



International Migration Law (IML)
NGO Learning Initiative

Session Eight

Addressing statelessness in the context of international migration

As stated in Article 15 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has a right to a nationality, and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality. However, there are more than 15 million people in the world who face a life without a nationality and every ten minutes, a child is born stateless. Without nationality, individuals face an existence characterised by insecurity and marginalisation. Stateless people are amongst the most vulnerable in the world, often denied enjoyment of rights such as equality before the law, the right to work, education, documentation or healthcare. In the context of migration, in which statelessness can act as both cause and consequence for migration, stateless persons often face additional vulnerabilities due to documentation issues, human rights violations and risk of detention.

Objective of the session: Participants will learn about the international legal framework relating to statelessness and the link between stateless and migration. They will also hear about ongoing NGO work promoting the rights of stateless people globally and UNHCR's #IBelong initiative to end statelessness in the world.

- ⇒ Introduction: organisers (8')
- ⇒ First speaker: **Melanie Khanna, Senior Legal Coordinator and Section Chief, Statelessness, UNHCR (20')**
 - Definition, causes and consequences of statelessness
 - UNHCR's mandate to address statelessness
 - The basics of the international legal framework
 - Progress since the launch of the #IBelong Campaign
- ⇒ Second speaker: **Laura van Waas, Co-Director, Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (20')**
 - The link between statelessness and migration
 - The issue of childhood statelessness
 - The work of the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
- ⇒ Questions and Answers (Q&A) session (30')
- ⇒ Closing remarks: organisers (8')



Further reading:

- Laura van Waas, *A 100-year (hi)story of statelessness*, a blog for the Peace Palace Library (2016), available at <https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/2016/08/a-100-year-history-of-statelessness/>
- UNHCR, *"This is our home" – Stateless minorities and their search for citizenship* (2017), available at <https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/stateless-minorities/>
- Melanie Khanna, *Putting statelessness on the front burner*, an essay in the Rosa Luxembourg Atlas of the Stateless (2020) – pages 59-61, available at https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/sonst_publicationen/atlasof_hestateless2020_web_201029.pdf
- Results of the High Level Segment on Statelessness, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/results-of-the-high-level-segment-on-statelessness/>
- Background Note on Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws, available at [Refworld | Background Note on Gender Equality, Nationality Laws and Statelessness 2021](#)
- Jyothi Kanics, *Migration, forced displacement, and childhood statelessness*, an essay in the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion's World's Stateless report (2017), available at <http://children.worldsstateless.org/3/migration-displacement-and-childhood-statelessness/migration-forced-displacement-and-childhood-statelessness.html>
- ISI and UNICEF, *What's best for children's nationality – Podcast #3: Lessons from Lebanon*, (2019), available at <https://www.institutesi.org/resources/whats-best-for-childrens-nationality-podcast-3>