



Statelessness and rights

(how can we protect the rights of stateless persons?)

1. There are millions of stateless persons in the world

In Europe alone, there are **over 600,000** stateless persons, who cannot enjoy the benefits that come with a nationality.



2. Many children are born stateless

Children born to parents who are stateless themselves, often inherit their parents' lack of nationality.



In this way the problem of statelessness is being transmitted to future generations

3. Being stateless can prevent someone from accessing their rights

Having a nationality coincides with access to many fundamental human rights that everybody should have. Not having nationality can make it difficult to access these rights.

Stateless persons face restrictions on their enjoyment of basic rights like

- » education;
- » health care;
- » housing;
- » employment;
- » marriage;
- » travel;
- » and many more.



4. Being stateless can make people feel like they don't exist



Stateless persons often feel like they are invisible, leaving them very isolated and lonely. They can feel misunderstood and have low self-esteem because they are unable to participate in society and enjoy the same rights as everybody else.

Stateless persons often have to deal with a variety of social and psychological problems because of their isolation and lack of support.

5. Everybody has the right to a nationality and protection of their human rights

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights protects every human's right to enjoy a nationality.



Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

However, even those people who do not have a nationality deserve to have their basic rights protected. Most European countries have signed up to special treaties to ensure stateless persons' rights and prevent new cases of statelessness.

The 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons

and

The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

6. States can protect children from statelessness

Not all countries have signed up to the Conventions on statelessness, and not all the countries that have signed up are fulfilling their obligations under them.

States can put safeguards into their nationality laws, so that any child born in that country who would otherwise be stateless is entitled to nationality.

By ending childhood statelessness in this way, we can stop the problem from growing, and ensure that every child can grow up with the protection of having a nationality.

No child deserves to be stateless or to be excluded from accessing their rights.



This factsheet was prepared as part of the European Network on Statelessness's campaign, **'None of Europe's Children Should be Stateless'**



To learn more visit: www.statelessness.eu
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