



International Monterrey Model United Nations Simulation

American School Foundation of Monterrey



General Assembly

Topic: Dealing with statelessness and establishing regulations to prevent its development

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I. Committee Background

The creation of the United Nations (UN), alongside the General Assembly, was established after the atrocities that resulted from World War II. The first meeting was held in London in 1946, right after the conclusion of the war. The UN is said to serve as a background for the General Assembly. The General Assembly is one of the UN's principal organs; it serves as a forum where all UN members assemble to discuss conflicting issues, mainly regarding international peace and security. It oversees the UN's budget, the overall functioning of the organization, the admission of new member states, and amendments to the UN's Charter (*About the General Assembly 2021*).

Currently, the General Assembly has 193 member states; each has a single, equally important vote. The sessions occur from September through December, but "special sessions" can be summoned if an emergency arises. In the regular sessions, member states strive to formulate resolutions that they then vote to pass. The essential questions require a 2/3 majority for the draft resolution to pass, while the rest only require a simple majority. Unlike the Security Council, the General Assembly's resolutions are not binding; they only serve as recommendations. The resolutions do not need approval from any other organ. However, the General Assembly receives resolution recommendations from subsidiary organs for them to take into consideration. This year they will meet for the 77th session (*About the General Assembly 2021*).

II. Introduction

Description and Definition of the Topic

A stateless person is defined internationally as: "a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law" (*UN Conventions on Statelessness 2021*). In other words, an individual is stateless when no nation recognizes them as a citizen. This problem affects more than 10 million people worldwide depriving them of their rights: health and education are often denied for them, making it difficult for them to lead prosperous lives. Due to their lack of identity recognition, and therefore their lack of rights protection, stateless individuals are potential victims of human smuggling and trafficking among other human rights violations. Being stateless can be the result of various factors: seeing how nationality laws often

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fail to consider all scenarios, people migrating from their birth countries and having children in countries that give citizenship by ancestry, the rise of new nations and adjustment of borders, or the deprivation of nationality by a government. The issue of statelessness is a concern for many governments as it leads to the rise of multiple problems within their nations (*Ending Statelessness* n.d.).

The Problem

Currently, an estimated 11-15 million stateless people living in the world are denied a variety of government services: the right to vote, education, and employment. These individuals are affected by their nationality, or lack thereof, since they are “alienated and marginalized” (*Convention on ... UNHCR*, 1961). Countries that, for political, religious, racial, or gender conflicts, reject nationalities lead to multiple people ending in a stateless situation. In some Asian countries, such as Malaysia, children need their parents to have citizenship resulting in many being born into statelessness. Stateless children are then not allowed to attend a school or receive any form of education; besides depriving them of a human right, these governments widen the education gap.

The region in the world with the largest stateless population is near Myanmar, where many Rohingya Muslims are displaced due to their religion and the genocide that occurred from 2016 to 2017. However, there are reportedly stateless people spanning over a range of 76 countries (*The World's Stateless* 2014). According to the Institute of Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), new data shows that Ivory Coast is moving higher in the list with the country with the most stateless people since there are around 955,399 stateless people. Other countries high on this list include Thailand, Tajikistan, Greece, Uzbekistan, and Italy. A worldwide consensus considers statelessness to be an unfair treatment of people, yet many countries still deliberately do not recognize many individuals. The UN has passed resolutions to prevent this issue, such as the right to nationality in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “but gives no clue as to how responsibility for granting citizenship should fall on a particular state” (Goris, Reddy, & Khon, 2009). As a result, many countries have harsh, biased, and very different systems to grant citizenship to a stateless person or community; this has made a significant disagreement on how to handle the issue.

The ability to ensure recognition of stateless individuals by the nation in which they reside will provide the world with a wide range of benefits. The UN prioritizing the protection of all human rights for all individuals in the world makes it their responsibility to provide aid and assurance of equal treatment to these individuals, protecting their rights. Statelessness has proven to have a direct correlation with discrimination due to “one or more ‘protected characteristics’ such as their race, ethnicity or gender” (Whiteman, 2014). The result of discrimination of an ethnic group can end with a whole stateless ethnic group or migrating refugees as a sort of

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protection of culture. The UN concerns itself with ensuring fair and equal life to all individuals: statelessness completely derails this idea.

III. History of the Topic

Chronological History of the Topic

Statelessness is a matter that has existed alongside the human race for over two millennia: since the start of the Roman Empire with their elaboration of citizenship, many outsiders and foreigners have been subjected to this issue. In the Greco-Roman world, those who were captives or slaves were positioned in the lowest ranks of society and, presumably, denied citizenship. Moreover, women were not viewed as Roman citizens; their citizenship depended on that of their father or husband (Syme, 1986). Although the sources of this problem have changed from an antique point of view into more modern reasoning, the ideal around this topic has lingered to this day.

The first examples of this situation in recent history can date back to before World War II, during the 1920s and 1930s, when apostates—Muslims from birth who have rejected or abandoned the Islamic religion by all means—were separated from their Muslim identities and placed in an underclass (*The World's Stateless* 2014). Additionally, the Roma people—an ethnic group that originated from northern India and live as nomads traveling mostly through Europe—also experienced different sorts of segregation and human rights violations throughout the continent in which they moved—and still move—around. The discriminations against them got to the point where nations had “legal decrees explicitly expelling Roma populations from their territory, such as the 1482 Brandenburg Decree” (Sardelić, 2021). Unlike the ex-Muslims, the Roma were not stateless as a result of political-religious disputes, but rather because they are a stateless nation: “an ethnic group or nation that does not possess its own state” (Chouinard et al., 2016). Due to the aggregation of events, in 1930 The Nansen International Office for Refugees of the League of Nations was established to take care of refugees; they did so through a nine-year span. This organization won the Nobel Peace Prize in their penultimate year for their relief work for the benefit of refugees throughout Europe (*Nansen International Office for Refugees – History* 2021). The union was named after Fridtjof Nansen, an explorer, scientist, diplomat, and humanitarian from Norway. This man is accounted for making a big impact in the diminishing and setting back of this worldwide obstacle by creating the stateless person passports. They were internationally recognized refugee travel documents from 1922-1938. After that year, the whole movement crumbled and a series of problems backlashed for stateless people as WWII started (Merritt, 2021).

The persecution of the Jews in Germany provoked serious instability in the legal status of citizens. Jews were denied the nationality of their home country, and denied general human

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rights; including the right to live. The events of the Holocaust drove millions of Jews out of the country and displaced them throughout Europe. However, with no legal papers, and a passport that had no nationality, it was arduous for them to find a place where they could reside safely and legally. The war left a lack of constitutional laws for people to maintain their original nationalities, especially for discriminated ethnicities (*Refugees 2021*).

Conditions started to improve once the UN established an agency called the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR): “mandated to help and protect refugees, internally displaced and stateless people, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country” (*The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees n.d.*). The first action set was the 1954 Convention, with a purpose to “ensure full enjoyment [and protection]” of the human rights for all stateless people (*"Eradicating Statelessness" ... Statelessness n.d.*). The meeting adjusted two subtopics: the legal definition of what a stateless person is, and the treatment and rights that should be provided to the subjects; the right to education, employment, and housing. Following the first convention, in 1961, they had another; the 1961 Convention: now politicians had aimed at preventing and reducing statelessness as a whole. The most essential provision made during the event was that newborns will acquire the nationality of the country in which they are at the moment of their birth (*UN Conventions on Statelessness 2021*). This dealt with the trouble of kids growing up with no official identification of their origin.

Statelessness keeps re-emerging across the globe, while some countries experience this with clear occurrences and events. A clear example of such happened in Syria: in 1962, about 120,000 Syrian Kurds were deprived of their Syrian citizenship. This number kept growing as the descendants of those who lost their nationality in 1962 multiplied; in 2011 it was estimated that there were about 300,000 Syrians without a nationality. The government attempted to reduce this number by granting “citizenship to thousands of stateless people in the country's Kurdish region”, but current conflict has impacted this effort (Maktabi, 2011). Another example is Australia that had 37 stateless people detained in onshore detention on April 30, 2017. Some of them had been confined for more than two years. In Australia people with no nationality could not apply for a visa and therefore had to rely on being refugees; they were granted no place in Australia (Doherty, 2018).

Historical Case Studies

Myanmar's Citizenship Law

Myanmar, a Buddhist-majority country, passed a citizenship law in 1982 that effectively rendered most Rohingya Muslims of South Asian heritage stateless. The 1982 Citizenship Law of Myanmar outlines the process of obtaining citizenship: obtaining "complete citizenship" is based on "race" or "ethnicity" (Van Fleet & Ji Kang, 2017). However, the country only

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recognizes 135 national ethnic groups, making those who do not belong to one of them at risk of being stateless. Children of unrecognized ethnicities are in danger of becoming stateless since Myanmar's national law mandates that children can only gain Myanmar citizenship if both parents are citizens and belong to one of the recognized national ethnic groups. At the moment, there are no safeguards in place to prevent children from being born stateless; most Rohingya Muslims of South Asian heritage are functionally stateless as a result of the nation's citizenship law. "Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims were forced to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh in 2017 following a military crackdown, while more than 100,000 of the persecuted minority remain" in the country (Regencia, 2021). For instance, many are being sold into slavery on fishing boats and plantations, this is one of the reasons why there is around 900,000 Rohingya live in Bangladesh, with smaller communities scattered around Asia (Batha, E., 2019).

Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action

In December 2014, representatives from over 20 American states joined in Brasilia, Brazil to confer and attempt to reach a solution on the problem of statelessness by 2024, alongside addressing the growing displacement trends that had been occurring. This meeting took place on the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, a declaration that was very helpful to international refugees, especially in Latin American countries. Brazil launched the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, which was adopted by 28 countries, as well as other territories in Latin America and the Caribbean. This declaration states that every person has a right to a nationality as well as "[highlights] that statelessness is a form of human rights violation" ("*Eradicating Statelessness*" ... *Statelessness* n.d.). The sixth chapter of this Plan of Action sets out the eradication of statelessness and includes different recommendations for countries to implement; initiatives to create statelessness conventions, expedite worldwide birth registration, advocate and establish internal protection and aid towards stateless people within countries, among other solutions. This project aims to protect refugees and expatriates, as well as provide them with the benefits they are lacking such as healthcare and the right to vote ("*Eradicating Statelessness*" ... *Statelessness* n.d.). This action plan caused more action taken in South and Central American countries; for example, there has been an increase in the UNHCR's presence at the border of Mexico and South America to identify and protect deported and displaced people. Another action started from this plan is the implementation of different organizations in American countries such as the *Commission on Forced Migration, Exile, and Reconciliation* in Colombia in order to provide more aid to stateless people ("*Eradicating Statelessness*" ... *Statelessness* n.d.).

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Yugoslav Wars: Statelessness Laws

Throughout the mid-1990s, Yugoslavia was a country made up of many different cultural and ethnic groups involving different practices and religions. The whole state was mainly divided into three groups, the Roman Catholic Croatians, the Eastern Orthodox Christian Serbians, and the Muslim Bosnians. These groups were always separated throughout the history of Yugoslavia, but the growing population and oppression by the Serbians due to their major influence in politics of the country would lead to disputes and fighting. There were different rights given depending on the cultural group people belonged in; there was substantial discrimination in the country. The Yugoslav War started in 1991 and ended up until 2001 resulting in the break up into six states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The disputes between these modern countries are the same that existed when they were one nation, but the repercussions of the war can still be seen in today's world: one of them being statelessness. The war resulted in people displaced and a refugee crisis throughout southeastern Europe.

According to the UNHCR, there are currently around "5000 stateless people" found within this region (*Report on statelessness in South Eastern Europe 2011*). These individuals were found to be stateless due to a number of reasons: the loss of any sort of birth certification or personal documentation, or the lack of recognition from the states in which they resided. However, many laws have been implemented in these countries by the governments or multinational organizations in order to help these individuals be granted some form of citizenship. For example, Macedonia's Law of Aliens "provides for grant of residence permit for 'stateless persons' under Article 80 which generally refers to 'humanitarian grounds', these individuals have been issued Alien Residence Permits", and states like Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina agreed to implement the "Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Avoidance and Reduction of Statelessness" as they entered the European Council (*Report on statelessness in South Eastern Europe 2011*). Through the state's and international organization's implementation of these safeguards, many individuals left stateless by the Yugoslav Wars have been provided with citizenship and rights within the states that they reside in.

North Korean Refugees in China

Since the Korean Separation in 1945, it is estimated that 300,000 people have defected from the country in search of better economic opportunities. While the exact number is unknown, a large part of the defections took the route to China bringing most of them from the North Hamgyong Province in North Korea: one of the poorest and most deficient regions in the country. With the immigration of North Koreans, new problems came to light, one of which was statelessness. China's strict immigration laws often prohibited the defectors from being officially

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categorized as political refugees (Tanaka, 2019). This left thousands of undocumented immigrants struggling in the streets of China, prone to human trafficking and sexual abuse. Women were left in an especially compromising position as they were often forced by the situation to make deals with Chinese men in exchange for protection. This situation alone caused more issues as undocumented women would end up pregnant with a child who did not possess the right to citizenship in any country. Today, the presence of stateless teens in China is one of the most overlooked refugee crises in the world as thousands of “illegal” teens struggle to live by that lack of human rights that citizenship entails (Van Fleet & Ji Kang, 2017). Strict communist laws continue to force North Korean citizens to flee the country and lose their citizenship by treason. This situation has gotten to the point in which Chinese businessmen and former departees have created enterprises with the intention to aid North Korean refugees seeking a new life. As the number of departees continues to grow, so does the number of stateless individuals in China which continues to expand to refugee related crises that can be found among immigrants residing in the country (Tanaka, 2019).

Jew's Expulsion of Palestinians

After centuries of displacement and persecution, in the post-WWII world, the Jews saw British Palestine in the Middle East as the best chance to make their new home. However, tensions between the Muslims and Jews living in the area were rising before the British mandate was over. Eventually, the UN mandated Britain to withdraw from the region and separated the country into two separate states: Israel was a nation for all the Jews to reside in, while Palestine was a nation for the Muslims, and Jerusalem was made a special international zone. The means of this action was “to give Jews a state, and Palestinians their independence with the hopes of stopping rivalry” (Writes 2021). In the eyes of the UN the end of the British occupation that started in 1919 and ended in 1948, was a terrific opportunity to achieve peace between contradicting parties. However, once the British mandate was over, Palestinian citizens had no protection from a world power-house; meanwhile Israel was tasked with arbitrating entitlement to nationality. This resulted in the British-Palestinian passports, held by Palestinians, redeemed invalid. Following the Arab-Israeli war, which the new state of Israel won, they set a policy to reduce Muslims and increase Jew immigrants. This movement's basis was that Jews are not just an ethnic group but rather one group deserving of a nationality and state. Their Zionist scheme was described as the “eradication of Palestine from the map, both as a political entity and a basis of nationality” (Shiblak, 2006). This new power started making a lot of changes and unlawful movements. The Jews began by taking major property off the Islamic state. Then, they illicitly revoked IDs from thousands, expelled numbers of Palestinians, and those who wanted to return to their country were turned down. In the process, the number of refugees around the Middle East rose exponentially.

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Palestinians today fall into one of three sections: “holders of the ‘Refugee Travel Document’ (RTD) issued by Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and, some other Arab countries; holders of nationalities of convenience—mainly temporary Jordanian passports; or holders of the Palestinian passport issued by the Palestinian Authority (PA)” which are not yet respected or valued (Shiblak, 2006). The events of the Zionist scheme are in the past, but currently, Palestinians keep suffering as a result of the Israeli cold war. As a result, more than four million Palestinians live without a record of an official state of origin, and most immigrants, especially in places like Lebanon and Egypt, are subject to a denial of civil rights such as housing, employment, property, communal interactions, and family unification. Due to all this, scattered Palestinian communities are one of the poorest ethnicities and are constantly subject to oppression or racism.

Past UN Actions

The UNHCR started the Campaign to End Statelessness in November 2014. The 1954 Convention defined statelessness and aimed to provide stateless people with a basic set of human rights: these include, the rights to education, work, and housing, among others. Stateless individuals are also entitled to identity, travel documents, and administrative aid under the 1954 Convention. Meanwhile, the 1961 Convention was oriented in the long-term objective: to avoid and minimize statelessness. It establishes an international framework to guarantee that everyone has the right to citizenship; according to this convention, states must incorporate protections in their nationality laws to prevent statelessness at birth. This was the most important provision of the treaty as every born child would be born into a nationality regardless of their parents’ nationality. It also sets important safeguards against statelessness caused by nationality loss or renunciation, as well as state succession; the agreement specifies the relatively restricted conditions under which a state may strip a person of their nationality, even if it ends in statelessness (*UN Conventions on Statelessness* 2021). The United Nations General Assembly entrusted UNHCR with the statutory mandate of identifying stateless people, preventing and minimizing statelessness across the globe, and protecting stateless people’s rights. As a result, the UNHCR has assisted stateless people through a series of resolutions dating back to 1995. The Assembly also decided to provide aid to individuals under the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness twenty years ago. Finally, the UN Refugee Agency has worked with governments, other UN agencies, as well as civil society organizations, to address the issue.

The UNHCR made huge steps toward the eventual eradication of statelessness in October 2013 when they made a call towards the international community to end statelessness by creating *The Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014 – 2024*. The plan, created in accordance with the international community and external organizations, paves a road towards ending statelessness and preventing future cases. The plan consists of 10 actions that aim to be

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completed between 2014 and 2024; these include: resolving existing major situations of statelessness, ensuring no more statelessness from birth, removing gender discrimination from citizenship norms, granting protection to victims of statelessness, prohibiting revocation of nationality, preventing on cases of state succession, ensuring birth registration, issuing proper nationality certification, go in alignment to UN Statelessness Conventions, and improve data regarding a stateless population (*Global action plan to end statelessness: 2014 – 2024* 2015). The UNHCR has continuously urged various key players in the situation who receive thousands of refugees every year to accelerate this process seeing the results of badly managed refugee crises around the world. Through this action plan, the UNHCR hopes to take big steps towards the eradication of this prevalent crisis, and by doing so helping the overall immigration issue that thousands of refugees face all around the world.

IV. Key Players and Points of View

Bangladesh

Currently, Bangladesh has been accommodating over 906,000 refugees, especially Rohingya Muslims, despite the country's own economic and resource restrictions. Many refugees are from the Rakhine State, a territory inside of Myanmar, and west of Bangladesh, which has been declared stateless by the government. Aside from the refugees in Bangladesh, approximately 200,000 stateless people are living in the Rakhine State, making Myanmar the country with the largest stateless population. Bangladesh is not a part of *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which is a legal document that “asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom,” even though this “is now considered a rule of customary international law,” (*Submission by the ... BANGLADESH* 2012). Therefore, in this nation there is no provision for refugees in the national legislation, however, there have been other laws implemented which protect all people in their country. Bangladesh has two main refugee camps in the Cox's Bazar district. These sites have been improving in quality over the years and now provide more humanitarian aid, early education, less reported cases of severe and acute malnutrition, and lower mortality rates. Despite this, Bangladesh has announced that it will review its refugee policy, and given a recent increase in violence in the Rakhine State, the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar has been closed. Media has also reported that around 4,000 refugees have been sent back to the Rakhine State. Myanmar's state counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, has been heavily criticized for her lack of involvement on the issue (*Submission by the ... BANGLADESH* 2012).

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United Kingdom

Statelessness is governed by a patchwork of laws, policies, and practices. In 2013, the United Kingdom (UK) implemented a Statelessness Determination Procedure (SDP) and it is a signatory to the majority of important human rights treaties. In most circumstances, the safeguards are in place to avoid childhood statelessness. However, there are considerable gaps in prevention in general: The UK does not consider statelessness to be a human rights issue nor do they have a time limit on immigration detention. They believe that a stateless person in the UK Immigration Rules includes exclusion criteria that go beyond the 1954 Convention (Carter, 2021). The UK SDP enables some people to have their statelessness acknowledged and to get residency and socio-economic rights, as well as a path to naturalization. However, there are procedural barriers and exclusion provisions including: a lack of legal aid in some jurisdictions, limited appeal rights, and a high standard of proof. Applicants have little rights, in some situations, they may be held while awaiting a ruling, which is oftentimes illegal. Statelessness is not always regarded as a legally important fact in detention decisions, and in some situations, a lack of procedural safeguards, such as no time restriction on immigration custody, leads to repeated and protracted incarceration. Most children born in the UK or to British nationals abroad are protected from becoming stateless under British nationality law; nevertheless high registration and naturalization fees, with no possibility of exemption or reduction, are a major barrier to stateless people acquiring British nationality. The UK government also has broad powers to strip British citizens of their citizenship, even if this results in statelessness in some situations (Carter, 2021).

Myanmar

Out of all the ethnicities who have been displaced and lost their nationality, the Rohingya ethnic group is the biggest. Rohingya is a stateless Muslim minority that is rooted in Myanmar's Rakhine State (*The Rohingya Crisis* 2017). Most of the problem can be dated to 1962 when the military regime rose to power in Myanmar with a focal point to expel Muslims; this priority continues to this day with the democratic regime in place (Awan, 2021). The government took various decisions to complete their vision of a country without Muslims, but by far the biggest measure they took was the 1982 citizenship law: a legislation that recognized 135 ethnic groups inside the country, excluding the Rohingya. As a result, neighboring countries have been victims of migrants and refugees for those seeking asylum; although many refugees seek to return to their homeland, they fear the persecution or action that will be taken against them by officials. The citizenship law implies that people born need both parents to be citizens so that they can attain one for themselves. However, non-citizens cannot acquire their nationality through marriage, nor by long-period of residency (*Statelessness in Myanmar* n.d.). The number of individuals who have been left with no papers of origin due to these conditions keeps on

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increasing. Now, stateless Rohingya are estimated somewhere around 1.6 million to 1.9 million. In this country the anti-muslim sense is not the only factor inhibiting people to get official nationalities, another problem is fraud and sudden, unpredictable government decision making (*The displaced and ... Myanmar* 2019). The actions of the government have been brutal, such as the violence of June 2012 that left 200 dead and 150,000 homeless, increasing the number of stateless people in the country (*The Rohingya Crisis* 2017).

Poland

Despite being a signatory to several key human rights documents, Poland has yet to ratify any of the main statelessness conventions. Its data on the country's stateless population is unreliable, and there is no particular mechanism for determining statelessness. Some stateless people may be able to legalize their status through alternative administrative procedures, such as during return or removal proceedings, but there are considerable safeguards in place. Stateless people can be detained merely to confirm their identity, and their protection requirements are not taken into account during the detention process. In Poland, stateless people can apply for naturalization legally, but residency and documentation requirements are substantial obstacles (Przybyławska, 2021). Polish nationality law includes protections to prevent statelessness in the case of adopted children and foundlings, and it also allows for the acquisition of nationality by a child born on the territory to unknown or stateless parents. However, it does not prevent statelessness for children whose foreign parents are unable to impart nationality, and there are practical barriers to acquiring Polish nationality for children born abroad to same-sex parents, which are discriminatory and may lead to statelessness. The parents' legal residence is not necessary for birth registration, and while Poland has received UPR recommendations on access for this particular policy, there have been no recent reports of birth registration hurdles (Przybyławska, 2021).

Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

Statelessness within the African continent has become a growing issue throughout the years and Côte d'Ivoire has played a significant role in the establishment of citizenships and providing residence to unrecognized people. Côte d'Ivoire encourages immigration within its country as a means to provide work opportunities to people who struggle; a total of 2 million immigrants living in Côte d'Ivoire and around a quarter of the population having foreign descent have been the result. However, the massive influx of immigrants within the country and the consequent civil wars in the span of a decade that would split the government in two has resulted in around "700,000 stateless individuals" (*World's stateless people: ... go?* 2014). This has affected the lives of many supposedly 'Ivorian' people, hurting their chances in regards to job opportunities, education, or even place of residence. Statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire however, is

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not an issue that is being ignored; action is being taken by the government in order to solve this issue.

As of September 2020, Côte d'Ivoire has adopted Africa's first legal process to identify and protect stateless individuals. This established procedure would provide previously unrecognized people with "identity documents, school enrollment, access to health services, lawful employment, a bank account, and the ability to buy land" (*Côte d'Ivoire Adopts ... People*, 2020). Côte d'Ivoire has also played a vital role in Africa in the past, with involvement in two Statelessness Conventions in 2013, as well as the adoption of the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness. Since the adoption of the declaration, "34,000 birth certificates [have been] issued mainly in Benin, Ivory Coast, and Mali, and 10,550 nationality certificates [were] issued by Ivory Coast" (ECOWAS, 2017). The lives of many Ivorian people have changed drastically due to the initiative taken by the government, and has been regarded as a prime example for other African countries to also follow suit (*Côte d'Ivoire Adopts ... People*, 2020).

V. Possible Solutions

There are many ways to solve the issue of statelessness: an essential step to take is addressing major, existing cases of statelessness, that way those who are entitled to nationality documents would receive them. However, to completely resolve the issue, delegations from all over the world must come together to an agreement. For example, agreeing to the UN Statelessness Conventions which are described in previous paragraphs (*UN Conventions on Statelessness*, 2021). Another idea would be to grant stateless migrants protection status and make naturalization easier for them. However, it is important to note that many nations would not be happy to make naturalization easier due to its implications and nationalistic laws. Adding on, to make sure that newborns do not fall victims of statelessness, nations should ensure that all births are registered despite the country they were born in. Another approach is the one taken by Brunei, Kuwait, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia, who granted citizenship to some stateless people born in their nations in exchange for investments in Antigua, also known as Waladli, solutions such as these benefit both the country giving the citizenship and the person receiving it. Furthermore, another solution would be to pressure for the removal of gender discrimination from national legislation and prohibit nationality denial, loss, or deprivation based on any type of discrimination. It is important to note that several states will be against this solution as their laws were specifically designed to do this.

Even though these are the factors mainly considered to solve statelessness, the possibility of state succession or separation should also be taken into account whenever solving or preventing statelessness. Promoting social inclusion and stability allows for the avoidance of

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state separation lowering the chance of a mass amount of stateless people. Considering state separation to be a possibility, the newly formed nations should provide provisions, whenever outlining or transferring new territories while also tackling the current citizenship of people living within these boundaries. As stated within the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*: “no person shall become stateless as a result of the transfer” (*Convention on ... UNHCR, 1961*). Though this case of statelessness is rather rare compared to descrimination or lack of birth registration, its impact and effects should not be misjudged. Cases such as those of South Sudan and the previously mentioned Yuogslavia have left a vast amount of people without rights or opportunities.

Another solution would be for governments to facilitate the acquisition of a nationality for the stateless population. The UNHCR has worked alongside governments to grant stateless people nationality in the corresponding countries. However, this solution is not accessible to many refugees since they do not know how to apply for citizenship, also some governments impede this process from occurring due to political, economic, or social reasons (*Convention on ... UNHCR, 1961*). To accomplish this solution, the UNHCR must work with governments, more specifically, in countries where statelessness is a larger issue, and facilitate the process of obtaining a nationality; as well as partnering with non-governmental organizations, media networks, and UN partners to publicize this solution. Making the solution more public will cause the stateless population to have more information on how to procure citizenship. This solution has been implemented by the CLARCIEV, which is a Latin American and Caribbean Council, and they have been devoted to promoting the pursuit of a nationality, “especially in the context of large movements of refugees and migrants” (*"Eradicating Statelessness" ... Statelessness n.d.*).

VI. Current Status

The UNHCR has an ongoing decade-long campaign to eradicate statelessness on a global scale. The campaign started in 2014 along with the UN Refugee Agency and makes yearly reports evaluating their performance to determine effectiveness. By 2017 the *#IBelong* campaign had helped more than 166,000 people gain nationality, and amassed twenty more states into the Statelessness Conventions; now the 1954 convention holds ninety-one states and 1961 amounted to seventy-three. However, a call to action was made by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi. He mentioned that although much was accomplished there was still plenty of work to be done, and millions of people to be helped. The more aid the UNHCR and the *#IBelong* campaign get from politicians, governments, and legislators the better to reach their goal on time (*Four years into its #IBelong ... states 2018*).

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The initiative is based on several goals that hope to reduce and eventually eradicate statelessness all around the world. These objectives can be accomplished through four steps, which, according to the UNHCR, include: “identification, prevention, reduction, and protection” (*How UNHCR helps stateless people* n.d.). Identification is needed to know where the problem comes from and how certain laws are stripping thousands from their rights. When the root of the problem is now known, legislation can be made to correct those policies and manage the situations of thousands of stateless people. As for now, the issue has been identified and certain regions of the globe have been deemed responsible for the majority of the statelessness that the world encounters (*How UNHCR helps stateless people* n.d.).

It has been remarked that the wide majority of the stateless people are located in Africa and Asia. It was good tidings when two regulations were signed “on [September 2, 2020] formally establish procedures that will regularize the status of stateless people and fulfill a crucial component of Côte d’Ivoire’s National Action Plan” (*Côte d’Ivoire adopts ... people* 2020). This will benefit people who were not legally recognized, to now gain “identity documents, enroll in school, access health services, seek lawful employment, open a bank account, and buy land” (*Côte d’Ivoire adopts ... people* 2020). This contributes to the second and third steps of the UNHCR’s plan in which the goal is to prevent future cases and reduce existing ones.

As seen in Côte d’Ivoire’s case and many other countries, the most effective and simplest way, that has been shown to gradually moderate statelessness, has been through the compliance of state governments with UNHCR. Small modifications in the legislation will help more people acquire a nationality. Although there are many parties involved in diminishing this global issue such as NGOs and private lawyers, it appears that the everpresent medium UNHCR. Ultimately, to grant basic human rights to all people on earth, more countries need to focus on what people can provide rather than where they came from. Societies were built by people to protect each other; today the modern world has globalized into one human society: it is up to everybody to take care of everybody, which is why the committee must find a solution to this problem.

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