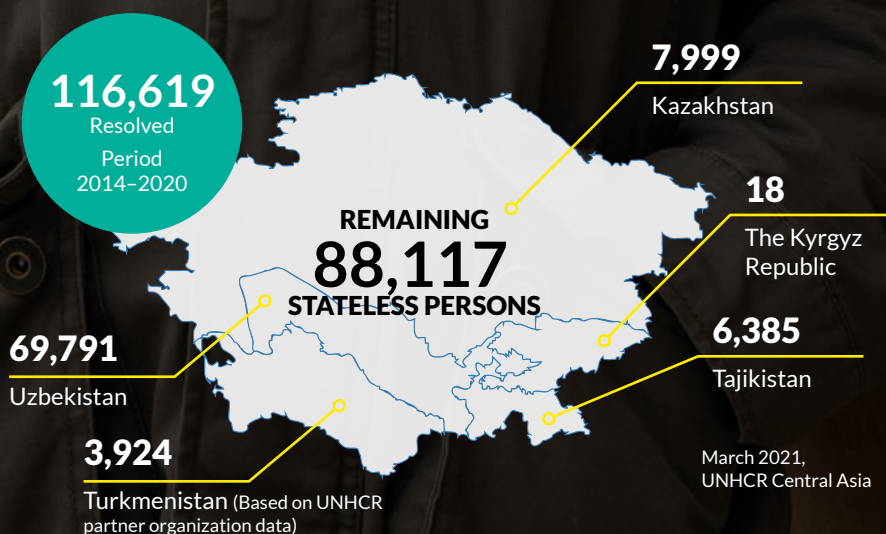


# ENDING STATELESSNESS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The international 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, a stateless person does not have a nationality of any country. Some people are born stateless, but others become stateless. Currently, millions of people are estimated to be stateless in the world. Stateless people without documents face difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement. They are unable to register marriage and even the birth of their children.



## CATEGORIES OF STATELESS PEOPLE IN CENTRAL ASIA

- 1** Stateless persons are individuals recognized and documented by the State as stateless.
- 2** Persons with undetermined nationality are individuals that lack proof of possession of any nationality and either have links to more than one State or are perceived and treated by the authorities in the state of residence, as possessing such links.

## TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE STATELESSNESS IN CENTRAL ASIA

- 2005:** The Kyrgyz Republic grants citizenship to 3,500 refugees and Turkmenistan grants citizenship to 16,000 refugees and stateless persons
- 2011- 2015:** Turkmenistan grants nationality to additional 5,000 stateless persons and accedes to two statelessness Conventions
- 2013:** The Kyrgyz Republic grants citizenship to 10,000 refugees
- 2014:** UNHCR launches #IBELONG Global Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024
- September 2016:** Central Asia Regional Conference “on accession to the Statelessness Conventions” (Ashgabat, Turkmenistan)
- June 2018:** Central Asia Regional Conference “Leaving No One Behind at Birth” reviewed the remaining gaps and actions needed to ensure the right to legal identity for all and prevention of childhood statelessness (Almaty, Kazakhstan)
- 04 July 2019:** The Kyrgyz Republic became the first country in the world to resolve all stateless cases on its territory. Overall over 13,700 stateless persons previously identified through a countrywide mapping campaign were assisted to confirm or acquire a nationality
- 05-06 September 2019:** The II Regional Conference for Central Asia “Leaving No One Behind at Birth” reviewed the progress made in providing birth registration to all children and prevention of childhood statelessness and explored further actions needed to eradicate statelessness in Central Asia (Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan)
- October 2019:** Mr. Azizbek Ashurov, the head of a UNHCR legal partner in the Kyrgyz Republic, was awarded the 2019 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award for his assistance to well over 10,000 stateless people gain Kyrgyz nationality and significant contributions to eradicating statelessness in the country
- 07 October 2019:** The High-Level Segment on Statelessness was convened to mark the mid-point of the #IBelong campaign to End Statelessness. Four Central Asian states made renewed pledges on addressing statelessness in the remaining 5 years of the #IBelong campaign (Geneva, Switzerland)
- December 2019:** Amendments were introduced to the Marriage (Matrimony) and Family Code of Kazakhstan to ensure that all children are registered at birth irrespective of the documentation status of their parents
- December 2019:** An Amnesty Law that was endorsed in Tajikistan will allow former USSR nationals irregularly residing in the country, many in stateless-like situations, to regularize their stay in Tajikistan thus paving the way for naturalization in a longer run
- 1 April 2020:** A new provision in the Citizenship Law of Uzbekistan came into effect, conferring citizenship to an estimated 50,000 stateless people in Uzbekistan who were granted permanent residence before 1 January 1995
- July 2020:** A new law on Civil Status Acts came into effect in Turkmenistan to ensure birth registration of all children born in the country including those with undocumented parents
- September 2020:** SDP regulations were adopted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan
- October 2020:** An identification campaign aimed at identifying and documenting persons with undetermined nationality started by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, UNHCR and partners
- December 2020:** President of Uzbekistan announced that in 2021 citizenship will be granted to 20,000 stateless persons who have been living permanently in the country for 15 years

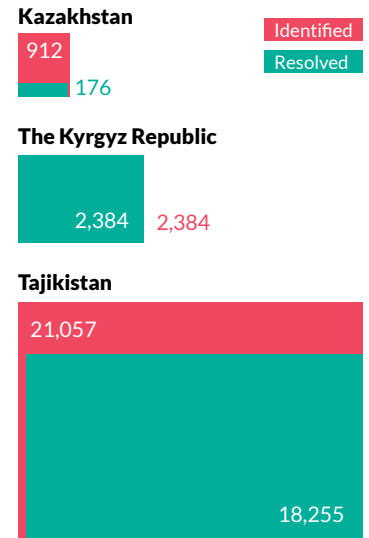
A total of 88,117 people are known to be stateless in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as of December 2020. However, the true magnitude of statelessness is believed to be higher as stateless persons are continuously identified in the region. The majority of them are ex-citizens of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) who have not yet acquired/confirmed citizenship of the newly independent States, following the USSR’s dissolution in 1991. Others became stateless due to gaps in nationality laws, international migration, and mixed marriages.

Central Asian States have made significant progress in tackling the challenge. Turkmenistan has acceded the 1954 Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Kyrgyz Republic, in a historic first, ended all known stateless cases on its territory. Kazakhstan (in 2019, 2020), Tajikistan (in 2015), Turkmenistan (in 2013, 2020) and Uzbekistan (in 2018, 2020) have also reformed relevant laws and practices to address statelessness.

UNHCR supports the States’ efforts to develop safeguards against statelessness at birth, apply the universal definition of a stateless person, and establish statelessness determination procedures in line with the international standards.

## NUMBER OF IDENTIFIED CHILDREN WHOSE STATELESSNESS SITUATION WAS RESOLVED

Since the start of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014 and through 31 December 2020.



## CUMULATIVE FIGURES OF PERSONS IN STATELESSNESS SITUATION

Period: Since the start of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014 and through 31 December 2020

		Kazakhstan	The Kyrgyz Republic	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Total
Stateless Persons	I	18,497	135	1,878	3,459 <sup>1</sup>	108,535 <sup>3</sup>	132,504
	R	9,811	132	79	7,614 <sup>2</sup>	38,744 <sup>4</sup>	56,380
Individuals of Undetermined Nationality	I	6,556	13,572	48,943	2,136 <sup>1</sup>	NA	71,207
	R	2,030	13,557	44,425	227		60,239

### IDENTIFIED

Identification exercise undertaken by the joint work of UNHCR, partners and governmental counterparts.

### RESOLVED

The authorities grant nationality to the individual.

- Based on partner organization data.
- Number of naturalized stateless persons by the Government of Turkmenistan.
- Statistical data as of November 2020 reported by the Government of Uzbekistan in January 2021.
- Number of naturalized stateless persons by the Government of Uzbekistan.

## PLAN

- 2021:** Support the efforts of Central Asian states to accede to the Statelessness Conventions, develop dedicated statelessness determination procedures and align national legislation and practices with international standards in the area of statelessness reduction and prevention
- 2021:** Strengthen regional cooperation and exchange of best practices on civil registry and vital statistics (CRVS) and support participation in ESCAP’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting on CRVS marking the midpoint of the CRVS decade in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, November 2021)
- 2021:** Provide technical support and expertise in mapping the full extent of statelessness through the upcoming round of national population censuses in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan