

NO 'STATELESS' PEOPLE, SAYS INDIA

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Indian Constitution - Features & Significant Provisions related to The Preamble, Union & its Territories and The Citizenship

Individuals excluded from the final list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam will not become stateless and will continue to enjoy equal rights available to all Indians, Raveesh Kumar, official spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry, said on Sunday.

Mr. Kumar declared that the implementation of the NRC process would be done in accordance with the democratic traditions of India.

“Exclusion from the NRC has no implication on the rights of an individual resident in Assam. Those who are not in the final list will not be detained and will continue to enjoy all the rights as before till they have exhausted all the remedies available under the law. It does not make the excluded person “stateless”. It also does not make him a ‘foreigner’,” Mr. Kumar said on Sunday.

The statement came a day after the publication of the final NRC list that excluded more than 19 lakh individuals. The mammoth exercise was reported widely by the global media over the weekend. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi also expressed concern, and urged India not to leave anyone as a stateless subject.

However, the External Affairs Ministry said reports in “sections of the foreign media” were incorrect.

Concerns in Dhaka

Following the declaration of the final NRC, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh A.K. Abdul Momen reiterated that the NRC was an internal matter of India that would not affect Bangladesh. India has maintained that the excluded individuals will not be deported to that country. Dr. Momen reminded reporters about the assurance of his Indian counterpart when questioned by the media in Dhaka.

The Ministry spokesperson maintained that the NRC was a “non-discriminatory process, which leaves no room for bias and injustice and that it is a fair process based on scientific methods”.

Allaying fears about the future of those excluded from the NRC, he said the list was supervised by the Supreme Court of India and was carried out with directives from the court.

Mr. Kumar said the Government of India would support those appealing for reconsideration of their applications. He argued that “inclusion in the NRC is a unique process, as it is based on ‘application’ rather than house-to-house enumeration”.

The official said Indian democracy followed “equal rights for all” and “respect for the rule of law” as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

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