Highlights

Côte d'Ivoire has publicly committed to fighting statelessness since 2013, which has earned the country recognition as a leader in this field in Africa.

UNHCR continues to support Côte d'Ivoire in preventing statelessness and identifying, protecting, and seeking solutions for stateless individuals.

During the Global Refugee Forum 2023, Côte d'Ivoire announced important pledges towards the reduction of statelessness.

KEY FIGURES

930,978*

Estimated stateless and of undetermined nationality

25,24%*

Are estimated to be children

100

Individuals at risk of statelessness who obtained nationality documents through legal assistance in 2023

Areas of intervention

- Reinforce the leadership of the Government of Cote d'Ivoire on statelessness issues
- Legal assistance to individuals who are stateless/at risk of statelessness
- Advocacy and technical advice for legal reforms
- Communication, sensitization and engagement with communities, local and traditional authorities

Delivery of late birth registration documents to individuals at risk of statelessness in Akoboissué (Abengourou) @AFJCI

Update on achievements

Operational context

Statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire has been the object of a **quantitative and qualitative study** financed by UNCHR and conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in 2018. Based on the study, as of June 2023, 931,076 individuals are estimated to be stateless or of undetermined nationality. This population comprises various profiles, including descendants of historical migrants who do not meet the criteria for obtaining Ivorian nationality through lineage. Other at-risk groups include children found born to unknown parents and individuals not registered in civil status at birth, whose parents lack proof of nationality.

In 2020, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted a **National Action Plan for the eradication of Statelessness** for the period 2020-2024.

On December 15 2023, the Côte d'Ivoire Government Focal Point on statelessness from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights participated in a high-level panel on statelessness organized in the framework of the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva @UNHCR/Baz Ratner

Main achievements and impact

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION

- **1,525** individuals at risk of statelessness were identified by the implementing partner « *Association of Women Jurists of Côte d'Ivoire* » (AFJCI) during sensitization and through the legal clinics' activities.
- A draft law on the protection status of stateless individuals was prepared.
- A Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) document related to the existing stateless determination procedure was drafted and adopted.
- **3** sessions of the National Eligibility Commissions were held.

PREVENTION

- **436** late birth registration documents were delivered to individuals at risk of statelessness.
- **5,385** individuals benefitted from legal counsel on the reestablishment of their civil status documents or nationality documents.
- **2,176** birth records were distributed.
- **40,000** birth registration and restoration of identity printouts were produced and distributed in 10 jurisdictions.

REDUCTION

- **100** nationality documents were issued to individuals at risk of statelessnes through legal assistance activities of AJFCI and Direction of Aid and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless (DAARA).

COMMUNICATION

- **2,881** individuals participated in **101** focus groups.
- **12,705** individuals participated in **72** mass sensitization events.
- **11,078** individuals participated in **271** small-scale sensitization events.
- **118** radio broadcasts, totaling **15,241** minutes of airtime covering various topics related to statelessness, such as the mechanisms for acquiring Ivorian nationality, the procedure for recognizing stateless status, and late birth registrations.

Focus – Statelessness among vulnerable children

Statelessness constitutes a serious violation of children's rights.

Without nationality and the associated legal rights, children and young people, especially vulnerable groups such as foundlings and street children, are particularly exposed to forced and unpaid labor, trafficking, forced and early marriages, and other forms of exploitation. Universal birth registration and legal safeguards aimed at preventing statelessness in children are fundamental measures to ensure every child's right to nationality.

According to the 2018 study on statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire, foundlings who cannot prove Ivorian nationality through either of their parents are at risk of statelessness in the country. It is important to note that foundlings with specific needs are particularly vulnerable to statelessness because their chances of being adopted and thus acquiring the nationality of their adoptive parents are significantly lower.

In anticipation of the reform of the nationality code, a positive development was observed in 2019. A circular from the Minister of Justice in 2019 instructed judges to prioritize the 1961 Convention (to which Côte d'Ivoire acceded in 2013) and grant Ivorian nationality to foundlings who are presumed to have been born in Côte d'Ivoire to Ivorian parents.

Since then, UNHCR's implementing partner *«Association of Women Jurists of Côte d'Ivoire »* – AFJCI identifies vulnerable foundling children of unknown parents and accompanied them in obtaining civil and nationality documents.

Despite the issuance of the above circular, only a small number of children has reportedly benefitted from the measure (less than 300). This is due to the lack of awareness about the circular and the necessity for legal assistance at the Tribunal, along with associated costs.

The following results were obtained in 2023 :

- **22** foundlings of unknown parents and **15** abandoned children with vulnerable parents obtained late birth registration documents.
- **29** foundlings obtained nationality certificates.
- **239** school children whose births were not declared in Doropo were supported in benefitting from the existing special law allowing free late birth registration - loi spéciale N° 2018-863.

Delivery of nationality documents benefiting children of the Dabou orphanage, which houses children living with disabilities, September 2023. @UNHCR/Divia Kibangou

Thanks to UNHCR's implementing partners in Côte d'Ivoire :

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
Project UNHCR/MJDH

Direction of Aid and Assistance
to Refugees and Stateless
(DAARA)

Association of Jurists Women of Côte d'Ivoire
(AFJCI)

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LINKS

Operational portal - Twitter - Facebook