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Press Release

**“Some sections of proposed Draft Citizenship Act 2016 inconsistent with the Constitution”
Barrister Nazrul Islam Khasru at a Seminar on Citizenship Laws in Bangladesh**

Today on 3rd August 2016, , Barrister Najrul Islam Khasru, a British-Bangladeshi Tribunal Judge speaking today at a seminar on the draft Citizenship Act, pointed to certain gaps in the existing law, and raised questions regarding whether the draft law addresses these gaps or creates new conflicts.

Barrister Khasru pointed out that the draft Act may have negative impacts on the migrant/ expatriate Bangladeshis and their children and consequently on the national economy. Section 5 of the Act provides that a person may acquire Bangladeshi citizenship by birth if his or her mother or father is a citizen of Bangladesh before the commencement of this Act. By this provision only one generation will have the opportunity to acquire Bangladeshi citizenship. Apart from this, expatriate/ diaspora Bangladeshis will be deprived of the chance to participate in elections in Bangladesh as candidates.

Citizenship in Bangladesh is currently governed by the Citizenship Act of 1951 and the Bangladesh Citizenship Temporary Provisions Order 1972 among others. According to news reports, in February 2016, the Cabinet approved the draft Citizenship Act 2016, with the aim of amalgamating the two existing laws.

The seminar was chaired by Advocate Z. I. Khan Panna, Member, Board of Trustees, BLAST. It was moderated by Sara Hossain, Advocate, Supreme Court. Participants included Advocate Md. Idrisur Rahman, Barrister Jotirmoy Borua, Advocate Md. Amirul Haq, Advocate Khalid Hossain, Rezaur Rahman Lenin, Alya Begum, Barrister Najrana Imam and other lawyers of Supreme Court, rights' activists and academics.

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