



November 21, 2013

Honourable Chris Alexander, PC, MP  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1L1

Dear Minister Alexander:

On behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress I am writing in regard to how our government must deal with persons who are deemed stateless.

Canadian law and policy generally recognizes the importance of citizenship. This is evident in Canada's policy of conferring citizenship on children born in the territory, as well as many of those born abroad to Canadian parents.

It is important that Canada has for many years adopted a national policy that gives meaning to Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to a nationality." Yet recent events regarding the case of Deepan Budlakoti are contravening this long-standing policy.

We are concerned with the government's determination that Deepan is not a Canadian citizen and is currently facing deportation to India, the country of his birth parents.

Deepan was born in Canada as evident from his Ontario birth certificate. He has been twice recognized as a Canadian citizen, by inclusion in his mother's passport in 1997 and by the federal government issuing him a Canadian passport in 2003.

The federal government claims that his citizenship status was void, due to his parents allegedly having diplomatic status at the time of his birth, has been disproved.

The Indian government does not recognize Mr. Budlakoti as an Indian national – thus making him stateless.

Canada has ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness which obliges governments to act in a manner that avoids, rather than increases statelessness.

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A study commissioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has noted the legal limbo a stateless person can find themselves in, is a major policy gap.

Deepan is experiencing this reality first hand.

This is a young man, just 24 years of age, who wants to work and regain hold on his life. He has never lived in India. All of his connections are in Canada, where his immediate family lives and where he has spent in his entire life.

The obligation to ensure he does not remain stateless logically rests with Canada.

We are aware that Deepan has a criminal record and that he served time for these sentences, and has no interest in making such mistakes ever again. We see a young man who has willingly paid a penalty and who is determined to work and make a constructive contribution to the country where he was born.

Deepan's conflict with the law can not now become the motivation for failing to live up to our international obligations to avoid perpetuating a situation of statelessness.

Minister Alexander, I urge you to restore Mr. Budlakoti's Canadian citizenship without delay.

Sincerely,



Hassan Yussuff  
Secretary-Treasurer

cc: Karl Flecker, CLC