

Written submission
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Good afternoon Madame Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, I would like to address to you the issue of risk of statelessness and restriction on the right to nationality of children living in the region of Northern Cyprus. Additionally, I would like to put forward two recommendations to the Republic of Cyprus (RoC).

Irrespective of the political situation present there, there are children born in the area who are unable to obtain their nationality, and in some case remain stateless. According to the 1967 RoC Citizenship Law, updated in the year 2000, anyone has the right to the Cypriot nationality if one of their parents has the nationality.

However, the law adds that law does not apply to cases where the entry of stay in Cyprus of any one of the parents is illegal. In practice, this provision discriminates anyone who is born to a parent who has entered or stays in the island via the north; this includes a significant Turkish population.

Therefore a large group of children of Cypriot parents living in the north are denied their right to RoC nationality based on their ethnicity. Only children of 100% Cypriot decent can acquire nationality easily. Children from one Turkish parent and Cypriot parent are denied the RoC nationality upon application. Grand children who one Turkish parent and three Cypriot grandparents also cannot acquire the RoC nationality.

Due to the length of the ongoing political conflict, this problem described is growing exponentially. There is now a third generation of children who are affected by this. It is estimated that this concerns between 15 000 and 25 000 people, including children and women.

I would like to point out that the applications for the RoC are not officially denied, but are left 'pending'. People are told different reasons why their application has not been accepted and told to return months later; this can go on for years. Meanwhile, they continue to be deprived of their legal right to nationality. These people are at great risk of statelessness.

Therefore I would like to put forward the following recommendations to the Republic of Cyprus:

- Establish in law a statelessness determination procedure and status in line with the 1954 Convention
- Review and amend legal provisions and ensure non-discriminatory application of the law to guarantee the right of all persons, including children, who have one RoC parent to obtain RoC nationality, irrespective of the other parent's ethnicity or gender as well as place of residency

Thank you.