



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Parliamentary action to end statelessness by 2024

*Virtual Webinar, 25 February 2021
14:00-15:30 (Central European Time)*

Statelessness, the situation of people who have no nationality, has devastating impacts on millions of people around the world. Statelessness deprives women and men, girls and boys, of the right to simply enjoy rights every other citizen enjoys – the right to an identity, to move, own property, access to education, health and employment.

In 2014, UNHCR launched an ambitious Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, known as the [#IBelong Campaign](#). As statelessness can be prevented and resolved by law, parliamentarians have a critical role to play in bringing the scourge of statelessness to an end.

The 2018 [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR) makes clear reference to statelessness as both a cause and consequence of forced displacement (para 83), and highlights the role of parliaments in supporting the implementation of GCR (para 39). A central follow-up arrangement is the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF) where States and other actors come together every four years to contribute with financial support, technical expertise and policy changes that help reach the GCR objectives.

In 2019, the inaugural GRF and the High-Level Segment on Statelessness (HLS) resulted in unprecedented 396 pledges concerning statelessness submitted by States, international and regional organizations, and civil society. 79 States submitted [270 pledges](#) relevant to eradicating statelessness globally, many of which involve **parliamentary action**, such as:

- the review and amendment of nationality laws;
- accession to the [1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons](#) and [1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness](#);
- adoption of Statelessness Determination Procedures; and
- budgetary allocations to ensure stateless persons are protected and can access their rights.

These pledges are expected to give a boost to the implementation of the [#IBelong Campaign](#) and [Global Action Plan to End Statelessness](#).

Past years and months have provided ample evidence that progress is possible, resulting in significantly changing the lives of thousands of men and women from around the world. In many instances, the role of parliaments has been instrumental in bringing about positive results.

Recent examples include the issuance of [Kenyan citizenship](#) to 1,670 stateless Shona and 1,300 stateless persons of Rwandan descent who qualify under the law as Kenyan citizens; and the decision of the [Islamic Republic of Iran](#) to amend its nationality law to allow mothers to confer nationality to their children. The nationality law was amended by the Parliament in 2019 to allow children under 18 years old to apply for identity documents. Nearly 75,000 children with Iranian mothers and non-Iranian fathers have become eligible to apply for Iranian citizenship.



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The [Parliament of Turkmenistan passed a new Law on Civil Status Acts in July 2020](#) which was followed by a Presidential Decree in December granting citizenship to 2,580 stateless persons. The law reform helped to prevent childhood statelessness by ensuring that all children born in the country, including those with undocumented parents, have their births registered.

[Côte d'Ivoire implemented the first African Statelessness Determination Procedure](#). Two regulations that were signed on 2 September 2020, formally establish procedures that will regularize the status of stateless people in Côte d'Ivoire.

Since the start of the #IBelong Campaign, 14 States have acceded to the 1961 Convention: Angola, Argentina, Belize, Burkina Faso, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Italy, Luxembourg, Mali, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone, Peru, Spain.

These actions are directly linked to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in leaving no one behind, including those who experience negative consequences of not being recognized as citizens of any country. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)– such as SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reducing inequality and SDG 16 on access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, including SDG 16.9 on legal identity for all – can help prevent and reduce statelessness.

Objectives of the webinar

The IPU and UNHCR are longtime partners in raising awareness about statelessness among parliamentarians, in close cooperation with IPU's Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In 2005, the IPU-UNHCR [Handbook for Parliamentarians on Nationality and Statelessness](#) was produced (updated in 2014 and translated into thirteen languages). This was followed in 2018 with the [Handbook on Good Practices in Nationality Laws for the Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness](#) (available in eight languages).

With just 3 years to go before the 2024 target, UNHCR and the IPU are organizing a global virtual webinar on '**Parliamentary action to end statelessness by 2024**'. This webinar aims to enhance awareness of statelessness issues among parliamentarians and showcase good practices to inspire further leadership by members of parliament in eliminating statelessness and protecting stateless persons, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The webinar will identify both challenges and opportunities for parliamentary engagement, and will place particular attention on **how to move beyond pledges made at the GRF and HLS** with concrete implementation and results.

The webinar will bring together parliamentarians to share **good practices** and discuss **strategies and practical ways** of mobilizing parliamentary action to end statelessness by 2024. Speakers include Members of Parliaments who have led legislative efforts to address statelessness in their countries.



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Time (CET)	Agenda Item
14:00-14:10	Welcome and Opening Remarks by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNHCR
14:10-14:30	Parliamentary Action to End Statelessness by 2024 Ms. Melanie Khanna , Head of Statelessness Section, UNHCR Overview of pledges made at the HLS and GRF and how parliamentary action can support those relating to acceding to the Statelessness Conventions, removing gender discriminatory provisions from national laws, preventing child statelessness, granting statelessness status and facilitating naturalization.
14:30-15:00	Good Practices and Lessons Learned by Members of Parliaments Four Members of Parliament will share their experiences in preventing and/or reducing statelessness, addressing key challenges and actions taken to overcome them.
15:00-15:20	Moderated Discussion and Q&A Participants are encouraged to share their views and perspectives on opportunities and discuss ways of mobilizing parliamentary action to end statelessness by 2024.
15:20-15:30	Closing Remarks