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UNHCR welcomes South Sudan's accession to two UN Statelessness Conventions

The Republic of South Sudan has taken a major step towards eradicating statelessness in the country by acceding yesterday to two key treaties – the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, commends the strong commitment of the government of South Sudan to prevent statelessness from occurring and to protect the rights of stateless persons.

“I congratulate the South Sudanese for taking the important step of joining the Statelessness Conventions,” said UNHCR’s Representative in South Sudan Marie-Hélène Verney. “By acceding to these key international instruments, South Sudan is sending a clear signal of its dedication to addressing statelessness and protecting vulnerable individuals.”

Mandated by the international community to prevent and resolve statelessness, UNHCR launched a ten-year #IBelong Campaign to push states to take action on this issue. Since the beginning of the Campaign and the recent launch of a subsequent, new [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#) last month, political will and momentum to tackle statelessness by South Sudan’s government and other partners have been growing.

By becoming party to the statelessness conventions, South Sudan also fulfils one of its pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 and a High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

The 1954 Convention regulates the status of stateless people and provides for their access to fundamental rights. The 1961 Convention offers carefully detailed safeguards to prevent statelessness at birth and later in life that should be implemented through a State’s nationality law.

In South Sudan, UNHCR has carried out capacity development for the Directorate of Civil Registry Nationality, Passports, and Immigration (DCRNPI) under the Ministry of Interior, enhancing support for civil documentation procedures including access by vulnerable groups to nationality documents, and advocating for improved legal frameworks to address statelessness in the country.

Since 2012, UNHCR and the DCRNPI have helped more than 150,000 individuals at risk of statelessness in South Sudan to obtain nationality certificates. UNHCR will continue promoting the issuance of nationality certificates, birth registrations, and other nationality documents to those who are entitled to it under the laws of South Sudan.

Stateless people and those at risk of statelessness are often marginalized and excluded from access to basic rights and critical services and participation in civic life. Ensuring everyone’s right to nationality is therefore critical, as the legal protections it affords can be life-saving and as it helps to make sure that everyone can benefit from and contribute to a country’s development.

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