

The Campaign to End Statelessness

October 2016 Update



#IBelong

Join us in our Campaign to End Statelessness



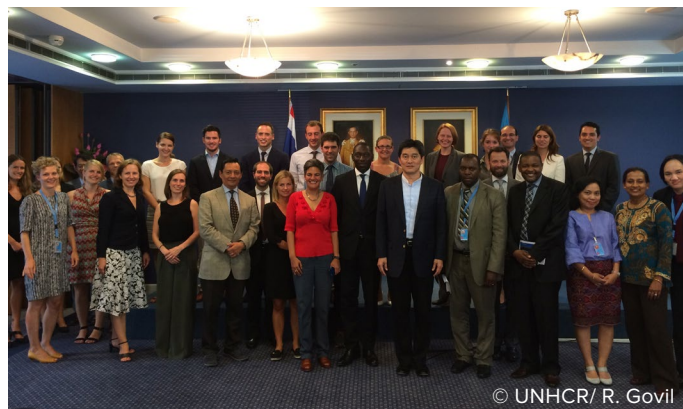
In cooperation with
UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

Mobilizing governments and civil society

New UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusions on [Youth](#) and on [International Cooperation from a Protection and Solutions Perspective](#) include important references to addressing statelessness. They were adopted at the Executive Committee's 67th session held in Geneva from 3-7 October 2016. The **Conclusion on Youth** highlights "the urgent need to take further measures to prevent childhood statelessness and engage with and find solutions for stateless youth," and the **Conclusion on International Cooperation** encourages "international cooperation to prevent and reduce statelessness and find solutions for stateless people, including through [UNHCR's Global Campaign to End Statelessness](#)."

On 2 September, delegations from more than 20 diplomatic missions to the United Nations in Geneva met at the **Thai Permanent Mission** for the fourth meeting of the group of **Friends of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness**. Participants discussed upcoming opportunities for engagement on statelessness and right to nationality issues at the Human Rights Council, as well as at UNHCR's Standing and Executive Committee meetings. With respect to the human rights opportunities, special attention was drawn to the Forum on Minority Rights to be held in November and to upcoming Universal

Periodic Reviews. With respect to engagement at meetings of UNHCR's oversight bodies, the Friends resolved to make joint statements at both upcoming committee meetings, and the Royal Thai Government offered to make these interventions on behalf of the group. The Friends were provided with an update on progress towards the adoption of an African Union Protocol on the Right to Nationality, an additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.



© UNHCR/ R. Govil

Friends of the #IBelong Campaign at the Thai Permanent Mission.



Youth Ambassadors at the Maastricht University Campus in Brussels during the First Youth Congress on Statelessness

From 20-23 September in **Sanremo, Italy**, a **new Course on Statelessness**, jointly organized by the **International Institute of Humanitarian Law** and UNHCR, brought together 50 participants from 35 countries. During 4 days of plenary sessions and group work activities, participants familiarized themselves with UNHCR's [Global Action Plan to End Statelessness](#), exchanged views on good practices and discussed how to protect, reduce and prevent statelessness. Participants particularly appreciated the exchange with Nedzad, a stateless person in Italy, as well as a simulation exercise where they experienced what it is like to be stateless.

On 21 June, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its judgement in [Ramadan v. Malta](#), a case concerning the revocation of Maltese citizenship that rendered the applicant stateless. The Court did not find any violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), but noted that **arbitrary revocation of citizenship** can, in certain circumstances, be problematic under Article 8 because of its impact on the right to private life. Judge Pinto de Albuquerque's dissenting opinion called on the Court to recognize the right to citizenship as an autonomous right under the ECHR and referenced to UNHCR's Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. A request to refer the case to the Grand Chamber is currently pending.

From 11-13 July, the [First Youth Congress on Statelessness](#), organized by the **European Network on Statelessness** as part of its [#StatelessKids campaign](#), brought together 35 Youth Ambassadors from 14 European countries. The Youth Ambassadors worked to develop model National Action Plans to address childhood statelessness and to find innovative ways to end childhood statelessness on the European continent.

In July in **Southern Africa**, the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and UNHCR hosted a capacity building workshop on the right to nationality in Johannesburg for 28 labour union representatives from 13 Southern African countries. At the workshop, partners developed strategies to protect the right to a nationality of migrant workers and members of their families. Also in July, Lawyers for Human Rights and UNHCR launched a **regional network of 25 civil society organizations working on statelessness in Southern Africa**.

In August in **Botswana**, the **Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Ministerial Dialogue on Mixed and Irregular Migration** agreed to groundbreaking commitments to pursue gender equality in nationality matters, to move towards a ministerial declaration on statelessness and to encourage member states to accede to the Statelessness Conventions.

Also in August, as a follow-up to the report on [“The Situation of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic,”](#) the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights launched a multimedia website entitled [“Denationalization and Statelessness in the Dominican Republic.”](#) The website aims to give an overview of the evolution of the situation of people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic.

In **Malaysia**, on 4 and 5 August, UCSI University, with the support of UNHCR Malaysia, held a public event to launch the [Journey to Belong](#) Campaign, which aims to engage the wider public in debates over inclusion and identity through testimonies of formerly stateless people shared over a [social media platform](#). The event also marked the launch of a [bilingual teacher's toolkit](#) on statelessness for elementary school students, which is accompanied by an interactive webinar open to the public.

On 23 and 24 August in **Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire**, UNHCR organized a **multi-stakeholder workshop** to discuss innovation and statelessness with government representatives. The event was co-facilitated by UNHCR Innovation, a UNHCR resource to help integrate new thinking and ideas into protection work, and in this case to improve case management and referral of stateless persons in Côte d'Ivoire.

On 9 September in **San José, Costa Rica**, UNHCR co-facilitated a Training Workshop on Nationality and Statelessness for government officials and human rights organizations.

From 22-24 September in **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR coordinated the **5th Regional Course on Statelessness**. 65 participants from 28 countries and territories came together to discuss the implementation of UNHCR's Global Action Plan to End Statelessness and the [Brazil Plan of Action](#).



Fact finding mission on Statelessness in Yenga, Sierra Leone

Implementation of the Global Action Plan

In August, UNHCR, in close collaboration with the government of **Sierra Leone** and the **National Commission for Social Action**, undertook a fact finding mission to the border areas of the country to collect information to support the development a National Action Plan to End Statelessness.

In line with **Action 1 of the Global Action Plan (Resolve existing major situations of statelessness)**, on 5 August, the Ministry of the Interior of the Royal Thai Government promulgated a **special regulation to the Immigration Act**, which extends freedom of movement of stateless persons in the provinces in which they live, thereby increasing their integration into the community.

On **Action 6 (Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate naturalization)**, "[The Black Box of Nationality](#)," a study on the naturalisation of refugees and stateless persons in **Hungary**, was published by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee with the support of UNHCR. The study analyses Hungary's compliance with its international obligations to facilitate the naturalization of refugees and stateless persons.

On 14 July in **Ukraine**, the national Parliament adopted legislative amendments to extend the **validity of permanent residence permits** for foreigners and stateless persons from 1 to 10 years. This eliminates the need for stateless persons to pay annual fees to renew their permits.

On 11 August in **El Salvador**, government counterparts, UNHCR's implementing partner CARITAS, and UNHCR held a **workshop on the protection of stateless persons** and the **development of statelessness determination procedures** as part of revisions envisioned to the current draft refugee law.

On **Action 7 (Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness)**, in **Romania**, the **Government Emergency Ordinance no. 33/2016**, amending several legislative acts regarding civil status documents and identity documents of Romanian citizens, entered into force in July. The Ordinance **simplifies the process for late birth registration**, thereby reducing the risk of statelessness among children and ensuring access to social assistance, health services, education and other fundamental rights.

With respect to **Action 9 (Accede to the UN Statelessness Conventions)**, in July, UNHCR contributed to a hearing in the parliament of **Cyprus** regarding its accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. In September, **Guinea-Bissau** deposited instruments of accession to both Statelessness Conventions at the annual Treaty Event in New York organised by the UN Office of Legal Affairs.

On 9 August in **Tajikistan**, a **roundtable** brought together some 20 government officials from relevant line ministries and agencies and leading experts to discuss the financial and legal feasibility of Tajikistan's accession to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions. This meeting was followed by a **Regional Conference on Statelessness** on 15-16 September in **Ashgabat, Turkmenistan**, organized by UNHCR in collaboration with the government to advocate with Central Asian countries to accede to the two Statelessness Conventions.



H.E. Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau depositing the Instruments of Accession to both Statelessness Conventions in the presence of Mr. Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR.

In line with **Action 10 (Improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations)**, from 27-28 September, the University Sains Islam Malaysia and the National University of Malaysia, in cooperation with UNHCR Malaysia, co-hosted a **“Workshop for Academics: Researching and Teaching Nationality & Statelessness.”** It brought together a multi-disciplinary group of researchers and academics from East and West Malaysia to contribute to improving quantitative and qualitative data and analysis on persons potentially of concern under UNHCR's statelessness mandate.

Upcoming Events

UNHCR will commemorate the **2nd anniversary of the #IBelong Campaign** at **UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva** on 27 October 2017. The event will feature remarks by the High Commissioner and Lifetime Goodwill Ambassador Barbara Hendricks, as well as the launch of a new publication featuring photographs by stateless children and youth. A number of “echo” events will be hosted by UNHCR operations around the world and others in the run up to the Campaign’s November 4 anniversary date.

In November in **Harare, Zimbabwe**, statelessness will be a featured topic at the **SADC Parliamentary Forum**.

In November, government officials and parliamentarians from 29 countries in the **Americas** and the **Caribbean** will attend the **Regional Parliamentarians Meeting Ending with Statelessness through Legislative Actions**. UNHCR will also convene a **Regional Meeting on the Development of Regulatory Frameworks: Statelessness Determination Procedures and Discussion about Technical Aspects of the Model Law**.

In November in **Geneva, Switzerland**, a side event on statelessness will be organized at the **Annual Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility Meeting**.

On 8-9 December, the 9th **High Commissioner’s Dialogue** will take place at the Palais des Nations in **Geneva, Switzerland**. This year’s theme, “**Children on the Move**” will help to call attention to the risk of statelessness among refugee children.

Campaign Resources

Want to support the Campaign? Take a look at our [#IBelong website](#) and post a digital banner on your website, mobilize your social media contacts by sharing one of our posts, download and post our Twitter cards or embed a short video that explains statelessness. Videos, photo essays and web stories can be found on our [#IBelong stories page](#). Legal resources are available on [Refworld](#).

Learn More About Statelessness

Learning about statelessness is fun and easy. Take advantage of our [self-study module](#) from the comfort of your armchair!



In cooperation with

UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.