

The Campaign to End Statelessness

April – June 2021 Update



#IBelong

Join us in our Campaign to End Statelessness



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On 15 June, UNHCR and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion held a **briefing on “COVID-19 and Statelessness”** convening over 80 representatives from Permanent Missions, UN organizations and accredited NGOs. At the event, UNHCR launched its paper **“[The Impact of COVID-19 on Stateless Populations: Policy Recommendations and good practices on vaccine access and civil registration](#)”**. The event was opened by UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs, who presented key policy recommendations regarding vaccine access and civil registration. Dr. Sónia Pereira, the High Commissioner for Migration of the Government of Portugal, presented the Government of Portugal’s good practices in ensuring that stateless people can access vaccines. Sanne Wendes of GAVI discussed the work the COVAX Facility is doing in advocating for inclusive approaches in national vaccine plans. Amal de Chickera of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion and Ravi Hemadri of the Development



and Justice Initiative briefed participants on the work of the [COVID-19 Emergency Statelessness Fund Consortium](#) and the Consortium's report on COVID-19 and stateless people.

On 17 June, the COVID-19 Emergency Statelessness Fund Consortium [launched](#) its report "[TOGETHER WE CAN: The COVID-19 Impact on Stateless People & A Roadmap for Change](#)". The report documents the impacts of the pandemic on stateless people and is grounded in the experiences and expertise of CESF Consortium members in 13 countries. The report sets out a roadmap to address the structural discrimination and exclusion of stateless people during times of COVID-19 and beyond.

On 21 June, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, in partnership with UNHCR, inaugurated its first **Online Course on Statelessness** which will run through 16 July. Participants of the course include over 50 government officials, civil society representatives and academics from 38 countries across the world.

On 1 June, the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights convened the virtual **event** "[Youth Activism for Gender Equality in Nationality Laws](#)". Youth activists from Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East discussed their involvement in advocacy efforts to advance gender-equal nationality rights and presented innovative approaches to this end. A keynote speech was delivered by the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka.

On 23 June, Think Tank Hub Geneva organized the virtual **event** "[Excluded and Invisible: How to protect stateless people?](#)". Panelists from UNHCR, the European Network on Statelessness and elsewhere presented highlights from their contributions to the "[Atlas of the Stateless](#)", a recent publication sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Foundation.

On 15 April, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion convened the **webinar** "[How to Protect Every Child's Right to a Nationality – A Discussion with the UN Treaty Body Experts](#)". Panelists exchanged ideas about how best to give effect to the right to a nationality and discussed the evolving approaches and jurisprudence of their respective committees. The panelists also unpacked the challenges and opportunities that come with monitoring a cross-cutting issue like the right to a nationality.

On 21 April, the European Network on Statelessness (ENS) convened the virtual **event** "[Statelessness and the Right to Health beyond the pandemic](#)" to launch its report "[Situation assessment of statelessness, health, and COVID-19 in Europe](#)" which focuses on the intersection of statelessness and the right to health.

On 14 June, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion held a fifth virtual lecture as part of the **Global Seminar Series on Citizenship Stripping** entitled "[Deprivation of nationality as a counter-terrorism measure: A human rights and security perspective](#)".

On 25 May, the **League of Arab States (LAS)**, in partnership with UNHCR, convened the virtual "**Arab Regional Conference: Towards an Action Plan on Belonging and Legal Identity**". The conference resulted in the endorsement of a regional Action Plan to address statelessness, which will be referred to the Arab Interior and Justice Ministers Councils for final adoption. The Action Plan was developed to support the implementation of the 2018 [Arab Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity](#), which calls on States to ensure gender equal nationality rights and to uphold every child's right to a name and a legal identity.

Interview with Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner – Protection



Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner – Protection © UNHCR

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, we asked UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs, why the 1961 Convention is still relevant today.

Why is it so important for States to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness?

While the grant of nationality is of course a classically sovereign prerogative of the nation State and States have discretion to provide nationality on different grounds, the 1961 Convention provides a number of safeguards to prevent individuals from falling through the cracks. The 1961 Convention was negotiated at a time when the international community was very aware of circumstances linked to conflict, displacement, and shifting borders that could lead to statelessness. But the safeguards of the Convention remain relevant to this day. Without these, a child may end up stateless in case the country in which he or she was born does not grant nationality based on birth on the territory and the law of the State of the parents’ nationality does not permit them to confer their nationality by descent. In this context, the 1961 Convention provides a safeguard so that children acquire the nationality of

the country in which they were born if they would otherwise be left stateless. The Convention also generally prevents people from being deprived of their nationality where doing so would leave them stateless. Complying with this rule would help States to avoid potential situations of mass statelessness, which we unfortunately continue to see occurring in certain parts of the world today. Fortunately given the high rate of accessions to the 1961 Convention (we’ve had 15 since the #IBelong Campaign was launched in 2014), we can say as we approach the 60th anniversary that States clearly see and value its continued relevance.

One of the four pillars of UNHCR’s work on statelessness is prevention. How has the #IBelong Campaign and the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024 helped accelerate prevention efforts?

Well the prevention aspect of UNHCR’s statelessness mandate is unique and distinguishes it from its

mandate to protect refugees. It was given to us because statelessness is preventable, and we've put forward the Campaign and the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness (GAP) to try to accelerate prevention and reduction efforts. Prevention is really key as it is much easier to prevent statelessness than trying to address it once it has occurred. Since the launch of the Campaign, we have seen impressive steps taken by States like Albania, Armenia, Cuba, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg and Tajikistan to ensure that no child born on their territory is left stateless. Removal of gender discrimination from nationality laws, which is of course also critical to preventing statelessness, is an area which has also seen some positive developments but where a lot more could be done. Iran, for example, recently passed laws that make it easier for a mother to pass on her nationality to her child, and this is a very welcome development. We would like to see all 25 countries which retain legislative provisions that discriminate against women in their ability to confer nationality to their children address these by the end of the #IBelong Campaign. Another important area of work to prevent statelessness is universal birth registration, something that virtually all countries and everyone can agree on. Birth registration records where a child was born and who their parents are – elements which are vital to establishing an entitlement to nationality. UNHCR is supporting many countries to improve their systems so that those who would be left at risk of statelessness as a result of not having important legal identity document such as a birth certificate, are able to access one. This work also ties into the Sustainable Development Goals, which call on States to ensure legal identity, including birth registration, and the overarching ambition of leaving no one behind. I hope we will continue to see important achievements in this regard as States implement recent pledges and commitments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities of stateless persons. Could you say something about the importance of the 1961 Convention and statelessness prevention generally in this context?

One thing that COVID has demonstrated is that a pandemic does not respect your legal status – nationals and those without any nationality have all

been affected. People in every country and every social class have been affected. However, people who were on the move, people fleeing violence, people who are refugees or asylum seekers and stateless people have been left particularly vulnerable. In many countries, healthcare and access to vaccines is restricted to nationals, and those with proof of their identity. You can easily imagine what it is like for somebody who does not have documentation and who is stateless being denied access to a vaccine. The lack of proof of identity is a very serious problem globally. The World Bank has estimated that over a billion people don't have documentation to prove who they are. Of course, not all of those people are stateless, but some are. The important point here is that stateless people risk being excluded from national immunization plans regardless of whether their age, health status or role in society would otherwise place them in a priority group. To draw attention to this, UNHCR has just issued a paper on the impact of COVID-19 on stateless populations, which has examples of good practices and policy recommendations that we hope will make a difference. And of course preventing statelessness by implementing the provisions of the 1961 Convention offers a critical and lasting way to remove the risk of statelessness and precarity that comes with being without a nationality in the context of a global emergency like a pandemic.

How will UNHCR accelerate efforts to resolve statelessness and boost accessions to the 1961 Convention in the remaining years of the #IBelong Campaign

The remaining three years of the #IBelong Campaign give UNHCR, together with the international community, a defined period in which to really rally our collective efforts to address statelessness. Within UNHCR, we are doing our best to bolster our advocacy, to increase budget allocations, and to appoint dedicated staff to statelessness. We know from our experience in places as diverse as Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand and Malaysia, these are the ingredients that lead to the greatest possibility of success as they set the scene for effectively persuading a government to take the steps necessary to reform its laws, implement the new legislation, and ensure that communities can

access nationality and the documentation to prove it. This is our strategy: work with local communities to try to build an interest in preventing and resolving stateless; identify who is stateless; and partner with allies in government, international organizations like the Inter-Parliamentary Union, civil society and supporters and influencers like Cate Blanchett to advocate for change. To increase accessions to both the 1961 Convention and its sister Convention, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, we will be following up with the States that

delivered pledges at the 2019 High Level Segment on Statelessness to accede to one or both of these. We will also be encouraging States that are already party to advocate with other States, as that peer-to-peer dialogue is so important. Also, we will be having a treaty event in September to welcome all those that have recently joined the 1961 Convention. And we will have other events to raise awareness. But the key thing I think will be increased resources and staff to work on these issues and stepped up advocacy as we enter the final stretch now.

On 16 June, in **Ukraine**, UNHCR and partner organizations held a webinar for employees of the State Migration Service involved in implementing the Statelessness Determination Procedure recently established in Ukraine. The participants were trained on communication and interview techniques as well as the various profiles of stateless people in Ukraine. Good practices were presented on the basis of SDP interviews in Hungary, Kosovo (S/RES/1244(1999)), Moldova, Montenegro, and the United Kingdom.

On 17 and 18 June, in Tashkent, **Uzbekistan**, the National Human Rights Centre and UNHCR conducted a “training of trainers” on nationality and statelessness matters for government officials with the aim of incorporating the content in the existing human rights trainings for law-enforcement and other officials.

On 26 May, the Government of **Kenya** [launched a 60-day Rapid Results Initiative](#) (RRI) to expedite the re-acquisition of Kenyan nationality for those individuals who had lost it due to historical legislative changes, as well as the acquisition of nationality for other groups. The Government Taskforce on Statelessness subsequently confirmed that other



A statelessness determination applicant at the State Migration Service in the Kirovohrad region. © State Migration Service Directorate

stateless groups, including stateless persons of Rwandan descent, can benefit from the procedure. Since the announcement, UNHCR and the Kenya Human Rights Commission have been collaborating with community leaders from stateless communities to explore how they can support them with their nationality applications.

On 4 June, the **OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities** (HCNM), Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, delivered his first address to the OSCE Permanent Council in his current function. Referring to his recent consultations with UNHCR, the HCNM highlighted the importance of addressing statelessness, emphasizing that statelessness in the OSCE region “*is both a human rights concern and a conflict prevention issue.*” He stressed the need to improve statelessness statistics and encouraged participating States to include questions related to statelessness in future census exercises.

In **North Macedonia**, UNHCR, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, the UN Resident Coordinator and the OSCE met with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy to discuss steps to resolve gaps in the legislative framework related to civil registration. The meeting followed the tragic death of a 19-year-old high school graduate, Toni Sali, whose birth was not registered and who could not access primary healthcare throughout his life. The case received significant media attention, which stressed the importance of universal birth registration.

From April to June, in **Serbia**, UNHCR and the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the office of the Ombudsman organized webinars for more than 350 civil registry officers to call attention to obstacles faced by members of the Roma national minority in obtaining personal documentation and training on ways to mitigate them. UNHCR also presented the findings of its [2020 Statelessness Survey](#).

On 21 May, the Government of **Botswana** submitted new pledges to address statelessness to the Global Refugee Forum. The Government committed to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to issue secure identification documents to all citizens and non-citizens in Botswana, to review relevant statutes to enable a conducive platform to address statelessness, and to undertake a qualitative study on statelessness in Botswana.

On 16 April, in **South Africa**, the NGO Lawyers for Human Rights briefed the Department of Home Affairs on the increased risk of statelessness due to interruptions in birth registration services and the closure of citizenship services linked to COVID-19 mitigation measures. At the meeting, which was convened by the South African Human Rights Commission, the Department of Home Affairs committed to strengthen its engagement on these issues.

On 27 and 28 May, the Government of **Namibia** adopted a National Action Plan to End Statelessness. Among other actions, the National Action Plan foresees accession to the UN Statelessness Conventions, amendment of the legislative framework related to statelessness, a qualitative and quantitative study on statelessness, and the naturalization and documentation of stateless populations in Namibia.

On 25 and 26 May, in Mbour, **Senegal**, the Ministry of Justice and UNHCR organized a [workshop](#) which resulted in the technical validation of the National Action Plan against Statelessness. It is expected that the National Action Plan will be officially adopted by the Government in the coming weeks, paving the way for more predictable engagement on statelessness issues.

On 22 June, the Government of **Somalia** launched its National Action Plan to End Statelessness, following a multi-stakeholder workshop held on 17 June. During the virtual launch event, the Minister of Interior reiterated the Government’s commitment to fulfil its pledges made at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and further committed to conduct a review of Somalia’s Citizenship Law and strengthen its civil registration system.

On 17 and 18 May, UNHCR and the Ambassadors of the Economic Community of **West African States** (ECOWAS) held a virtual retreat. Among other issues, the retreat focused on promoting the effective implementation of pledges made by States at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness. States were urged to join the UN Statelessness Conventions, support legislative reforms in line with international standards to prevent and reduce statelessness, and establish Statelessness Determination Procedures.

In June, in **Chad**, UNHCR and Agence Nationale des Titres Securisées, the new Government entity responsible for civil registration, signed an agreement which will support the inclusion of stateless persons and persons with undetermined nationality in the national civil registration and vital statistics system. The initiative will also improve statelessness statistics. As part of the agreement, the Government aims to deliver identity documents to IDPs and returnees at risk of statelessness and to register vital events for these groups.

On 27 May, Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) hosted a [virtual book launch](#) of a children's book on childhood statelessness: "[The Girl Who Lost Her Country](#)". LHR collaborated with the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion to translate the book into Zulu. The book is an important advocacy and educational resource.

On 25 June, in the **United States**, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network organized the [webinar](#) "Understanding and Screening for Statelessness" reaching over 400 legal practitioners. Participants learned about the different profiles of stateless people residing in the United States and were trained on how to identify if their client may be stateless.

Implementation of the Global Action Plan

In line with **Action 1, Resolve existing situations of statelessness**, the Government of **Namibia** issued a Cabinet Decision in April to naturalize all undocumented and stateless individuals who came to Namibia between 1977 to 1990. A similar Cabinet Decision was issued in 2010, covering all those who came to Namibia between 1930 to 1977.

On 13 May, the National Organization for Civil Registration of **Iran** announced that over 88,000 applications were submitted following a legal amendment in June 2020 making it possible for children of Iranian mothers and foreign fathers to apply for citizenship. Of these, 1,401 applicants have so far received their nationality documents.

As of 20 May, more than 4,700 undocumented persons and persons with undetermined nationality in **Kazakhstan** have been identified through the country-wide identification and documentation campaign launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNHCR and civil society partners in October 2020. Out of this group, 3,400 people resolved their situation and obtained legal status documents, of whom more than 71 per cent were recognized as citizens of Kazakhstan, while close to 29 per cent obtained official statelessness status.

On 30 April, the President of the **Dominican Republic** signed Decree 297-21, authorizing the naturalization of fifty individuals of Haitian descent. All fifty were affected by the 2013 Constitutional Court ruling 168-13 and were minors at the time of submitting their naturalization requests. Since the adoption of Law 169-14 in May 2014, important steps have been taken by the Dominican Republic to confirm Dominican nationality and to process naturalization applications. This is the second executive decree on this matter, bringing the total number of naturalized individuals of Haitian descent to 799. Nationality documents confirming the status of those naturalized should follow.

With regard to **Action 2, Ensure that no child is born stateless**, and **Action 6, Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate their naturalization**, on 20 April, the Government of **Chile** adopted a new [Law on Migration and Foreigners](#) that provides for the establishment of a Statelessness Determination Procedure (Art. 155) and the introduction of safeguards for the prevention of statelessness (Art. 173). Once the regulatory decree has been adopted, children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless will be granted Chilean nationality. This includes children born to unknown parents.



A girl from the district of Tarapacá in Chile recently had her Chilean nationality confirmed. The newly adopted law on migration in Chile includes important safeguards against statelessness. ©UNHCR/David Alarcón

On 17 May, the Government of **Mexico** reformed Article 30 of its Constitution regarding the acquisition of Mexican nationality. The revised Article allows children born abroad to acquire Mexican citizenship if one or both parents are Mexican nationals, regardless of whether or not they were born in Mexico.

In line with **Action 6**, on 30 March, the Cabinet of **Thailand** approved the inclusion of a group of 5,000 stateless students in the National Healthcare Fund for Persons with Legal Status Problems. This followed an earlier decision to include a group of 3,000 students in September 2020, and will allow these students to access government health facilities free of charge.

In May and June, in **Ukraine**, pursuant to the 2020 law establishing a Statelessness Determination Procedure, the State Migration Service (SMS) rolled it out across all 25 provinces. As of 18 June, 140 applications were processed by the SMS. Statelessness status will allow individuals to legally reside in Ukraine and access other rights.

On 7 June, the State Migration Service Directorate in the Cherkasy region, **Ukraine** started issuing its new stateless travel document, which now meets the latest international standards on travel documents. The document is issued to stateless persons who permanently or temporarily reside in the country and the validity of the document was extended from three to ten years.

On 12 May, the Government of **Georgia** reduced the statelessness status application fee by half in order to improve access to the procedure, in line with one of its pledges made at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

On 14 and 25 May, in **Morocco**, UNHCR and the Law Faculties of Rabat, Oujda, and Casablanca organized three webinars on statelessness attended by close to 100 students and members of legal clinics. Participants were briefed on the causes and consequences of statelessness, the international legal framework on the protection of stateless persons, and the prevention of statelessness in the Moroccan context. The events aimed to raise awareness of statelessness among future law practitioners and to strengthen the capacity of legal clinics to assist migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in birth registration procedures.



The Deputy Head of the State Migration Service of Ukraine, Ms. Natalia Naumenko, announced during Refugee Day celebrations in Kiev that 140 stateless determination procedure applications had been submitted as of 18 June. © Arena CS/Andriy Krephih



Stateless people waiting to receive medical assistance from volunteers in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. © UNHCR/Carla Lee



A woman in Panama is interviewed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during a mission conducted in the Darien province to identify people at risk of statelessness. © Ministry of Interior of Panama

From 14 to 16 April, in **Côte d'Ivoire**, UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a training on Statelessness Determination Procedures (SDPs) for members of the recently established eligibility bodies. The eligibility bodies were installed following the adoption of an SDP in September 2020; they will commence their work as soon as cases are submitted by the Directorate for Relief and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons.

On 29 May, in the **Dominican Republic**, UNHCR organized a mobile health clinic operation in the San Pedro de Macoris province in collaboration with the NGO ASCALA and community members designed to assist stateless people and people at risk of statelessness who face obstacles to access the national health system.

In May, the Government of **Panama** granted statelessness status to the first individual pursuant to its recently adopted Statelessness Determination Procedure. To enhance the impact of the procedure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama, with UNHCR's support, conducted two missions to remote areas of the Darien province to identify and assist persons at risk of statelessness in April and May. This exercise resulted in the identification of 15 individuals whose cases will all be presented to the relevant authorities to initiate the recognition process.

In line with **Action 7, Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness**, from May 2020 to May 2021, with the support of UNHCR, the Government of **Panama** registered the births of 98 newborns whose parents were stranded in the country due to the closure of borders in 2020 to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. All children were duly documented and received birth certificates and identification cards (*cédula juvenil*).

In **Indonesia**, a birth registration campaign was conducted for children of Rohingya refugees in Lhokseumawe, Aceh in March and May. This is in line with the Presidential Regulation No. 62/2019, designed to ensure birth registration for all, including those born to refugees and asylum seekers.

On 17 April, in **the Philippines**, UNHCR, UNICEF, the Local Government of Zamboanga, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Zamboanga Sub Office conducted a verification exercise in Zamboanga to register the births of the Sama Bajau populations at risk of statelessness. As a result, 141 persons had their documents checked and approved by the civil registry office and arrangements are being made to distribute birth certificates. The activity is in line with the National Action Plan to End Statelessness and the national UNHCR-UNICEF Joint Strategy to End Childhood Statelessness.

On 25 March, in **Kyrgyzstan**, an Instruction “on the Procedure for State Registration of Civil Acts” entered into force in accordance with the new civil registration law. The instruction establishes the procedure for registering the fact of the birth of a child and issuance of a birth certificate regardless of the parents’ documentation status. Under the new legal provisions, actual birth certificates can only be issued after at least one parent is documented.

On 25 March, the **Syrian** President issued Law No. 13/2021, amending the Civil Affairs Law, introducing facilitated procedures to access civil documentation within and outside the country. A new “One Syrian Registry Office” will be created to enable Syrian citizens to register civil status events, including births, in any civil registry office in Syria regardless of the place of their original records. The new law will also extend deadlines to report civil events from 30 days to three months for events occurring in Syria and from 90 days to nine months for events occurring abroad. On 11 April, the Syrian President issued Legislative Decree No. 7/2021 exempting Syrian citizens for a six-month period from paying fines for not registering civil status events or obtaining identification cards within the required timeframes.

From 21 May to 4 June, in **Burkina Faso**, 16,854 birth certificates were delivered to internally displaced persons and host communities in Boucle du Mouhoun, Northern, Eastern, South-Western and Hauts-Bassins regions. New border demarcations following rulings from the International Court of Justice, coupled with a drastically reduced number of functioning civil registration offices due to armed conflict, has led to heightened risks of statelessness in these parts of Burkina Faso.



A woman in Mozambique received an ID card through a mobile legal clinic which assists internally displaced persons at risk of statelessness. © Catholic University/Tercilio Gedeão Da Ruth Natal

In line with **Action 7** and **Action 8, Issue nationality documentation to those with entitlement to it**, on 11 June, in **Mozambique**, UNHCR and the Catholic University employed mobile legal clinics to assist over 7,500 internally displaced persons at risk of statelessness in Cabo Delgado province in obtaining birth certificates and identity documents.

On **Action 8**, in **South Sudan**, UNHCR and the Directorate for Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration in Bor assisted 695 individuals of the transborder Anyuak community in Poachella to apply for citizenship documents.

In line with **Action 10, Improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations**, on 10 May, the Government of **Estonia** launched the **Estonian Integration Monitoring 2020**, which includes data on the attitudes of the in situ stateless population (who are referred to as “persons with undetermined citizenship” by the Government of Estonia) towards acquiring Estonian citizenship. The results show that 56% of stateless persons are interested in obtaining Estonian citizenship and also shed light on the challenges they face in this regard.

Media Impact of the Campaign

On 22 June, UNHCR issued a [press release](#) to warn that many of the world's stateless may miss out on vaccinations as a result of their lack of citizenship or proof of identity. The press release refers to UNHCR's recent [report](#) "The Impact of COVID-19 on Stateless Population" which notes that the majority of national immunization plans do not provide clarity on their coverage of stateless people.

In **Madagascar**, in anticipation of the introduction of a bill for a new citizenship law in the National Assembly, the NGO Focus Development Association (FDA) called on its network of journalists to provide media coverage on the bill. The Members of Parliament who are the holders of the bill and FDA participated in various television and radio programs to discuss the issue. The bill was covered on the national TV channel [TVM](#) in its program "Lazao ny marina" ("Tell the truth") on 12 May, on the TV channel [RTA](#) in the program "Ca me dit" on 22 May, during the [news program](#) of the radio station [Antsiva](#) on 27 May, and during a special broadcast on [TV Plus](#) on 3 June.

In **South Africa**, the issue of statelessness received media coverage on different channels. On 22 March, the NGO Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) issued an [op-ed](#) on universal birth registration and persisting challenges in South Africa. On 24 April, LHR was interviewed by [The Saturday Star](#) on the human rights consequences of the Namibian Government's refusal to issue travel documents to twin babies born to a surrogate mother in South Africa. On 26 May, LHR was interviewed by [CNBC Africa](#) on access to COVID-19 vaccines for undocumented people in South Africa.

In April, in the **United Kingdom**, UNHCR published the report "[I am human](#)" to shine a light on the predicament of [stateless people in the UK](#) on the long path to recognition and residency status, which often takes years or even decades. The report is the result of a participatory assessment carried out in the UK.

On 2 June, the Swiss National Radio broadcast a [program](#) on the plight of stateless persons in **Switzerland** featuring an interview with a stateless refugee and with the Head of Office of UNHCR Bureau for Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

On 6 May, UNHCR organized a media briefing in Makassar, **Indonesia** to inform journalists of UNHCR's mandate on statelessness and its work to improve access to universal birth registration for refugees in Indonesia, particularly in Makassar.

On 1 June, UNHCR **Thailand** published the [story of Yutthachai Jaju](#), a formerly stateless person, on UNHCR's website and social media platforms for the UNHCR's "Refugee Voices" series. Yutthachai Jaju works as a Community Mobilizer providing legal assistance to stateless persons in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.

On 28 May, in **Armenia**, UNHCR broadcast the [story](#) of a stateless person who is currently receiving assistance from a partner organization of UNHCR to obtain a passport. The video and is part of a broader effort by UNHCR to raise public awareness in Armenia.

On 27 May, USA for UNHCR, a civil society partner of UNHCR in the **United States**, published a [news story](#) about a stateless Harvard student and member of the NGO United Stateless who is raising awareness of statelessness issues in the United States.



John, a stateless man residing in the UK, was interviewed by UNHCR for the report "I am human". © UNHCR/Katie Barlow

Upcoming Events

On 15 July, virtually

The European Network on Statelessness is organizing the virtual event “ONLINE DEBATE: Using litigation to end statelessness” which will mark the launch of the Network’s new Statelessness Case Law Database. Registration is open [here](#).

From 26 to 30 July, virtually

UNHCR and the Catholic University of Central Africa will organize the third edition of the Nationality and Statelessness Course for French-speaking practitioners in Africa.

16 September, virtually

UNHCR and the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness are organizing an event to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

On 24 September, in Strasbourg and virtually

The Council of Europe and UNHCR will host an international conference to take stock of the statelessness situation in Europe and to renew Member States’ commitments to address outstanding issues by agreeing on concrete follow-up actions.

4 November, virtually

UNHCR will convene a Thematic Stocking Event on Statelessness in the lead-up to the High-Level Officials Meeting to assess progress on the pledges submitted at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness and Global Refugee Forum. The outcomes of the Thematic Stocktaking Event will inform the three primary outcome areas of the High-Level Officials Meeting.

14 and 15 December, Geneva

UNHCR will convene the first High-Level Officials Meeting to follow-up on the [Global Compact on Refugees](#). The event will be an opportunity for senior government officials and representatives of the international community to take stock of progress and maintain the momentum towards achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, taking into consideration the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 16 to 22 February 2022, virtually

The Peter McMullin Centre of the University of Melbourne will hold its annual Statelessness Intensive Course. The multi-disciplinary course employs a blend of theoretical and practical components and is open to participants from diverse backgrounds. Applications can be submitted until 30 September. Registration is open [here](#).

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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