

Cristina Raducan
Roma Women Network in Moldova
Cristina.raduca8@gmail.com
+373 799 799 96

Item 5: Minority women and children affected by statelessness: advancing gender equality in nationality laws.

Thank you Madame Chair,

According to the data provided by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, it is estimated that at least 10 million people are stateless worldwide: they are not considered as nationals by any State under the operation of its law. Statelessness is sometimes referred to as an invisible problem because stateless people often remain unseen and unheard. They often aren't allowed to go to school, see a doctor, get a job, open a bank account, buy a house or even get married. A stateless person is not allowed to express his or her electoral rights, like the right to vote or to be elected in a constituency. This means that the stateless person has no rights and opportunities even to decide on his or her future life in the country he or she seeks to live. The fact that someone is excluded from the decision making process, without any opportunities to somehow influence the direction the country is going, contributes to the fact that the needs and voices of a big category of population are not taken into consideration during the development of normative framework. **Thus, stateless people always face the violation of their fundamental human rights.**

Taking into account the refugees' crisis, which occurred in the past few years due to multiple conflicts around the world, all of us have to understand that the situations when someone is denied a citizenship and risks to become stateless are even much more real. That's why today it is crucial to discuss about this issue and to urge states to find viable solutions to combat the phenomenon.

In this respect, the states should undertake urgent measures to eliminate the statelessness and to prevent the people to lose their citizenship without being awarded with a new one.

Today I want to make the following recommendations to the states:

1. Ensure that no child is born stateless and no person gives up his/her citizenship without having another one. The states should revise their legal framework in the way to exclude every gap which would cause a situation when the citizenship is not awarded to a new-born or when someone, who is in process of changing and/or giving up the existing citizenship, is withdrawn his or her citizenship. No citizenship should be retracted if a person doesn't have another one.
2. Remove gender discrimination from nationality laws. Due to the fact that gender discrimination is so widespread in the world, there are countries which do not allow mothers to confer their nationality to their children on an equal basis as fathers. In this respect, there are children born stateless just because women don't have the same rights as men do. Gender based discrimination should be ended from all spheres of our life.
3. Reduce discrimination towards stateless people and ensure the legal framework allow them the same rights as to people with a valid citizenship living in that country. Stateless people shouldn't be forbidden to go to school, to see a doctor or to apply for a job. The legal framework should be amended in a way to ensure each and every person benefit of all spectrum of rights and opportunities a country could offer.

Besides this, the states should take measures to reduce discrimination and stereotypes existing in the society towards stateless people. They shouldn't be excluded or marginalized by citizens. In this respect, the states should undertake informative and educative campaigns to inform people about the notion of statelessness, what does it suppose, how to stop it and how to protect stateless people from discrimination and abuse.

4. Prevent statelessness in cases of State succession, especially in the era of so many wars, civil wars and unsolved conflicts.
5. Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate their naturalization. The last few years were marked by a huge migration and population flee from conflict zones. This could create situations when people lose their citizenship without obtaining a new one. States should ensure that the status of each migrant or refugee is documented and enough measures are for person not to lose the citizenship or to be awarded with a new one.
6. Improve quantitative and qualitative data on stateless populations. States should undertake measures to ensure that the statistical data about stateless people is up to date and is disaggregated based on different criteria. This would allow states to correctly

assess the situation of stateless people and to be informed about their needs and potential services to be developed or offered to those people.

7. Accede to the UN Statelessness Conventions.

I would urge states to undertake all measures and every person, regardless the citizenship, benefits of all rights and opportunities the international conventions are envisaging.

RomaBelong #LeaveNooneBehind

The lack of comprehensive, accurate data on Roma poses a problem. If statistical data on Roma is incomplete and problematic, the statistical data on statelessness is even more so¹.

One of the issues that affecting roma people in Moldova is that we don't have data. There are a few cases of statelessness, but we know there are more. The recently published ERRC report about Stateless people in Ukraine contain stateless cases of Moldovan roma, who are now stateless in Ukraine. Specifically, as we know, statelessness particularly affects **roma women and children**, and by not doing anything about it, we fit into side convert generational statelessness.

Statelessness of the roma is reflective of the largest structural discrimination roma faced in terms of effective governance and human rights and the lack of implementation of the already existing Action Plan and legislation on roma at the national level. Despite the Action Plan is placed, there is no implementation and there is no change.

In this respect, we ask Moldovan Government to address the situation concretely by:

1. Carrying research and providing data on stateless roma both in Moldova and out of the country (involving roma activists and/or community mediators).
2. Ensure the implementation of the Action plan to support roma in Moldova 2016-2020 to register stateless roma, who have not been documented.
3. We recommend to the UN system in general, and to the UN Country Teams in particular, in order to “**enhance minorities participation in the UN processes**” to establish UN Voluntary Fund for Minorities, launching the Global Minority Caucus, among others.
4. To tap former fellows (including roma) as resource in their work, projects and activities on minority issues at the country, regional and international levels and at the same time, and consider former fellows as intermediary between the UN and minority organizations.

Thank you Madame Chair.

¹ ERRC Report on the Western Balkans and Ukraine, 2017