

# The Campaign to End Statelessness

October – December 2020 Update



# #IBelong

Join us in our Campaign to End Statelessness



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## Mobilizing Governments and Civil Society

On 10 November, the **Rosa Luxemburg Foundation** hosted a virtual event to launch the [Atlas of the Stateless](#), a report which brings together a series of new short essays on statelessness covering different regions and themes. The launch event can be watched [here](#).

On 10 December, Human Rights Day, the **Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI)** officially launched the [ISI Database on Statelessness and Human Rights](#). The database offers easy access to recommendations relating to statelessness and the right to a nationality issued to States by the UN human rights system. The new database allows the user to compare and analyze the information it contains using different filters such as country, UN body and theme. The event launching the database can be watched [here](#).

On 29 December, the UN Human Rights Committee [found](#) that **the Netherlands** violated a child's rights by registering him as "nationality unknown", as this left him unable under Dutch law to be recognized as stateless and given protection as a stateless child. It is the Committee's first decision on the right of a child to acquire a nationality. "States have the responsibility to ensure that stateless children under their jurisdiction who have no possibility to acquire any other nationality are not left without legal protection," said committee member Shuichi Furuya.

On 7 November, the [Consolidated Action Plan of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region \(ICGLR\) on the Eradication of Statelessness \(2017-2024\)](#) was validated during a regional inter-ministerial committee meeting. The action plan adds a new strategic objective on access to proof of legal identity for persons at risk of statelessness, including refugees in protracted circumstances. This step is in line with a pledge made by the ICGLR at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

On 2 November, UNHCR convened an online lecture on nationality and statelessness for university students in **Turkmenistan**. Students were acquainted with the international standards on nationality and statelessness, causes and consequences of statelessness, strategies to address statelessness, and remaining reforms and other steps needed to end statelessness in Central Asia.

On 13 November, a National Action Plan to End Statelessness (NAP) was finalized in **Uganda** during a working group meeting convened by UNHCR and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The NAP will be officially launched in 2021 and then implemented by the National Taskforce on Statelessness.

On 23 October, the annual [General Assembly of the Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity and Vital Statistics](#) resulted in the adoption of a declaration which includes 1) a commitment by member States to implement projects to eradicate statelessness, especially in the context of large movements of refugees and migrants, and 2) a commitment to consider implementation of recommendations from the “Regional Guideline to guarantee effective access to late birth registration and the issuance of identity documents that prove nationality”.

On October 21, the **General Assembly of the Organization of American States** adopted a [resolution](#) on the promotion and protection of human rights. The General Assembly urges States to reaffirm their commitment to eradicate statelessness; to continue to move forward in implementing the actions reflected in the Brazil Plan of Action of 2014; and to support the global #IBelong Campaign to eradicate statelessness by 2024.

On 18 December, the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights** (IACHR) published a [report on guaranteeing due process in refugee and statelessness status determination procedures](#). The report compiles international standards and best practices and as such may serve as a useful reference document for governmental authorities charged with processing applications for status determination, as well as civil society organizations and refugees and stateless persons themselves.

In September, UNHCR and the National Institute of Migration of the **Dominican Republic** launched the second edition of the [study program “Asylum Law, refugee status and nationality”](#) for staff from relevant State institutions, civil society, and academia. Statelessness and the right to nationality was introduced in this year’s program. The program is accredited by the Dominican Republic.

In December, UNHCR and the Royal Thai Government distributed a Handbook on Nationality and Civil Registration to over 2,500 civil registration offices in 77 provinces across **Thailand**. The handbook was jointly developed by UNHCR and the Royal Thai Government and provides practical guidance in applying civil registration law and procedures.

On 14 December, UNHCR organized a webinar on preventing and mitigating the impact of statelessness on the life of affected individuals in **Asia-Pacific** that was attended by representatives from NGOs working on statelessness at global, regional and national levels. During the webinar, participants explored how UNHCR and NGOs can improve their collaboration on statelessness, particularly in addressing root causes and providing protection to stateless individuals.

On 1 November, a Joint Submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child pertaining to **South Africa** was submitted by Lawyers for Human Rights, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town and the Centre for Child Law. The report assesses South Africa’s compliance with the child’s right to a nationality enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On 2 December, Lawyers for Human Rights, in collaboration with Pro Bono.Org, hosted a virtual training on “Access to Nationality and Statelessness in **South Africa**” for over 20 lawyers. The purpose of the training was to capacitate lawyers across South Africa to provide legal assistance to persons affected by statelessness. At the conclusion of the training, all the lawyers were invited to join the [South African Network on Statelessness \(“SANS”\)](#).

On 3 and 4 December, in **Madagascar**, Focus Development Association and UNHCR held a [training workshop](#) on the right to nationality for 20 parliamentarians from the National Assembly in Ampefy.

In November and December, the Interinstitutional Technical Committee on statelessness in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and UNHCR organized a series of events in Bakavu, Bunia and Goma to engage local authorities in addressing statelessness. The events resulted in a provincial roadmap on the eradication of statelessness by 2024 in the provinces of South Kivu, Ituri and North Kivu.

On 11 and 12 November, the Kingdom of **Eswatini** and UNHCR convened a briefing with Members of Parliament to encourage Parliament to take action in line with the pledge submitted by the Kingdom of Eswatini at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness to remove gender discriminatory provisions in the nationality law. To support advocacy efforts, UNHCR convened a training session the following day with media and governmental communications staff.

On 9 December, UNHCR and UNICEF, under the banner of the Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality, convened a series of trainings on "Birth Registration and Prevention of Statelessness" for State Registration Service and local authorities in the **Kyrgyz Republic**. The trainings aimed to raise awareness of international legal standards in the field of birth registration and to support the implementation of the pledges made by Kyrgyz Republic at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

On 25 November, the Supreme Court of Appeal of **South Africa**, in [The Minister of Home Affairs and Others v Jose and Another](#), upheld the decision of the High Court granting citizenship to two brothers of Angolan origin. The order provided clarity on the interpretation of a provision concerning the acquisition of citizenship by naturalization for applicants born in South Africa. Applicants who meet the four listed requirements can now apply for naturalization regardless of whether they were born prior to or after the 2013 Citizenship Act Amendment.

From 30 November to 4 December, the second edition of the Statelessness and Nationality Course for French speaking statelessness practitioners was organized jointly by the Catholic University for Central Africa and UNHCR in Yaoundé, **Cameroon**. A total of 60 trainees from 30 countries participated in the virtual course, which was taught principally by trainers from across Africa. Trainers from the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness of the University of Melbourne and from Tilburg University complemented the course with a global perspective.

On 14 and 15 December, a stocktaking event as follow-up to the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and Global Refugee Forum focused on the **West and Central Africa** region was convened by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and UNHCR. Despite constraints posed by the pandemic, good progress on the implementation of statelessness pledges has been made in the region, including the establishment of a Statelessness Determination Procedure in Côte d'Ivoire, the adoption of a progressive civil registration framework in Chad, and the publication of a study in Mali, among other achievements.

On 25 November, the Government of **Nigeria** [adopted a National Action Plan against Statelessness](#) during a Federal Executive Council meeting.

On 5 and 10 October, the Directorate for Aid and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons of **Côte d'Ivoire** and UNHCR organized a workshop in Yamoussoukro to train all 81 staff of the National Council for Human Rights on statelessness and civil registry issues. On the margins of the workshop, UNHCR and the National Council for Human Rights adopted a 2021-2023 Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Statelessness and the regional Banjul Action Plan to End Statelessness.



Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR jointly opened the photo exhibition "WE BELONG: Global Faces of Statelessness" at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. © UNHCR

On 5 December, the Minister of Internal Affairs of **Niger** appointed the members of a technical committee tasked with reforming the institutional asylum framework. In line with a pledge made at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness, reforms are expected to include the establishment of a Statelessness Determination Procedure.

On 16 December, the results of a public audit of the **United Kingdom's** Statelessness Determination Procedure were published in a report entitled '[Can I Belong? A Review of the UK's Approach to Statelessness](#)'. The review was carried out under the Quality Protection Partnership, a joint UNHCR and UK Government collaborative endeavour aimed at improving the quality of Home Office decision-making. At a virtual event launching the report, the UK Government presented its [response](#) to the audit. The audit includes 40 recommendations and highlights areas for improvements relating to applications for leave to remain as a stateless person in the UK. Following a [UNHCR press release](#), the [Independent](#), the legal blog [Free Movement](#) and the [University of Liverpool Law Clinic and Asylum Aid](#) published articles about the audit.

UNHCR submitted recommendations as part of the **European Commission's** public consultation process on its initiative to introduce a new strategy on the rights of the child. Among other recommendations, UNHCR urged the Commission to redouble efforts to end childhood statelessness in Europe, including by improving identification of stateless persons through the establishment of Statelessness Determination Procedures, introducing safeguards against childhood statelessness, and ensuring universal access to birth registration.

UNHCR recently submitted recommendations to the upcoming Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies of the **Council of the European Union** (January-December 2021) inviting the two Council Presidencies to consider 1) developing a comprehensive EU strategy and action plan on statelessness within the EU, 2) increase support to civil registration and documentation systems in third countries in the context of EU enlargement, and 3) show leadership in bringing the issue of statelessness to the attention of COHOM, CODEV and COHAFA to support efforts to end statelessness globally.



Representatives from the Government of Viet Nam, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and UNHCR after a panel discussion launching a report on legal identity for women and children. © UNHCR

On 15 and 16 December, UNHCR and the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) of **Turkey** co-organized a two-day workshop on Statelessness Determination Procedures (SDPs) targeting technical experts of the DGMM and its Provincial Directorates. Following interactive discussions on procedural safeguards, coordination between refugee and statelessness status determination and good practices, standard operational procedures on SDPs were formulated to provide guidance to the Provincial Directorates.

On 30 September, the newly formed Government of **Belgium** adopted an [agreement](#) regarding its plans for the next four years, which includes an intention to search for solutions for individuals who cannot go back to their country of origin, such as stateless persons.

On 11 November, in **Croatia**, UNHCR organized an online presentation of its report '[Analysis of the Legal Framework Concerning Stateless Persons and Persons at Risk of Statelessness in Croatia](#)' which was published in July this year. The analysis offers recommendations for enhancing protection against statelessness and serves as an important advocacy tool for addressing statelessness in Croatia with governmental and civil society stakeholders.

Participants included government officials, civil society partners, diplomatic corps and academia.

On 24 November, **Thailand's** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR opened the photo exhibition "WE BELONG: Global Faces of Statelessness" at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) in commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the global #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness. The opening was attended by government officials, representatives of the diplomatic community, civil society and UN agencies. Tuenjai Deetes, a regional finalist of the Nansen Refugee Award, gave a speech on ongoing efforts to end statelessness in Thailand.

On 17 November, the Government of **Viet Nam**, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and UNHCR organized a panel discussion to launch a report on "Legal identity for all women and children" from the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). The aim of the event was to initiate consultations on ways to translate the recommendations into practice. All ACWC representatives, representatives from relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and ACWC partners joined the event.

## Implementation of the Global Action Plan

In line with **Action 1, Resolve existing situations of statelessness**, on 12 December and on the occasion of Kenya's 57<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebrations, the President of Kenya announced a landmark decision [to grant citizenship to 1,670 stateless Shona and 1,300 stateless persons of Rwandan descent](#) who qualify under the law as Kenyan citizens. The decision follows a pledge made by the Government of Kenya during UNHCR's 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

Also with regard to **Action 1**, on 11 December and on the eve of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Permanent Neutrality of **Turkmenistan**, following a Presidential decree 2,580 stateless persons belonging to 19 ethnicities were granted the citizenship of Turkmenistan. The next day a passport handover ceremony took place at the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat. In addition, 874 foreign citizens and stateless persons were granted residence permits.

Further on **Action 1**, the Government of **Kazakhstan** and UNHCR launched a country-wide campaign in October to identify stateless persons and address their situation through the confirmation of nationality or registration as stateless. Coordination meetings were held in eight regions with local executive bodies and media representatives to raise awareness of the campaign and facilitate the identification activities.

Also in line with **Action 1**, on 22 July, the Constitutional Court of **South Africa** declared children (now adults) born in exile to South African parents as citizens of the country. The decision came following seven years of litigation concerning the status of such children (*Chisuse v Director-General of Home Affairs* CCT 155/19). All four of the applicants in this case have since had their births registered and are awaiting the issuance of ID documents in line with the court order.

Furthermore on **Action 1**, the President of **Uzbekistan** announced that stateless persons who have permanently resided in the country since 2005 will receive Uzbek citizenship. It is expected that another 20,000 stateless persons in Uzbekistan will acquire citizenship in 2021.



Sister Joanna Dube, an elderly Shona nun who arrived in Kenya as a child with her parents, receives her certificate of registration from President Kenyatta. © Presidential Strategic Communication Unit



Hadicha, an 80 year-old woman who pursuant to the Amnesty Law in Tajikistan recently received a residence permit legalizing her stay in the country. © Asia Plus/Zarina Ergasheva

Also in line with **Action 1**, on 4 November UNHCR launched a large-scale information and awareness raising campaign in **Tajikistan** on the recently enacted Amnesty Law paving for a solution to the most complex cases of statelessness in the country. The objective of the campaign is for eligible stateless persons to come forward and legalize their status.

In line with **Action 2, Ensure that no child is born stateless**, approximately 47,000 children born in **Colombia** to Venezuelan parents have acquired Colombian nationality since the adoption of Resolution 8470 of 2019. UNHCR is advocating for the extension of this measure beyond its current expiration date in September 2021.

Also in line with **Action 2**, on 5 October, the House of Representatives of the **Philippines** approved the Foundling Welfare Act, which if it becomes law would recognize foundlings as natural-born Filipino citizens regardless of status or circumstances of birth and allow them to access government programs and services. This is in line with the Government of the Philippines' pledge at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and its commitments under the National Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024. The author of the bill is currently advocating for adoption of a counterpart bill in the Philippine Senate.

In line with **Action 2** and **Action 8, Issue nationality documentation to those with an entitlement to it**, the Women Jurists' Association of **Côte d'Ivoire**, supported by UNHCR, provided legal assistance to persons at risk of statelessness to resolve their situation and help ensure that foundlings are issued with birth and nationality certificates. In 2020, this work has led to the issuance of documentation to over 300 children.

In line with **Action 6, Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate their naturalization**, on 10 November, the Department of the Interior and Local Government of the **Philippines** issued a Memorandum Circular on Local Government Assistance for Persons of Concern. The Circular is meant to ensure that asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons have uniform access to basic services and assistance at the local level, particularly in times of public emergencies. The Circular covers a wide range of areas of assistance, such as education, livelihood, and self-reliance programmes, and will contribute to further inclusion of persons of concern in the Philippines.

With regard to **Action 6**, on 9 November, the authorities in **Kosovo**<sup>1</sup> [granted statelessness status to the first four applicants to go through the Statelessness Determination Procedure](#), thereby granting them access to residency rights and basic services. After completing the five-year residency period, they will be eligible to apply for facilitated naturalization in accordance with the Law on Citizenship.

In line with **Action 7, Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness**, the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization of **Madagascar** and Focus Development Association organized an [awareness campaign on birth registration](#) from September to December. Videos were screened and broadcast text messages sent to communities in pre-identified areas to encourage birth registration and thereby reduce the risk of statelessness.

Also on **Action 7**, in the **Republic of Congo**, UNHCR and local authorities organized an awareness raising campaign on birth registration from 1 November to 31 December in the departments of Brazzaville, Plateaux and Likouala. Community relays were trained and deployed to raise awareness among households on the need to register births in order to reduce the risk of statelessness.

Also in line with **Action 7**, on 13 November, the **Republic of Congo** published Ministerial Order n° 14888 to establish auxiliary civil status centres in health facilities to limit the risks of non-registration of children when they leave the hospital.

Further on **Action 7**, on 1 November, a new law “on Civil Acts” entered into force in the **Kyrgyz Republic** which ensures the right to register the fact of the birth of a child and for the child to be issued with a proof of birth regardless of the parents’ possession of documents. This will allow a child to access medical care and social benefits. In accordance with the new legal provisions, actual birth certificates can only be issued after at least one parent is documented.

In line with **Action 7**, UNHCR provided support to a number of governments in issuing birth certificates to populations at risk of statelessness. From 21 November to 2 December, the Government of the **Republic of Congo**, with support from UNHCR, organized a campaign to issue birth certificates to indigenous populations in the departments of La Lekoumou, Kouilou and Sangha. The campaign involved mobile court hearings that resulted in 2,000 indigenous people receiving birth certificates.

In **Sudan**, the civil registry and UNHCR continued birth registration campaigns in Darfur, Kordofan and White Nile states that contributed to up to 15,000 children having their births registered in the last quarter of 2020. The campaigns targeted refugees, IDPs and host communities and involved late birth registration as well as cases of children born out of wedlock and foundlings.

In **Tanzania**, a campaign by the authorities and UNHCR to clear birth registration backlogs among refugee children born in Kigoma resulted in the issuance of 13,537 birth certificates. In **Yemen**, UNHCR, in close collaboration with civil registration authorities, continued to provide legal assistance to displaced families to ensure birth registration, facilitating the issuance of 305 birth certificates to refugee/asylum seeker children and 4,969 birth certificates to IDP children. In **Egypt**, UNHCR supported the birth registration of 215 children through the provision of legal aid.

Also in line with **Action 7**, the Government of **Montenegro** has started implementing a new birth registration practice which involves the immediate birth registration of children abandoned by their mothers, or whose mothers are missing identification documents. The new birth registration practice is in line with the Government of Montenegro’s pledge at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness to strengthen collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Interior to conduct immediate birth registration of children. Although the number of children facing

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1 All References to Kosovo in this document shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).



The distribution of identity documents to undocumented Roma and Egyptian communities in Montenegro is continuing, with appropriate COVID-19 prevention measures in place. © UNHCR/Milos Vujovic

this problem in Montenegro is relatively small, they are the last group of persons born in the country who were without any birth registration procedure. To date the new practice has been implemented in five municipalities, with nation-wide implementation expected by the end of 2021.

Also in line with **Action 8**, in **South Sudan**, UNHCR and the Directorate for Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration facilitated applications for nationality certificates for 1,300 individuals in Bor, Bazia Al-Jaded and Khor Mudir. The projects specifically targeted individuals who could not afford to acquire certificates on their own.

On **Action 9, Accede to the UN Statelessness Conventions**, on 5 August, the Government of the **Republic of the Congo** authorized accession to the two UN Statelessness Conventions. The Government has yet to formally deposit its instruments of accession.

In line with **Action 10, Improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations**, in October, the Government of **Namibia** commissioned a study on stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness which is to be carried out in all regions in Namibia. This initiative builds on the pledges

made by the Government of Namibia at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

With regard to **Action 10**, on 2 November, UNHCR and UNFPA organized a webinar in **Uzbekistan** for the State Committee on Statistics to support the roll-out of the national population census in Uzbekistan - the first one in over 30 years. UNHCR provided expertise on mapping of stateless populations through censuses and stressed the need for accurate quantitative data on such persons.

Further on **Action 10**, from 16 to 19 November, the National Statelessness Taskforce of **Rwanda**, with support from UNHCR, carried out a pilot survey for data collection on stateless persons and those with undetermined nationality in Bugesera and Rwamagana districts. The pilot helped refine the methodology and data collection tools.

In line with **Action 10**, on 9 December, UNHCR in the **Czech Republic** published the statelessness study '[Faces of Statelessness in the Czech Republic](#)'. The study is based on in-depth interviews with stateless persons and desk research on the domestic legal framework. Prior to its publication the study was shared with the relevant ministries and the Ombudsman's office.

## Media Impact of the Campaign

In September, UNHCR issued a [press release](#) to mark the decision by the **Dominican Republic** to naturalize around 750 people born and raised in the country who were previously without Dominican citizenship due to the immigration status of their parents.

November 2020 marked the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness, which was commemorated through numerous events around the globe.

A global press release marking the Campaign anniversary '[UNHCR urges states to end limbo for stateless people by 2024](#)' generated 80 pieces of coverage. Multimedia stories were published on UNHCR's global website on the situation of the [Shona population in Kenya](#) and about a [woman who finally gained Russian citizenship in 2018](#).

To mark the anniversary in **Eswatini**, UNHCR conducted a training on statelessness for journalists working for radio stations, TV and newspapers. The training built the capacity of participants to report on statelessness, and it is hoped that the issue and the #IBelong Campaign will receive greater attention from the media in the future.

In **Italy**, UNHCR organized an Instagram feed "takeover" with five stateless persons living in Italy and abroad. In the course of the week, they shared their experiences in order to raise awareness about statelessness and the importance of achieving the objectives of the #IBelong Campaign. The Instagram "takeover" and related sponsored posts and content on Facebook and Twitter reached an audience of over one hundred and ninety thousand people.

In **Ukraine**, UNHCR invited the public to join the Campaign, emphasizing the importance of birth registration for the prevention of statelessness



The singer Jaojoby, a high-level supporter of the #IBelong Campaign in Madagascar, intervenes during a debate on the right to a nationality to commemorate the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Campaign. © Inviktus Laboratory

among children by [posting on social media](#) using the hashtags #IBelong #EndStatelessness #ЯІснүю.

In **Zambia**, on 11 November, UNHCR published an [open letter](#) to the Government of Zambia in the Times of Zambia and other major media platforms, applauding the efforts taken by the Government to date to eradicate statelessness and calling for accelerated momentum to address remaining issues. In **Kosovo**<sup>2</sup>, UNHCR published two [videos](#) with key messages on the importance of birth registration for the prevention of statelessness. The videos were produced with contributions from influential community members, UNHCR and UNICEF.

In **Luxembourg**, UNHCR produced a [Luxembourgish version](#) of UNHCR's key calls to the European Union to end Statelessness in order to raise awareness of the key role EU Member States can play in ending statelessness.

In **Madagascar**, the NGO Focus Development Association (FDA) conducted capacity building sessions for local print, television and radio journalists in three project intervention sites: Mahajanga, Fianarantsoa and Toliara. About sixty journalists received training concerning statelessness. Several articles were published following the training, including in the newspapers [Studio Sifaka](#) and [L'Express de Madagascar](#). FDA, with the support of UNHCR, also celebrated the anniversary through the [streaming of a Facebook talk show on "the right to nationality"](#).



Mulugeta Zewdie, UNHCR Representative in Tajikistan, speaking on the radio station Asia Plus about the right to a nationality and the importance of eradicating statelessness © UNHCR/Nodira Akbaralieva

In **South Africa**, UNHCR’s Deputy Director for the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa and a young stateless man were [interviewed](#) by Leanne Manas, UNHCR South Africa’s Goodwill Ambassador and host of a popular TV programme, Morning Live. At the end of the segment, a representative from the Department of Home Affairs called in to say that the Department would follow up on the case. Following the interview, UNHCR published an [open letter](#) calling for universal birth registration for all children born in South Africa. The open letter was shared by the Trevor Noah Foundation, a High-Level Supporter of the Campaign in South Africa, which marked the Campaign’s 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a [blog](#) on its website.

In **Malaysia**, civil society organizations reached out to [media outlets](#) to encourage the Government to eliminate all forms of discrimination from its citizenship law.

From 16 to 20 December, in **North Macedonia**, UNHCR broadcast a [video on statelessness](#) on the seven national TV stations with the highest viewership, generating approximately 3.5 million views.

In December, UNHCR issued a [press release](#) welcoming the decision of the Government of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** to give nationality to thousands of children born to Iranian mothers and non-Iranian fathers.

Also in December, UNHCR issued a [press release](#) applauding the decision of the Government of **Kenya** to resolve the statelessness of the Shona and other communities.

On 26 December, The New York Times published a [“Saturday Profile”](#) featuring the story of statelessness activist Maha Mamo’s life and journey to ultimately obtain Brazilian citizenship. The article follows the recent publication of a [memoir](#) about her ordeal.

In **Spain**, after being stateless for seven decades, Sergio Chekaloff was finally granted statelessness status in 2019 at the age of 74. UNHCR recently published a [web story about him in Spanish](#) and amplified it [through social media channels](#). His testimony was included in a [global story about statelessness in Europe](#), and also features on [UNHCR’s YouTube](#) and [global social media channels](#).

In **Tajikistan**, a campaign was launched to raise awareness about a recently enacted Amnesty Law which will facilitate resolution of the most complex cases of statelessness in the country. The campaign began with an interview on the popular radio station Asia Plus and continued with a series of national TV and radio programs. The story of Nazokat, a 42-year-old mother of four who has lived in legal limbo for the last 17 years, generated significant interest on social media platforms.

## Upcoming Events

### **End of March, Middle East and North Africa**

The League of Arab States, in partnership with UNHCR and the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, is organizing a virtual regional conference entitled “Towards a Regional Action Plan on Belonging and Legal Identity”. The conference aims to develop and adopt a Regional Action Plan that will guide the implementation of the 2018 Arab Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity.

### **From 17 to 23 February 2021, virtually**

The Peter McMullin Centre will offer its third Statelessness Intensive Course with support from UNHCR. The course provides participants with the skills and practical tools needed to understand and address the problem of statelessness. This live and interactive course is multi-disciplinary and employs a blend of theoretical and practical components, utilising mixed delivery methods.

### **From 21 June to 16 July, virtually**

The International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy, will offer its annual statelessness course in English, with support from UNHCR.

## 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!



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