

# THE JORDAN TIMES

## Debate tackles women's right to pass nationality to spouses, children

by Dana Al Emam | Mar 28, 2013 | 21:56

**AMMAN** — As the issue of women's right to pass their nationality to their spouses and children remains a point of contention in Jordan, a local initiative sought to give the two sides of the conversation a platform to debate their points of view.

In an event organised by Diwanieh on Rainbow Street recently, Aroub Soubh, spokesperson of the "My nationality is the right of my children" coalition, argued for granting women this right, while Al Arab Al Yawm Chief Editor Nabil Ghishan argued against it.

"In 2013 and in a country that praises modernity, democracy and reform, a Jordanian man passes nationality to his children and to his non-Jordanian wife... but the law does not provide legal status for the husbands and children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians," Soubh said at the debate.

"It's not normal to teach a child to love a country that does not acknowledge his citizenship," she told the audience.

There are no accurate statistics concerning the number of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians, according to Soubh.

"Numbers are somewhere between nearly 450 mothers who joined [our] campaign and... around 53,000 families according to the Civil Status and Passports Department," she remarked.

"Those who use the threat of Jordan becoming an alternative homeland for the Palestinians to oppose this right seek to obstruct democracy in Jordan," she concluded.

But Ghishan argued that increasing the number of people who hold Jordanian nationality puts much pressure on Jordanian citizens.

"Over the past 20 years, Jordan has absorbed all the crises of the area, despite its small area and limited resources," he said.

Politics, for Ghishan, is a main factor that affects this demand, since the majority of Jordanian women who suffer from this issue are married to Palestinians.

"According to a report by the Chief Islamic Justice Department, the number of Jordanian women married to Palestinians during 2011 reached 2,281 while those married to Lebanese were 249, and those married to Egyptians were 223," he told the audience.

"Passing Jordanian nationality to non-Jordanian husbands and children will affect the demographical

balance in the Kingdom, which is a national priority,” he concluded.

According to Sami Hourani, the founder of Diwanieh, which organises debates to encourage young Jordanians to join the conversation on the Kingdom’s “hot issues”, the nationality topic was chosen to expose the two views to the public.

“Each party has the right to convince people of its opinion,” Hourani told The Jordan Times.

“I am very happy that a big crowd was able to observe the debate... You can see policemen, sanitation workers and people passing by the street watching the debate,” he added.

The event caught the attention of Shawqi Abu Yazeed, an Egyptian sanitation worker employed by the Greater Amman Municipality.

“I am Egyptian and so is my wife, but it would be completely unfair if my wife was Jordanian and my children could not get a proper education and healthcare,” he said.