Contest for Journalists

“Statelessness in Central Asia”

UNHCR in Central Asia is announcing a contest for journalists from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan on covering the topic of nationality and statelessness.

Background and context

The international legal definition of a stateless person is “a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law”. In simple terms, this means that a stateless person does not have any citizenship, as if they don’t belong to any country. Some people are born stateless, but others become stateless later in life.

Today, millions of people around the world are denied a nationality. As a result, they often aren't allowed to enrol of graduate school, seek medical assistance, get an official job, open a bank account, own property or even get married or register the birth of their children.

Stateless people are found in all regions of the world and even though statelessness may arise out of conflict and forced displacement, the majority of statelessness people were born in the countries in which they have lived their entire lives.

Central Asia is home to a considerable stateless population. Statelessness in Central Asia is largely a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. While many were able to confirm or acquire the nationality of the successor states, some others have been unable to do so despite having had a link to a newly independent state partly due to gaps in the nationality laws and practices. Subsequently, although significant progress has been made since independence, statelessness continues to affect the lives of many people, compounded by migratory movements, the lack of adequate safeguards in citizenship laws, and gaps in birth registration procedures.

UNHCR is mandated by the UN General Assembly to identify stateless people, prevent and reduce statelessness, as well as to protect the rights of stateless people. UNHCR fulfils its mandate by working with governments, other UN agencies and civil society to address the problem. On 4 November 2014, UNHCR launched the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.

Goal

The goal of the contest is to support quality, authoritative and impactful reporting of various aspects of nationality and statelessness in Central Asia.
Submissions

The contest is open to original works on the topic of nationality and statelessness in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) presented in print, online, TV or radio from journalists based and working for a media outlet in one of the countries mentioned above. Contest submissions can be focused on a range of topics, including, but not limited to:

- causes of statelessness and innovative solutions for this problem;
- extreme vulnerability and human impact of statelessness, including the risks and issues stateless people face in Central Asia because of COVID-19;
- challenges faced by Central Asian countries in resolving the issue of statelessness;
- progress made by Central Asian countries in eradicating statelessness.

Eligibility and Requirements

- Participants must be based and work for a media outlet in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan at the time of submission.
- Entries are open to professional and freelance journalists.
- Submissions are accepted in English, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek languages.
- The contest is open for submissions published/broadcast within the period from 15 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- There is no limit on the number of submissions that can be provided by one participant.
- Each submission is to be limited to a single author.

Deadline, Method of Submission, Contest Procedures and Criteria

The deadline for submissions is 11:59 PM (GMT+6), 31 December 2020.

Applicants should provide the following information to email: kazalres@unhcr.org with the subject line “Contest for Journalists on Statelessness 2020”:

- Completed registration form
- Confirmation from a respective media outlet signed by the chief editor and stamped
- The contest work.

Contest works should be provided in the following form:

- For print materials: Scanned copy (PDF, JPG). The scan copy must be of high quality, readable and preferably show the publication date.
- For online materials: a link to the online platform where the contest work has been published.
- For TV and radio materials: a link to the online multimedia-sharing platform where the contest work can be accessed and/or downloaded

If an applicant submits more than one submission, each submission should be provided in a separate email.

Questions should be directed to the same address.

By submitting contest works, candidates represent that they fulfil the eligibility requirements of the Contest. The organizers may request formal proof of eligibility.

No later than 72 hours after the submission deadline, candidates will receive an e-mail confirming that their submissions have been received.

**Contest Procedures and Selection Criteria**

For anonymity purpose all eligible submissions will be assigned numbers.

Reviewers will refer only to those numbers in their communications.

The Contest will be judged by a reviewing committee made of representatives of UNHCR, NGOs, educational and media organisations.

In assessing the contest submission, reviewers will take into account:

- Demonstrated understanding of the problem and context
- Clarity of presentation
- Usage of fact-based and reliable information
- Objectivity, impartiality and fairness;
- Adherence to ethical principles of journalism

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**Prizes and Announcement of the Winners**

- 1st place - a laptop;
- 2nd place - a tablet;
- 3rd place - a smartphone.

The winners will receive certificates of recognition and information about their winning works will be published on UNHCR communications platform.
A message announcing the name of winners will be published on UNHCR Central Asia websites and social media accounts. An e-mail with the final outcome will also be sent to all who submitted papers no later than 31 January 2021.