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International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Human Rights Committee

Decision adopted by the Committee under the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3595/2019*, **

Communication submitted by:	V.K. (not represented by counsel)
Alleged victims:	The author and A.K.
State party:	Latvia
Date of communication:	19 July 2018 (initial submission)
Document references:	Decision taken pursuant to rule 92 of the Committee's rules of procedure, transmitted to the State party on 30 April 2019 (not issued in document form)
Date of adoption of decision:	19 July 2024
Subject matter:	Spelling of the name of one of the alleged victims according to Latvian orthography on identity documents
Procedural issues:	Exhaustion of domestic remedies; substantiation of claims; victim status
Substantive issues:	Right to privacy and family life; discrimination on the basis of language; right to use own language
Articles of the Covenant:	17, 26 and 27
Articles of the Optional Protocol:	1, 2 and 5 (2) (b)

1. The author of the communication is V.K., a national of Latvia born in 1971. He submits the complaint on his own behalf and on behalf of his minor son, A.K., born in 2011. The author claims that the State party has violated his and his son's rights under articles 17, 26 and 27 of the Covenant. The Optional Protocol entered into force for the State party on 22 September 1994. The author is not represented by counsel.

Facts as submitted by the author

2.1 The author is a Latvian national of Russian ethnicity. His wife is a Latvian national of Belarusian ethnicity. Their son, A.K., was born on 20 June 2011. On 18 July 2011, the author

* Adopted by the Committee at its 141st session (1–23 July 2024).

** The following members of the Committee participated in the examination of the communication: Tania María Abdo Rocholl, Wafaa Ashraf Moharram Bassim, Rodrigo A. Carazo, Yvonne Donders, Mahjoub El Haiba, Carlos Gómez Martínez, Laurence R. Helfer, Marcia V.J. Kran, Bacre Waly Ndiaye, Hernán Quezada Cabrera, José Manuel Santos Pais, Soh Changrok, Tijana Šurlan, Kobauyah Tchamdja Kpatcha, Teraya Koji, Hélène Tigroudja and Imeru Tamerat Yigezu.

requested the Civil Registry Office of the Ziemeļu district of Riga to include the transliteration from the Russian alphabet to the Roman alphabet of his son's first name and surname as an additional entry in the birth register and on his son's birth certificate. The possibility of including an additional entry of this kind is provided for under section 19 (2) of the Official Language Law. On 25 July 2011, the Civil Registry Office dismissed the author's request, finding that the name of the author's son could only be recorded in Latvian. The author's subsequent appeals to the District Administrative Court, the Regional Administrative Court, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court concerning the decision not to allow the inclusion of the transliteration of his son's first name were dismissed on 8 January 2013, 27 June 2016 and 18 January and 20 July 2017, respectively. The Regional Administrative Court terminated the proceedings concerning the claim as to the transliteration of the author's son's surname, as, by that point, the author had received a birth certificate for his son that included the transliterated form of the surname, in accordance with his request.

2.2 In its decision of 18 January 2017, the Supreme Court noted that, under section 19 (2) of the Official Language Law, the inclusion of the transliterated form of a name is allowed if the applicant can provide documents indicating previous use of the name. It noted that that possibility was provided for in order to minimize the inconvenience caused to the person and to facilitate the identification of a person whose name in one personal identity document differed from that used in another personal identity document previously issued for that same person. It noted that the aim of allowing the inclusion of the transliterated form of a name was to prevent misunderstandings regarding the identification of a person and that, under domestic legislation, transliteration was not intended for any other purpose. It noted that the author had referred to the Committee's findings in *Raihman v. Latvia*[1] but found that the facts differed between that case and the author's case, as, in the former, the name of the author had been used in its original form for a very long period of time on official documents before being unilaterally changed by the authorities. The Supreme Court further found that the regulatory framework in the State party had a legitimate purpose, which was the protection of the role of the official language. The author subsequently submitted a constitutional complaint to the Constitutional Court. On 20 July 2017, the Constitutional Court decided not to initiate a case.

Complaint

3.1 The author claims that his and his son's rights have been violated under article 17 of the Covenant. He refers to the Committee's jurisprudence[2] and notes that the right to retain one's name and to have that name officially recognized as part of one's identity is an integral part of the right to privacy and family life. He argues that the lack of official recognition of minority first names, including by not including them as an additional entry on personal identity documents, gives rise to doubts over the State party's respect for minority identities. He argues that the unilateral modification of his son's first name amounts to an arbitrary interference with their right to privacy and that such interference is not in pursuit of a legitimate aim. While he notes that interference in the form of altering the name given in the main entry on an identity document could be argued to be necessary to protect the Latvian language and its proper functioning as an integral system, he claims that there is no legitimate aim in denying the possibility of indicating the transliterated form of the name elsewhere on the document. The author further submits that domestic legislation regarding the transliteration of names is arbitrary. Whether the transliteration of his son's first name is included as an additional entry on his birth certificate has no impact on other individuals' ability to freely use the Latvian language in their daily lives. In addition, he claims that the refusal to include the transliteration of his son's first name creates inconveniences in their daily lives, as having a first name on his son's identity documents that is different from that used by the family may raise problems and doubts when his son is required to prove his identity.

[1] *Raihman v. Latvia* (CCPR/C/100/D/1621/2007).

[2] *Raihman v. Latvia*; and *Bulgakov v. Ukraine* (CCPR/C/106/D/1803/2008).

3.2 The author also claims that his and his son's rights have been violated under article 26 of the Covenant. He notes that, although the State party considers its domestic legislation to be neutral, it can still result in discrimination on the grounds of language and ethnicity. Persons belonging to the Russian-speaking minority are not even afforded the possibility of adding a transliteration of their first name to official records, as to do this, the authorities require evidence of previous use that it is impossible for them to provide if they were born in Latvia and have a Latvian birth certificate. He notes that this rule has a negative impact on the Russian-speaking community, which makes up one third of the population.

3.3 The author further claims that his and his son's rights have been violated under article 27 of the Covenant. He argues that the refusal to accept the transliteration of his son's first name amounts to a denial of the right to use their own language with other members of the community. He argues that a name, including a first name and the spelling thereof, is an essential element in the culture of many ethnic, religious and linguistic communities, indicating a person's ethnic, religious or linguistic identity. He argues that the State party has an obligation to create a system of transliteration that would allow the first name of a person belonging to a minority group to be maintained and used officially, even if the name is not integrated into the grammatical system of the State party's official language.

State party's observations on admissibility and the merits

4.1 On 30 October 2019, the State party submitted its observations on the admissibility and merits of the communication. It submits that the author's claims should be found inadmissible on the grounds of failure to exhaust domestic remedies, insufficient substantiation and lack of victim status.

4.2 The State party takes note of the author's claim that the refusal of the State party authorities to include, as an additional entry in the birth register, the transliteration into the Roman alphabet of his son's original Russian name, as chosen by the author, amounts to a violation of articles 17, 26 and 27 of the Covenant. It notes that, on 18 July 2011, the author requested the Civil Registry Office of the Ziemeļu district of Riga to add the Roman alphabet transliteration of the original form of his son's first name and surname to the birth register. On 25 July 2011, the Civil Registry Office rejected the request, noting that section 6 of the Law on Registration of Civil Status Acts and section 8 of the Official Language Law stipulated that entries in the civil register were to be made in the official language of the State party. The State party states that the Office further noted that no document had been submitted that provided proof of the original name of the author's son and the application had therefore been rejected. The author subsequently noted in further proceedings that part of his claim had been resolved, as he had been able to have the transliteration of his son's surname recorded in the civil register. He, however, lodged an appeal against the refusal by the Civil Registry Office to include the transliteration of his son's first name as an additional entry in the birth register. On 27 June 2016, the Administrative Regional Court rejected the appeal.

4.3 The judgment of the Administrative Regional Court was upheld by the Supreme Court on 18 January 2017. The Supreme Court noted that prohibiting the transliteration of a personal name would not in itself constitute a violation of the right to privacy; however, it found that account must be taken of the fact that the author and his son belonged to a national minority group and that his child's name in Latvian had been reproduced phonetically and adapted to the grammatical rules of Latvian. The Supreme Court recalled that the possibility of transliterating a person's original name had been introduced in the legislation of Latvia with the aim of minimizing, to the extent possible, any inconveniences caused by the reproduction of a person's name. The Supreme Court noted that, in his claim, the author sought to use the transliterated form for a different purpose, and it was therefore necessary to examine whether the State party had an obligation to include such a transliteration. Recalling the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the Supreme Court noted that States had a wide margin of appreciation in relation to regulations governing the reproduction of personal names. The Supreme Court continued that the State party, in exercising its margin of appreciation, chose to reproduce foreign names phonetically, while simultaneously incorporating them into the Latvian language system. To preserve the role of the Latvian language, no parallel forms were allowed. The Court concluded that the State party was not

obliged to afford national minority groups the possibility of also reproducing personal names in a transliterated form, and, in the case at hand, it found that the author and his family did not suffer any particular inconveniences as a result. The author's son's first name was reproduced phonetically, taking into account the grammatical rules of the Latvian language, and, at the same time, the use of a minority surname was not denied. With regard to the conclusions of the Committee in the case of *Raihman v. Latvia*, referred to by the author in his appeal, the Supreme Court stated that the circumstances of that case were different from those of the author's case, namely, that the crucial factor in the *Raihman v. Latvia* case was that the preferred form of the person's name had been used in official documents for a long period of time, until it had been changed by the State party authorities, while the author's case concerned the initial entry in the civil register of his son's first name. On 20 July 2017, the Constitutional Court refused to initiate the constitutional complaint submitted by the author, finding that the argumentation in the author's complaint was not sufficient to initiate a case.

4.4 The State party provides information on the domestic legislation and it notes that article 4 of the Constitution stipulates that "[t]he Latvian language is the official language in the Republic of Latvia", while article 114 provides that "[p]ersons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural identity". Names are regulated in section 19 of the Official Language Law, which stipulates that:

> (1) Names of persons shall be presented in accordance with the traditions of the Latvian language and written in accordance with the existing norms of the literary language, observing the provisions of Paragraph two of this Section.
>
> (2) There shall be set out in a passport or birth certificate, in addition to the name and surname of the person presented in accordance with the existing norms of the Latvian language, the historic family name of the person, or the original form of the personal name in a different language, transliterated in the Roman alphabet, if the person or the parents of a minor person so wish and can verify such by documents.

4.5 The State party submits that the author's claims should be declared inadmissible for failure to exhaust domestic remedies, as he did not make full use of the constitutional complaint procedure. It notes that, if the Constitutional Court has refused to initiate a case due to insufficient legal reasoning, the person concerned can submit a new complaint to the Constitutional Court that remedies the shortcomings indicated by the Panel of the Constitutional Court in its previous decision. This mechanism is regularly used, on average 40 to 50 times per year. The State party notes that, in the present case, the author applied to the Constitutional Court twice. The first application was submitted while administrative proceedings were pending before the Administrative Regional Court. In its decision of 2 September 2016 relating to that first application, the Constitutional Court noted that the author had not yet exhausted all available general remedies and therefore it had rejected the complaint. In that decision, the author's arguments were carefully examined, including through a detailed analysis of the structure of the author's constitutional complaint, and sufficient guidance was provided regarding the parts of the complaint that needed to be amended or expanded.

4.6 The State party notes that the author's second, amended constitutional complaint was rejected by the Constitutional Court on 20 July 2017, due to insufficient argumentation as to the claims raised in the complaint. In its decision, the Panel of the Constitutional Court noted that the author had exhausted all available general mechanisms for the protection of his rights. Turning to the evaluation of the legal reasoning, the Court noted that the author had made reference to comparable groups to argue the alleged incompatibility of the challenged domestic provisions with the Constitution. However, the Panel found that the reasoning provided was not sufficient to show why those groups were in similar and comparable situations. The Constitutional Court also noted that the author had not provided reasons as to why the alleged restrictions were not proportional in his case. In addition, the Court pointed out that the author had failed to provide the reasons as to why he was convinced that the factual circumstances of his case were comparable to the factual circumstances in the case of *Raihman v. Latvia*. In this context, the State party notes that the second constitutional complaint submitted by the author only contained minor amendments to the initial

constitutional complaint that expanded the argumentation regarding the alleged violation of the prohibition of discrimination. It argues that the author did not do everything he could to duly amend his constitutional complaint in order to comply with the guidance received from the Court when his first complaint was rejected, a fact which was also noted in the second decision of the Constitutional Court, dated 20 July 2017. The State party notes that it is therefore compelled to question the author's intention to make full use of all available mechanisms at the domestic level before submitting his complaint to the Committee. In this regard, the State party recalls that the European Court of Human Rights has recognized the Constitutional Court as an effective domestic remedy in the examination of individual complaints where the constitutionality of the provisions of national legislation is called into question.[3] A decision by the Constitutional Court and its interpretation of a legal provision are binding on the State party authorities. Therefore, even if the Constitutional Court finds a legal provision to be compatible with the Constitution, it can provide an interpretation of that provision that is different from that previously adopted by the State party authorities, thereby remedying the situation in question.

4.7 In addition, the State party submits that the author's claims should be found inadmissible for lack of victim status, as it argues that the claims have been formulated hypothetically, relying on an assumption that there could be situations in the future related to the incorrect understanding or transliteration of his son's first name.

4.8 The State party also submits that the author's claims should be found inadmissible for failure to substantiate the claims for the purposes of admissibility. It submits that the author has failed to explain how the absence of the transliterated form of his son's first name on the birth register has interfered with his and his son's private lives in violation of article 17 of the Covenant. It notes that the author has referred to general considerations regarding the use of a name by which society identifies an individual. It, however, argues that neither before the national authorities nor in the present communication has the author explained how the absence of the transliterated form of his son's first name on the birth register has created suffering and hardship for the family in their everyday lives. It notes that the author describes possible situations of inconvenience, without providing further explanations as to whether such situations have actually occurred.

4.9 Should the Committee nonetheless decide that there has been an interference with the right to privacy, the State party maintains that the author has not substantiated how the absence of a transliterated form of his son's first name on his birth certificate has interfered with his and his son's right to privacy. It submits that nothing in contemporary human rights law prevents States from creating legislation in order to protect and promote the official language.[4] The State party refers to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, which indicates that States are "at liberty to impose and to regulate the use of [their] official language",[5] and it submits that this conclusion is fully valid also for the purposes of the present communication. With regard to the author's argument that section 19 (2) of the Official Language Law interferes with his family's right to privacy, the State party submits that such an argument is contradictory, and it emphasizes that, precisely because of this provision, the transliterated forms of the author's and his son's surnames have been added to the civil records. In addition, it submits that due regard must be given to the conclusion by the domestic courts that the existence of several forms of a person's name on official documents increases the possibility of difficulties and misunderstandings. The State party reiterates its argument that the author has not provided any example of an alleged difficulty or hardship arising from the absence of an additional transliterated entry on the birth register for his son's first name. It submits that the author has therefore failed to substantiate that there has been an interference with his and his son's right to privacy and family life and that, likewise, he has failed to provide any arguments as to why the alleged interference is arbitrary. The State party therefore submits that the complaint is manifestly ill-founded and should be

[3] European Court of Human Rights, *Grišankova and Grišankovs v. Latvia*, Application No. 36117/02, Decision, 13 February 2003.

[4] *Raihman v Latvia*, para. 8.3.

[5] European Court of Human Rights, *Mentzen v. Latvia*, Application No. 71074/01, Decision, 7 December 2004.

found inadmissible. Should the Committee find the claim admissible, the State party submits that there has been no violation of article 17 of the Covenant.

4.10 The State party takes note of the fact that, in his complaint, the author refers to the Committee's jurisprudence in *Raihman v. Latvia* and *Bulgakov v. Ukraine*. The State party emphasizes that, in contrast to those cases, the author in the present communication has not raised any objections to the fact that, on official documents, his son's name is written according to the orthography rules of the State party's official language, namely, Latvian. In addition, it argues that the cases of *Raihman v. Latvia* and *Bulgakov v. Ukraine* concerned the main form of the individuals' names used in passports that had been issued following the prolonged use of the victims' names on identity documents. The present case, however, concerns a dispute relating to the additional entry of a first name in the civil register for a person born in Latvia. As such, in this case, there are no other officially recorded forms of the person's name in another language, as was the case in *Raihman v. Latvia* and *Bulgakov v. Ukraine*.

4.11 As additional grounds for non-interference under article 17 of the Covenant, the State party argues that, according to the provisions of the Official Language Law, the use of language is not regulated in unofficial communications, in the internal communications of national and ethnic groups or in services, ceremonies, rituals and other religious activities of religious organizations. This means that, in important spheres of a person's private life, for example, when interacting with other members of society or with family members, the author and his family are free to use the language and spelling of their choice. Likewise, any person is free to choose and use, in unofficial communications, diminutive or shortened forms of his or her name of any origin, as well as any nicknames and pseudonyms. The State party argues that the freedom to use different forms of a person's name in unofficial communications in Latvia is established also by the fact that the baptism certificate of the author's son, issued by the religious organization to which the author belongs, is written in the language used by the author's family.

4.12 Regarding the author's claims under article 26 of the Covenant, the State party submits that the author has failed to provide any further explanation as to the grounds for the alleged discrimination or to provide any substantial reasoning in support of his complaint. It notes that the Constitutional Court, in its decisions on the author's applications, found that he had not provided sufficient arguments in support of his claim of alleged discrimination. The State party further argues that the provisions of the Official Language Law are applied equally to all members of Latvian society.[6]

4.13 Regarding the author's claims under article 27 of the Covenant, the State party refers to the Committee's jurisprudence in *Raihman v. Latvia*, in which the Committee recalled that States may regulate activities that constitute an essential element in the culture of a minority group, provided that the regulation does not amount to a de facto denial of this right.[7] It submits that, accordingly, as long as the national regulation does not deny persons belonging to linguistic minority groups the right to freely use their language within their community or disproportionately infringe upon those rights, the State is acting in conformity with article 27 of the Covenant. The State party therefore submits that the author has failed to explain how the absence of an additional entry in the birth register for his son interfered with their right to use his Russian name in their community. The State party notes that this part of the author's complaint before the Constitutional Court was rejected due to insufficient reasoning, and it observes that the author has not provided any additional arguments in his complaint to the Committee to support his claim.

[6] The State party refers to a judgment by the Supreme Court, Case No. A420243915, in which the applicant, a woman, following marriage and a change of surname, requested her new surname to be entered in the civil register with a suffix that, according to Latvian grammar rules, is possible only for men, as was the tradition in her family. The Supreme Court dismissed the applicant's request, finding that, pursuant to the legislation in force, a feminine suffix needed to be added to the surname of a woman. The State party submits that this example proves that Latvian speakers are in the same position as minority linguistic groups in needing to accept and follow the contemporary rules of Latvian grammar.

[7] *Raihman v. Latvia*, appendix, para. 8.6.

Author's comments on the State party's observations on admissibility and the merits

5.1 In March 2022, the author submitted his comments on the State party's observations. He maintains that the communication is admissible.

5.2 The author takes note of the State party's argument that he has failed to exhaust domestic remedies by not doing everything that could be expected to prepare for the proceedings before the Constitutional Court. He notes that the Constitutional Court may decline to initiate a case if it considers that an applicant has failed to provide sufficient legal reasoning as to the claims raised in a complaint, and that these were the grounds on which his second constitutional complaint was dismissed. He notes that in the second constitutional complaint he had expressly claimed that his and his son's right to privacy had been violated and that not allowing the transliterated form of his son's first name to be added to official identity documents amounted to a violation of the prohibition of discrimination. He submits that, considering this, all the claims set out in the complaint now before the Committee had in substance been previously raised before the domestic authorities, including up to the highest authority.

5.3 The author further takes note of the State party's argument that he has failed to substantiate his claims for the purposes of admissibility. He refers to the Committee's jurisprudence in *Raihman v. Latvia* and argues that the unilateral modification of a name on official documents amounts to arbitrary interference with a person's privacy and that an author does not subsequently have to demonstrate any additional suffering and hardship, as once there is a unilateral modification, the interference is evident. Regarding the State party's argument concerning the lack of victim status, the author notes that his request to include the transliteration of his son's first name on official records was rejected by the domestic authorities, and that such decisions therefore had a direct impact on both him and his son.

5.4 The author reiterates his argument that the inability to officially record the transliteration into the Roman alphabet of his son's first name on identity documents amounts to a violation of articles 17 and 26 of the Covenant, impacting him and his son as members of a minority community. Regarding his claims raised under article 27 of the Covenant, the author argues that the inability to include the transliteration of his son's first name amounts to assimilation pressure, in violation of their rights under article 27 of the Covenant. He argues that his son's given name remains only for private use, with even any limited recognition being denied by the authorities, which goes against the right to choose one's own name.[8]

Issues and proceedings before the Committee

Consideration of admissibility

6.1 Before considering any claims contained in a communication, the Committee must decide, in accordance with rule 97 of its rules of procedure, whether the communication is admissible under the Optional Protocol.

6.2 The Committee has ascertained, as required under article 5 (2) (a) of the Optional Protocol, that the same matter is not being examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement.

6.3 The Committee takes note of the State party's submission that the author's claims should be found inadmissible for lack of victim status, as the claims are formulated hypothetically. The Committee recalls its jurisprudence that any person claiming to be a victim of a violation of a right protected under the Covenant must demonstrate either that a State party has, by act or omission, impaired the exercise of his or her right or that such impairment is imminent, basing the arguments, for example, on legislation in force or on a judicial or administrative decision or practice.[9] In the present case, the Committee notes that the author applied to include the transliteration of his minor son's first name as an additional

[8] The author refers to the Committee's concluding observations on the third periodic report of Latvia (CCPR/C/LVA/CO/3), para. 7.

[9] *Rabbae et al. v. Netherlands* (CCPR/C/117/D/2124/2011), para. 9.5, citing *Andersen v. Denmark* (CCPR/C/99/D/1868/2009), para. 6.4, and *A.W.P. v. Denmark* (CCPR/C/109/D/1879/2009), para. 6.4.

entry on the official records, claiming that the absence thereof violated his and his son's right to privacy and family life. It further notes that the author pursued this claim up to the highest available domestic authority and that the author's son was directly and personally affected by the State party authorities' decisions to reject his request and the author was affected as he was acting on behalf of his minor son in pursuit of the alleged violation of their right to privacy and family life. The Committee therefore finds that it is not precluded, under article 1 of the Optional Protocol, from examining the present communication.

6.4 The Committee further takes note of the State party's submission that the author's claims should be declared inadmissible for failure to exhaust domestic remedies, as, by not amending his second constitutional complaint in accordance with the guidance provided by the Constitutional Court in its decisions, he did not make full use of the constitutional complaint procedure. It takes note, however, of the author's claims that he pursued his claims up to the highest available authority in the State party, namely, the Constitutional Court, that in his constitutional complaint he expressly claimed that his and his son's right to privacy and family life had been violated and that the failure to allow the transliteration of his son's first name to be included as an additional entry on official identity documents amounted to a violation of the prohibition of discrimination. Taking this into account, the Committee therefore considers that it is not precluded, under article 5 (2) (b) of the Optional Protocol, from considering the present communication.

6.5 The Committee takes note of the State party's submission that the author's claims under articles 17, 27 and 26 should be found inadmissible for lack of substantiation. It takes note of the author's claims that the refusal to include the transliteration of his son's first name as an additional entry on identity documents, implying a lack of official recognition of his minority status, amounts to an arbitrary interference with his and his son's right to privacy and family life and to discrimination on the basis of language, in violation of their rights under articles 17 and 26 of the Covenant. It further takes note of the author's claim that the refusal to accept the transliteration of his son's first name amounts to a denial of his and his son's right to use their own language with other members of their community, in violation of their rights under article 27 of the Covenant.

6.6 The Committee further takes note of the author's argument that his case is similar to that of *Raihman v. Latvia*, in which the Committee considered the unilateral change by State party authorities of the author's first name and surname on official documents, following new legal requirements imposing a Latvian spelling for names on official documents, to amount to a violation of article 17 of the Covenant. In that case, the Committee found that such measures, taken after 40 uninterrupted years of the author's use of his original name, had resulted in a number of daily constraints, such as failed banking transactions, delays in immigration controls at airports and other inconveniences in the author's daily life that were not proportionate to the aim sought of protecting the Latvian language and were therefore in violation of article 17 of the Covenant.[10] The Committee observes, however, that in the present communication, the issue before it does not concern a unilateral change to an original name – first name and surname – that has been used by a person for a long period of time, but rather a request to have an additional transliterated record of the author's son's first name included on official documents. The Committee also takes note, in this regard, of the fact that the author's request to include the transliteration of his son's surname on official records was approved by the State party authorities. The Committee notes that the author has claimed that the refusal to transliterate his son's first name may cause inconveniences in his and his son's daily lives and may raise problems and doubts when his son is required to prove his identity. The author has, however, not provided any specific example or arguments to substantiate this claim as to how he or his son have been or could be adversely affected by the refusal of the State party authorities to include an additional transliteration of his son's first name on identity documents. In the absence of such information and argumentation, the Committee finds his claims under articles 17 and 26 of the Covenant inadmissible for lack of sufficient substantiation under article 2 of the Optional Protocol.

6.7 As regards article 27 of the Covenant, the Committee takes note of the State party's argument that the State party's regulations do not deny persons belonging to minority

[10] *Raihman v. Latvia*, paras. 3.1 and 8.2; see also *Bulgakov v. Ukraine*, paras. 7.2 and 7.3.

linguistic groups the right to freely use their language within their community. It further notes that the author has not provided any specific information or argumentation as to how the refusal to include the transliteration of his son's first name in official records would amount to a denial of his and his son's right to use their own language with other members of their community. The Committee therefore finds this claim to be insufficiently substantiated and therefore inadmissible under article 2 of the Optional Protocol.

7. The Committee therefore decides:

(a) That the communication is inadmissible under article 2 of the Optional Protocol;

(b) That the present decision shall be transmitted to the State party and to the author.