised by a guardian after losing her parents, she possessed a clinic card, a school leaving certificate, and her guardian's identity card. The same guardian also raised her brother, who managed to secure an identity card in a timely manner. However, for Habiba, it was anything but easy due to uncooperative officials at the registration offices, making the process arduous.

After receiving a waiting card, an extended period of waiting commenced. Despite the passage of time, each visit to check on her application resulted in disappointment. This cycle persisted for two decades. Eventually, exhausted and frustrated, she decided to move forward in life without an identity card.

Twenty years later, in June 2014, she initiated the application process anew. Gathering her documents, she returned to the registration office, filled out the necessary forms, passed the elders' review, and underwent vetting. This process was repeated once more, but national vetting was not scheduled again.

Driven by frustration, she contacted the registrar's office to ascertain the issue. She was summoned to a district security investigating committee vetting due to her age exceeding 24 years. A year later, she attended the security vetting, where she recounted her challenging application journey. To her astonishment, she was informed that she was not considered a Kenyan due to her physical appearance and was told to return to Ethiopia.

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I encountered Habiba at the National Registration Bureau (NRB), the agency responsible for identity card applications and issuance in Kenya while following up on another client's case. She had come to check her status on the vetting list and had three waiting cards that were now rendered useless. She discovered that she had not been scheduled for the monthly national vetting yet again.

I invited her to the Nubian Rights Forum office located in Makina, Kibra. There, I explained the process, and the required documents, and advised her to bring all supporting materials, which I then assisted her in applying for.

In 2017, she served as a witness in the Huduma Namba Nubian rights petition against the government, providing clear evidence of discrimination in obtaining citizenship documents. Habiba's testimony emphasized that if digitalization proceeded, a majority of Kenyans would be excluded.

We recommenced the application process in 2020. This time, I accompanied her to the elders' vetting, and subsequently, she received a date for submitting her application to be scheduled for national vetting. After a few months of waiting, she was invited for vetting in September 2022. She underwent the vetting process and received another waiting card. To her surprise, on February 14, 2023, her identity card was finally issued.

She has now embarked on the journey of applying for birth certificates for her four children and is actively seeking employment.

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\***Mariam Hussein** is a paralegal at Nubian Rights Forum.



>>> By Mellan Kwekwe <<<

## Challenges of a Community Ambassador and How to Surmount Them

Community ambassadors are individuals who voluntarily work with paralegals to mobilize community members toward a specific cause and help create a safe space to empower and grow the members of their community, enabling them to advocate for their rights. These individuals are essential partners for citizenship paralegals as they enhance the reach and impact of their work within the community.

Often, ambassadors maintain close contact with their respective communities. They possess the knowledge and empowerment to understand administrative processes, such as acquiring identification, and have an above-average understanding of the challenges community members face when applying for essential documents and addressing citizenship-related matters overall.

They shoulder the responsibility of building positive relationships with community members, providing support to paralegals in organizing events like community outreaches and offering relevant information related to the paralegal's work. Community ambassadors exhibit outgoing personalities, strong communication skills, a willingness to aid fellow community members in problem-solving, and effective leadership abilities.

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Ambassadors strive to identify and alleviate the challenges their communities encounter. However, it's imperative to acknowledge the personal challenges they encounter in their roles and, more importantly, to tackle each of these challenges with well-thought-out solutions.

### **Lack of Proper Training:**

Alongside their inherent skills, a community ambassador's value lies in their ability to convey accurate information. This ensures that community members can make informed choices and provide accurate information to the paralegal.

An ambassador without proper training might inadvertently mislead community members, exacerbating issues rather than resolving them. Trained ambassadors possess comprehensive information and are better equipped to comprehend the needs of their community. They are also empowered to take on the responsibility of educating the community about citizenship rights and entitlements.

### **Lack of Recognition:**

Engaging with the community demands significant effort and work. Ambassadors might feel disheartened if their efforts go unrecognized in any way. Acknowledging their expertise and contributions enhances their motivation and dedication to serving their respective communities.

### **Geographical Distance:**

Due to the expansiveness of their operational area, paralegals select individuals who can leverage their personal experiences and knowledge to raise awareness and drive positive change. However, the geographical remoteness of certain areas might hinder regular communication between the ambassador and paralegal. This challenge can impede the paralegal's ability to conduct one-on-one sessions with the ambassador and share up-to-date information.

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## RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

### Training and Workshops:

The primary objective of training ambassadors is to empower them to play a pivotal role in community outreach and education. This includes imparting knowledge about citizenship, rights, roles, and the registration process for vital documents such as birth certificates and IDs. Furthermore, trained ambassadors can effectively address issues that arise within their societies concerning citizenship matters.

### Supporting Their Work:

Ambassadors serve as the bridge between the community and the paralegal. Providing support enhances their impact within their respective areas. Support can be extended through means such as providing them with airtime for easier communication, supplying necessary stationery, and addressing any emerging needs.

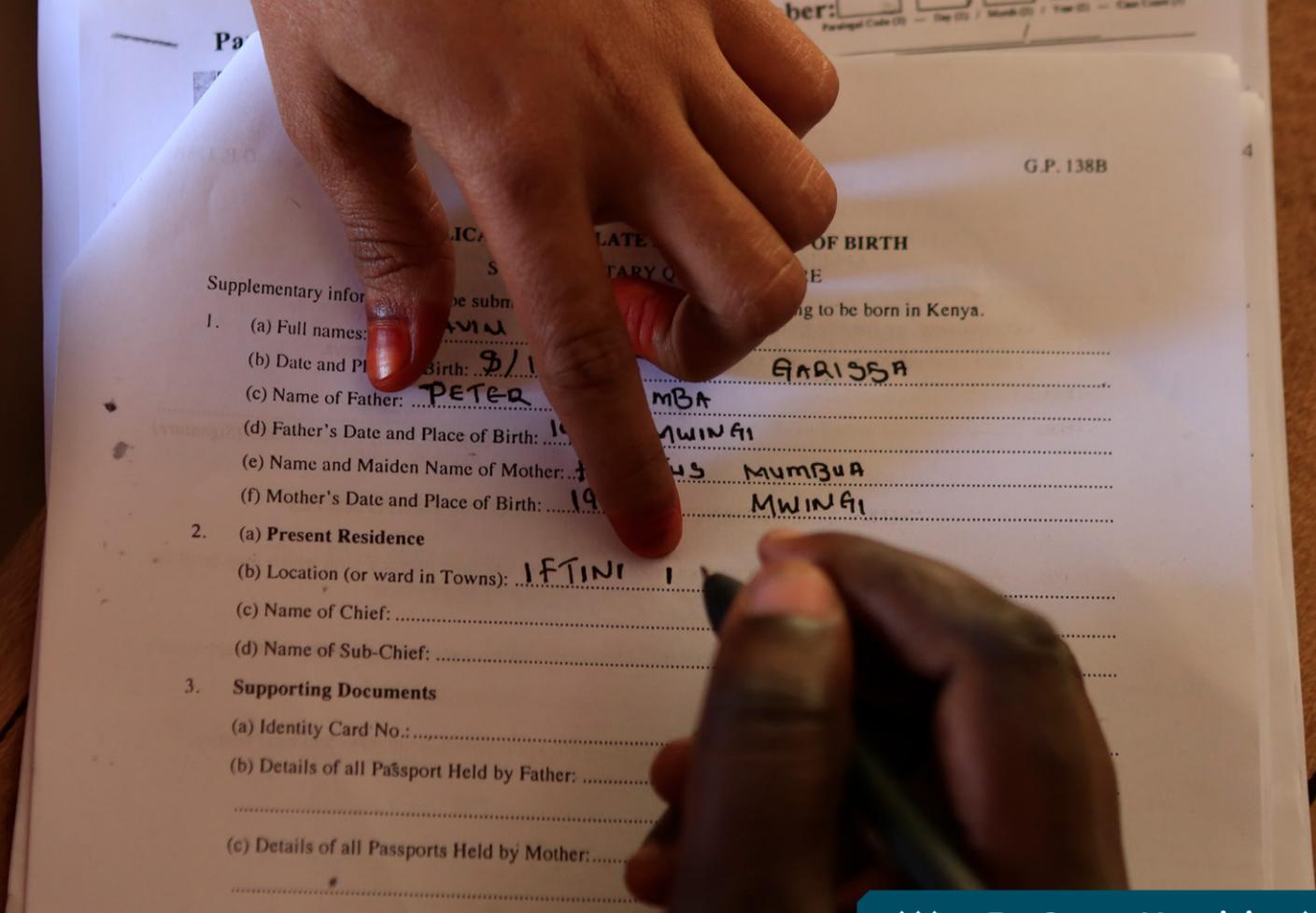
### Inclusion:

Once involved, ambassadors should participate not only in the organization and planning of community meetings and events but also in public speaking engagements and advocacy opportunities. This inclusive approach equips them with the knowledge and confidence to conduct community outreaches and education initiatives. Involvement in activities like radio talk shows, community forums, and door-to-door campaigns allows them to share their stories effectively.

Community ambassadors play a significant role in the paralegal's mission to reach communities, educate and empower them. However, this role is not without challenges. Understanding these challenges facilitates their management and the development of strategies to address them effectively.

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\*Mellan Kwekwe is a paralegal at the Haki na Sheria.



»» By Omar Hamisi ««

## 7 Steps to Applying a Birth Certificate as an Adult: The Hamudani Case

**Hamudani\***, a 32 years old man from Makina area in Kibra, first came to the NRF office seeking for an affidavit in late 2020. He came back later that year in December for assistance to apply for his birth certificate so that he could use it to apply for a passport which is a requirement for a job application in the Middle East.

Here are the steps I followed to assist him in this quest:

**Step 1:** The first thing to do when applying for a birth certificate for an adult (who already has an ID) is to get a biodata printout of the ID application. The biodata printout is usually available at a cost of Ksh.300 at the National Registry Bureau (NRB) at any chief's office county-wide. In Hamudani's case, I directed him to first go and get his print out and then take the print out for verification at the National Registration bureau headquarters based at Nation Social Security Fund (NSSF). The alternative of getting this biodata form via the registration office is usually slower and may take about three working days.

**Step 2:** With the biodata, Hamudani came back to the NRF office with the originals of his parents' IDs and verified copies of the same. With these documents, I helped him to fill the necessary forms for the late birth certificate application.

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**Step 3:** the next step was for him to take the filled birth certificate application and verified copies of his ID and those his parents' to his area chief, in this case in Makina. Hamudani took his application to the chief's office where it was signed.

**Step 4:** He then submitted the application documents to the Civil Registry office at Bishop House in Nairobi – Community area. He was advised to come back after three working days to check on the status of his application. On the third day, when he went back to Bishop House, he was requested to make a payment of Ksh.200 via the e-Citizen portal upon verification of his application documents. Usually, this is easily done at the nearest cybercafé.

**Step 5:** When Hamudani checked on his application for this e-Citizen account, the process was not yet complete. I told him that he needed to go back to Bishop House and let them know that his application was not yet approved. He went back to bishop the next week, and on his inquiry the application was finally approved.

**Step 6:** To his surprise he was asked to go and make an undisclosed payment of an extra Ksh700 – rather than the initial Ksh.200 – to a certain individual at the cyber next door. He came to learn later that the individual he was asked to pay was a broker working with the registration staff. At this point, he called me and I guided him not to pay any amount outside the e-Citizen portal. With his permission, I logged in to his e-Citizen account then sent him the payment code. He did not pay that same day he called me the following day and told me he had made the payment and he only paid 200/-.

**Step 7:** After a week he went back to the Civil Registry got his birth certificate. Later in December 2021, he told me that he wished to apply for a passport but he was still raising funds to do so. The cost of applying a Kenyan passport is usually Ksh.4,550 for the 32-page booklet, a charge that is costly for most people like Hamudani who live on less than a-dollar-a-day.

**Note:**

*Hamudani\* - Name concealed to protect client's identity due to nature of information shared.*

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\*Omar Hamisi is a paralegal at the Nubian Rights Forum.



»»» By Shema Chelangat «««

## Birth Registration: An Essential First Step Toward Eradicating Statelessness

Like many parts of the world, in Kenya, proof of identity is an essential requirement for gaining access to basic services, including enrolling in basic education, healthcare services, or even claiming rights to inheritance or obtaining legal protection in courts of law. Yet in some countries, as low as 21% of children are registered at birth, often due to poor communications infrastructure between rural villages and national birth registration offices.

Birth registration, the official recording of a child's birth by a state agency, is an important event in a child's life. Birth registration affirms the place of a child in a state and under the law and also provides the foundation for ensuring many of the child's rights. Although in Kenya, birth registration is not proof of nationality, the absence of it exposes a child to the risk of statelessness and to a greater risk of a range of human rights violations.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Articles 6 and 7 recognizes registration of birth as an important and fundamental human right. In addition to the CRC, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also establishes that "Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name," and that each child "has the right to acquire a nationality."

There are close to 7 million stateless children in the world according to UNHCR. These children continue to be at risk of exclusion.

While international and national provisions for nationality and interventions to reduce statelessness are essential, and while the international community has become more vocal in calling for remedies to the injustice of statelessness, little attention has been paid to the roles of more local actors and their effects on the conditions that produce or reduce the incidence of child statelessness.

These local duty bearers include mothers, fathers, children, kinship networks, village leaders, midwives, employers, brokers, and traffickers, whose decisive actions in regard to birth registration and documented or undocumented migration may contribute to outcomes for children in regard to nationality or statelessness.

Local remedies such as mobile birth registration have proved to be among the best ways to end statelessness. Birth registration enables stateless people to acquire some kind of official status that later supports their claim to nationality. Where civil registration services are unavailable or out of reach due to high transportation costs, poor road infrastructure, poverty, or low levels of literacy, it is important to bring services to the concerned population.

Haki Centre, through the support of partners like Namati and UNHCR, has conducted several mobile birth registration exercises in areas where stateless communities live, notably Kwale and Kilifi counties. The impacts of this intervention have definitely changed the dynamic for stateless communities like the Pemba community, who are currently being registered as Kenyans after a presidential proclamation by President William Ruto on the 12th of December 2022.

In the recent exercise, about 72 percent of children from the Pemba community have been issued birth certificates. Unlike before, these children are now able to access education, healthcare, among other fundamental rights. In Kichaka Mkwaju, one of the locations where the Pemas live, out of 1980 children whose parents showed up for the registration, 1600 children had birth certificates. This worked well in helping Pemba children and families who were subjected to the vetting process to prove that they were born and have lived in Kenya since birth. For the children, this helped to prove kinship to their parents during the vetting process.

The Pemba Registration exercise has proved that efforts such as Haki Centre's mobile birth exercises could really give stateless people a chance to see their human rights properly protected. After all, birth registration is not only essential to eliminating statelessness in itself; it is a major step on the way to securing universal human rights.

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\*[Shema Chelangat](#) is a Program Officer at the Haki Center.



By Somane Aden



## Getting Citizenship Documentation Right from Birth

In my work as a paralegal at Haki na Sheria, I closely monitor birth registrations in Bullas, Garissa, in an effort to assist the community, especially nursing mothers, to register the births of their newborn babies. After the registration, they would be issued a birth notification that confirms the registration of the child.

In most of the cases I encounter, parents do not know the importance of registering the births of their newborns at the hospital. Others do not know that this is an important document one receives at the hospital after the mother delivers.

Every day, I make sure I know the number of nursing mothers at the hospital and personally visit them to check if they were offered a child notification by the nurse in charge. If they have not received it, I personally take responsibility and make sure the mother has her child's notification.

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My interactions with the nurse in charge are mainly to emphasize the importance of giving birth notifications immediately after children are born. While some are cooperative, some nurses tend to be dismissive. But I take this in my stride as part of my role is communicating effectively even in hostile situations.

In some cases, nurses fail to give delivering mothers the notification because they do not have national Identity cards (IDs), even when it is clear they are Kenyan citizens. Legally, no child born in Kenya should be denied the right to be registered at birth and to documentation.

Apart from enabling the child to get a birth certificate, a simple document like a birth notification can actually help them get a national ID when they attain the statutory age of 18 years, as long as their parents have IDs.

It is clear from these engagements with nurses and medics that they have little understanding of the requirements for a child to get a birth notification or even of the larger issue of child registration at birth.

In my engagement with the health records officer, to ensure we get the notifications to the mothers in a timely and easy manner, many do not know that a baby can get a notification even if they do not have both parents' national IDs. For example, if one of the parents is double-registered, the other parent can still be assigned the child's nationality by birth.

Through these efforts as a paralegal, I have shared this knowledge and helped increase awareness among my community about their rights to documentation and registration, especially on birth notifications, birth certificates, and national IDs. There is a need for sensitization of these personnel as they hold key roles in the registration of children and, in the long run, in the determination of the children's nationality.

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\*Somane Aden is a Paralegal at Haki na Sheria in Garissa.



>>> By Zena Musa <<<

## Discussing Citizenship Laws Over a Shared Biryani Platter

In February 2022, the Nubian Rights Forum introduced ‘Biryani Friday’ discussions for its team of a dozen community paralegals working to solve the citizenship challenges facing Nubians in Kibra, one of Africa’s largest informal settlements.

Biryani, a Swahili cuisine prepared with colored rice, local flavored spices with a curry fried chicken, and a boiled egg, is a delicacy from the coastal strip of East Africa.

With its origin from analysis of previous years' clients' follow-up interviews, the aim for these paralegal gatherings every Friday over a Swahili meal is to hold discussions on citizenship laws, bills, policies, and citizenship cases in Kenya that would help them understand better how to handle their client cases.

The discussions focus on different aspects of Kenya’s citizenship law, including concerns of discriminated ethnic communities in Kenya’s citizenship and identification system by these laws and how past case laws were delivered across different jurisdictions. These deliberations have proven to be a silver bullet in helping paralegals, in a collective way, understand citizenship and nationality laws deeply.

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In preparation for the weekly discussions, each paralegal is assigned a section or article of the bills, policies, acts, and summarized case laws to research. They then make presentations to the rest of the paralegals. During the deliberations, paralegals ask each other questions and give live examples of what is happening within the community they serve with respect to the provisions of the law and what is practiced by the duty bearers e.g., the registrars.

This has been a very effective learning and comprehension method for the new paralegals who by the end of the discussion can read, interpret and discuss the laws confidently and correctly. They also apply this valuable knowledge when they appear on weekly radio shows, at community forums, when engaging with stakeholders and different duty bearers; and when handling their day-to-day interactions with community members.

The interactive discussions help the paralegals during their interaction with the community in terms of making them understand the laws and practice them. These discussions have also helped them with intellect when it comes to handling different cases from either the community or the stakeholders and duty bearers and overseeing policy implementation.

In addition, these discussions have given the paralegals the skills and abilities to identify gaps and loopholes within the existing citizenship laws, find effective ways of addressing them, and utilize these possible solutions e.g., community participatory development of litigation and petitions.

Identification of these loopholes through the laws also helps paralegals know who the different duty bearers of state offices addressing nationality and citizenship issues. For example, paralegals get to know what cases the high court handles and what cases are handled at the international courts and other human rights bodies.

Since its inception, we have had discussions on the Huduma Bill 2021, which is about the digital ID in Kenya, Citizenship Laws and Nationality Rights Case Digest with different case studies highlighting how different countries and different duty bearers follow, interpret, and implement different policies provided within the laws, Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act 2011, Registration of Persons Act and currently we are discussing the Births and Deaths Registration Act.

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\*Zena Musa is a Senior Program Officer at Nubian Rights Forum.



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## Haki Centre

Haki Centre Organization (HCO) is a Non-Governmental Organization working in the coastal region of Kenya to promote social justice through human rights education and advocacy, peacebuilding, and legal empowerment focused on nationality rights. The organization was founded in 2006 but was officially registered in 2012.

HCO has been working on the issue of statelessness since 2014 when the #IBelong campaign was launched. With the support of UNHCR, Namati, and Open Society Foundations (OSF) among other actors, HCO has been actively involved in actions seeking to reduce existing situations of statelessness, prevent the emergence of new cases of statelessness, and protect the rights of stateless persons in Kenya.

Our citizenship rights program advocates for legal identity for all including birth registration (SDG 16.9) through a legal empowerment approach (paralegal work) that supports and empowers affected communities to overcome administrative obstacles in accessing nationality documentation. Recognizing the importance of birth registration in the prevention of statelessness, HCO has been conducting a robust campaign to promote universal birth registration in Kenya since 2014 through a multifaceted approach including community sensitization and paralegal assistance, capacity building of registration agents, and supporting Civil Registration Services (CRS) to conduct mobile civil registration in areas that are underserved due to distance to registration centres.

Working closely with stateless communities and other minority groups facing citizenship challenges; and in partnership with the Coalition on Nationality, Citizenship and Statelessness Empowerment (CONCISE), HCO has been promoting equal and non-discriminatory access to nationality documentation through community-led advocacy actions, public interest litigation, and advocacy for policy reform.



# HAKI NA SHERIA

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## **Haki na Sheria**

Haki na Sheria was founded in 2010 as a caucus by Kenyan Somali law students at the University of Nairobi from Garissa in the run-up to the promulgation of the Kenyan constitution. The initial aim was to end systemic discrimination in Garissa County especially on access to civic services such as birth certificates.

The early days of the organisation were characterised by advocacy to redress the history of gross human rights violations on communities of the region that had been a mainstay. One of those main issues was discriminatory issuance of persons with Identity Cards through ethnic and religious profiling and denial of certain basic rights such as freedom of movement. The organization was in 2017 upgraded to a national organization and registered with the NGO coordination Board. The founders aimed to create a just and prosperous future for their communities and their children.

One of the successful methods the organisation has used to empower local communities is through the paralegals whereby young people have been given skills to navigate the unjust government systems. This empowerment of the youth has been a key pillar in fighting for equals rights for the Somali populations in the region. One of our focus areas is ; Statelessness in Garissa County: Including assisting individuals through the processes of obtaining relevant government documents such as birth certificates, Identification Cards (IDs) and support on the pre-registration vetting processes.



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## **The Nubian Rights Forum**

The Nubian Rights Forum is a community based civil and human rights organization in Kibra whose primary aim is to agitate and champion for the rights of the marginalized and minority Nubian community across citizenship, land, and human rights issues such as Gender Based Violence civic education on the constitution, conflict resolution, campaigning and lobbying, peace building and reconciliation. The organization which was founded in 1997 has gained wide acclaim and acceptability by the people as primary advocates on citizenship and nationality. Although the organization is deeply rooted in Kibra, it has further reach with Nubian communities located outside of Nairobi and other parts of Kenya through coalitions and partnerships.

### **Citizenship & Access to Documentation**

In February 2013, Nubian Rights Forum initiated a community empowerment program focused on access to documentation for the Nubian community. Their intervention was a community paralegal approach where they trained and supported the first group of community-based paralegals to work in the Nubian community in Kibra. The paralegals conduct outreach and community education to mobilize people to obtain legal identity documents – with a focus on birth certificates, national identity cards, passports, and death certificates.

In addition to their work on citizenship and access to documentation, the Nubian Rights Forum has been at the forefront of advocating for the implementation of a digital ID system in Kenya. In fact, they have taken legal action around the Huduma Namba system, which has had a positive influence on the public's understanding and acceptance of digital IDs. The NRF believes that a well-designed digital ID system can improve access to government services and promote inclusivity, but they also recognize the potential for abuse and discrimination if the system is not properly designed and implemented. As a result, they are actively engaged in discussions around the development of digital ID policies in Kenya, working to ensure that the rights of marginalized communities are protected, and that any system is fair and accessible for all Kenyans.

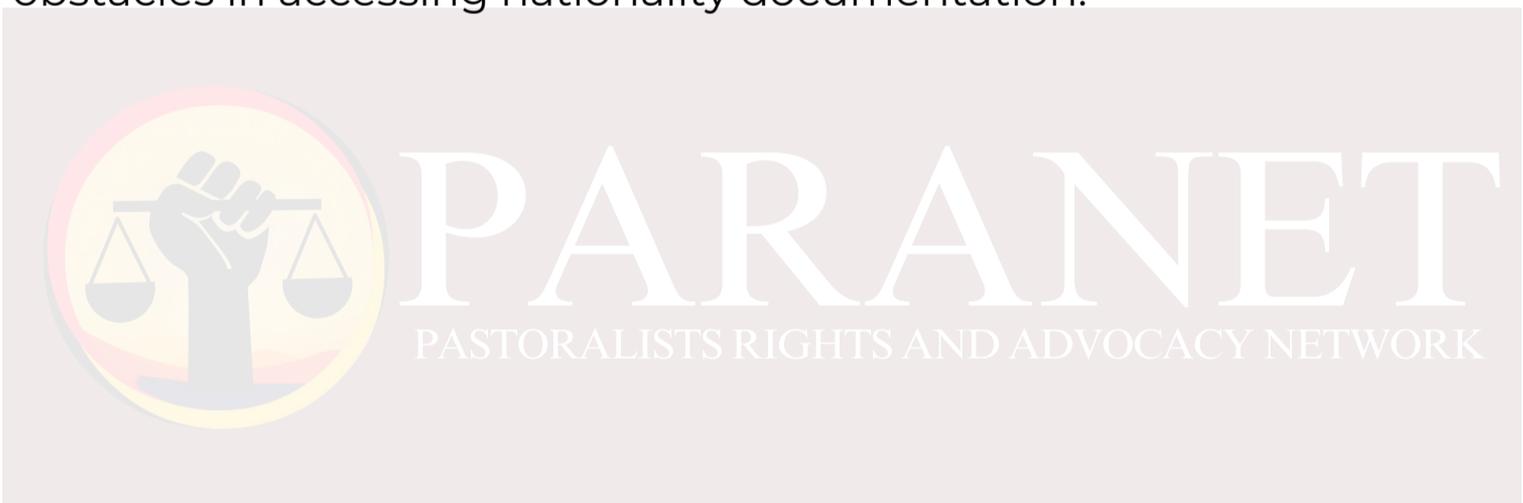


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## Paranet

Paranet (Pastoralist Rights And Advocacy Network) is a Non-Governmental Organization working in the Wajir County to promote social justice through human rights education, advocacy, peacebuilding, and empowerment primarily targeting the pastoralist community in Wajir and North Eastern Kenya as a whole.

Paranet has been working on the issue of nationality rights for more than 5 years and have handled over 3,000 cases ranging from birth registration, Identity card registration, and death certificates through a legal empowerment approach (paralegal work) that supports and empowers affected communities to overcome administrative obstacles in accessing nationality documentation.





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## **About Namati**

Namati, a nonprofit organization, advances social and environmental justice in six countries by building a movement of people who know, use, and shape the law. Namati and our partners have been on a quest to democratize the law: to take it out of books and courtrooms and combine it, instead, with the other key asset that communities have – people power. Namati and our partners train and deploy community paralegals to take on some of the greatest injustices of our time and solve problems at the grassroots: protecting community lands, enforcing environmental law, and securing rights to healthcare and citizenship. Together with communities, we strive to translate the lessons from our grassroots experience into positive, large-scale changes to laws and systems.

Namati co-founded and convenes the Grassroots Justice Network, the world's largest community of justice defenders with 12,300+ members representing over 3,400 organizations across 175 countries. The network fosters connection, learning, and action to bring justice everywhere.

## **About Namati's Citizenship Program**

Namati's Citizenship Program works with communities who are citizens in law but who face discrimination in attempts to access proof of nationality and documentation like birth certificates, ID cards, and passports. Paralegals from these communities, supported by Namati and our partners, empower others to overcome discriminatory treatment to access legal identity documents and drive changes to Kenya's national legal framework on citizenship rights.



# Paralegal

