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.

ENDING STATELESSNESS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Kyrgyz Republic
7,915
Kazakhstan
6,141
Turkmenistan (Based on UNHCR partner organization data)
4,107
Uzbekistan
59,136

Stateless persons are individuals recognized and documented by the State as stateless.

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

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 77,315 people are known to be stateless in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan as of June 2021. 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 accessed 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 30 June 2021.

Kazakhstan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified</th>
<th>Resolved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>978</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kyrgyz Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Resolved</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>2,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tajikistan

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Resolved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21,057</td>
<td>18,255</td>
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</table>

CUMULATIVE FIGURES OF PERSONS IN STATELESSNESS SITUATION

Period: Since the start of the #IBelong Campaign in 2014 and through 30 June 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>The Kyrgyz Republic</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stateless Persons</td>
<td>I 19,604</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2,043</td>
<td>3,530</td>
<td>106,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals of Undetermined Nationality</td>
<td>I 6,985</td>
<td>13,572</td>
<td>49,833</td>
<td>2,248</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 10,772</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>7,614</td>
<td>47,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R 2,336</td>
<td>13,558</td>
<td>45,615</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2nd 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

UNHCR