

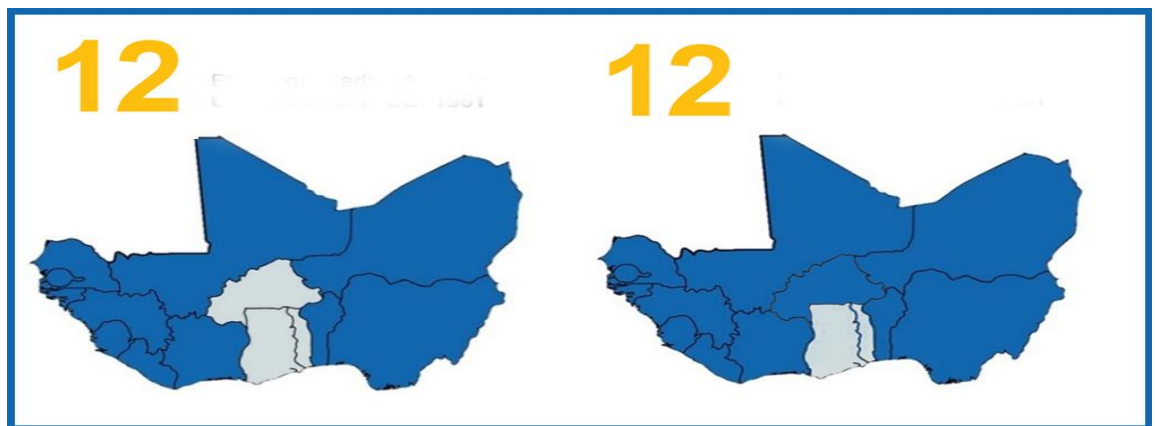
## STATELESSNESS IN WEST AFRICA

### NEWSLETTER #14

July - September 2017

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BANJUL ACTION PLAN

### Accession to International Conventions on Statelessness (Goal. 1.1)



- **Burkina Faso** acceded to the [1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness](#) on 3 August 2017, marking an important milestone for the country in its commitment to eradicate statelessness as well as for the region, where 12 of the 15 ECOWAS Member States are now party to both the [1954](#) and 1961 Conventions.

### National Legislation Reforms (Goal 1.3)

- In July, Sierra Leone took a significant step toward ending statelessness with the amendment by the Parliament of the [Citizenship Act](#), which previously contained a discriminatory clause that did not allow women to pass their nationality on to their children in certain circumstances. With [this reform](#), equality between men and women with regard to transmitting their nationality is guaranteed, bringing Sierra Leone in line with the commitments made by the ECOWAS Member States in the [Abidjan Declaration](#) and the [Banjul Action Plan](#).

## Advocacy & Awareness (Goal. 4)

- **Côte d’Ivoire:** The population of Guiglo, a town close to the border with Liberia, benefitted from an awareness raising campaign on the risks related to lack of birth registration. According to the [Service for Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons](#), 25,000 children do not have birth certificates. In response, civil society, with the support of UNHCR, organized two awareness-raising campaigns in July on birth registration through local radio stations in Guiglo.



- **Côte d’Ivoire:** Students from the [University Félix Houphouet Boigny](#) in Abidjan participated in August in discussion sessions on statelessness organized by UNHCR

- **Senegal:** Children helped raise awareness of the risks of statelessness among hundreds of thousands of Senegalese people through the [Summer Penc](#) competition broadcasted on television.

Summer Penc is a short film contest for children between the ages of 12 and 17, including stateless and refugee children. The [Short films](#) touched on various topics, among which, statelessness, birth registration and civil registration. The competition is aired on national television.



One of the competing teams ©Adam Sie.

- **Côte d’Ivoire:** The Francophonie Games were held in Côte d’Ivoire in July 2017. This international event is broadcasted in all French speaking countries. During the 10-day competition, UNHCR and supporters of the IBelong campaign mobilized representatives of the different countries to advocate for a “Francophonie” without statelessness”. Banners, flyers, and the setting up of booths and panels were used throughout the event.



Awareness campaign at the Francophonie Games © Daouda Guiro

- **Côte d’Ivoire:** More than 2.8 million children in Côte d’Ivoire were not registered at birth. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with UNHCR, produced a film entitled “[Register our Children](#),” which aims to raise awareness among communities country wide about the importance of registering births in order to prevent statelessness. The film was officially released in August.



- **Burkina Faso:** Since August, hundreds of thousands of people have been sensitized on statelessness in the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, through an extensive poster campaign.

## Guaranteeing Access to Proof of Nationality (Goal 5)



- In **Benin**, around thirty traditional leaders and local government officials received training on procedures related to birth registration. The training took place in the departments of Zou and Collines, in the center of Benin, where birth registration rates are low and the management of civil status is weak. The training was conducted by the Directorate General of Civil Registry, with the support of UNHCR.
- **Benin**: Five border regions, where the risk of statelessness is particularly high, are now able to issue electronic birth certificates. The ABeGIEF (Benin Agency for Integrated Management of Border Areas), in collaboration with UNHCR, supplied 10 communes with IT kits containing computers and scanning software, thereby enabling the digitization and securitization of birth certificates for persons already reported to the civil registry as well as children registered in the future.
- **Burkina Faso**: Proof of citizenship requirements to obtain the Burkinabe Nationality certificate can differ from one magistrate to another. High requirements make it sometimes impossible for an applicant to establish his/her nationality, thus creating risks of statelessness. To prevent statelessness and harmonize practices, the Ministry of Justice, in partnership with UNHCR, organized in July a 2-day training for judges, prosecutors and clerks.
- **Burkina Faso**: In July, 164 civil registry officers, including mayors, staff from maternal and child health services were trained on civil registration and statelessness by the NGO Bravo, in partnership with UNHCR.

## Adoption of National Action Plans (Goal 6.2)

- **Mali:** The National Action Plan on the Eradication of Statelessness was officially adopted on 18 August 2017. On this occasion, a ceremony was organized and attended by various ministries, UN agencies, civil society organizations and students.

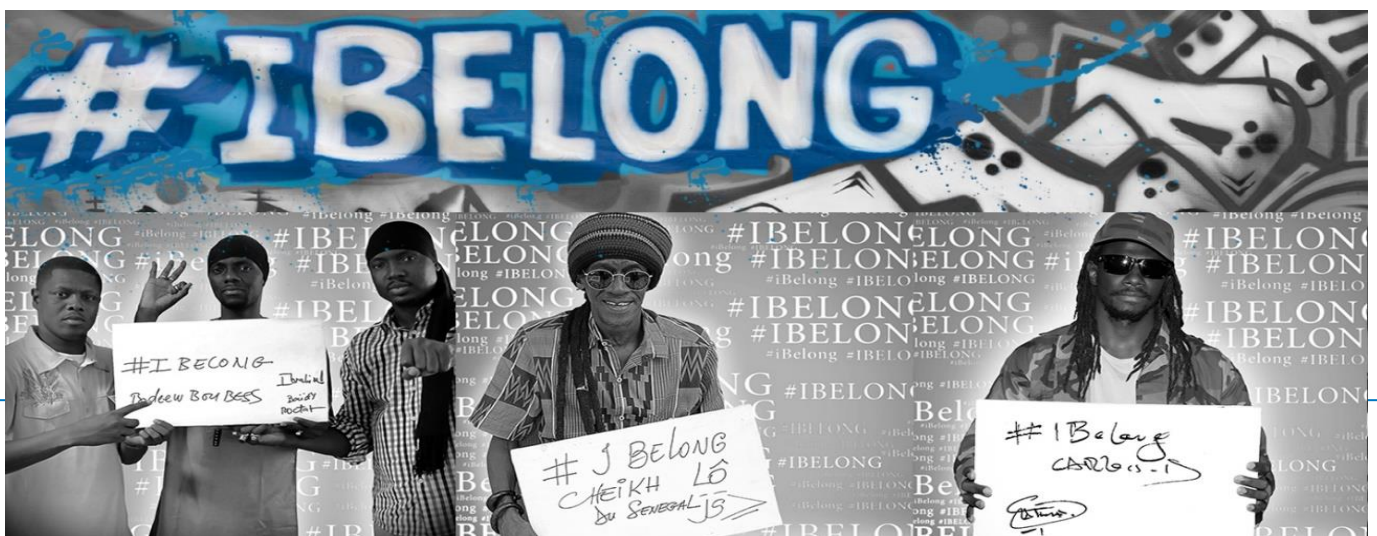


Government officials, UNHCR representatives, and the artist Habib Koité © UNHCR/Bassirou Nignan

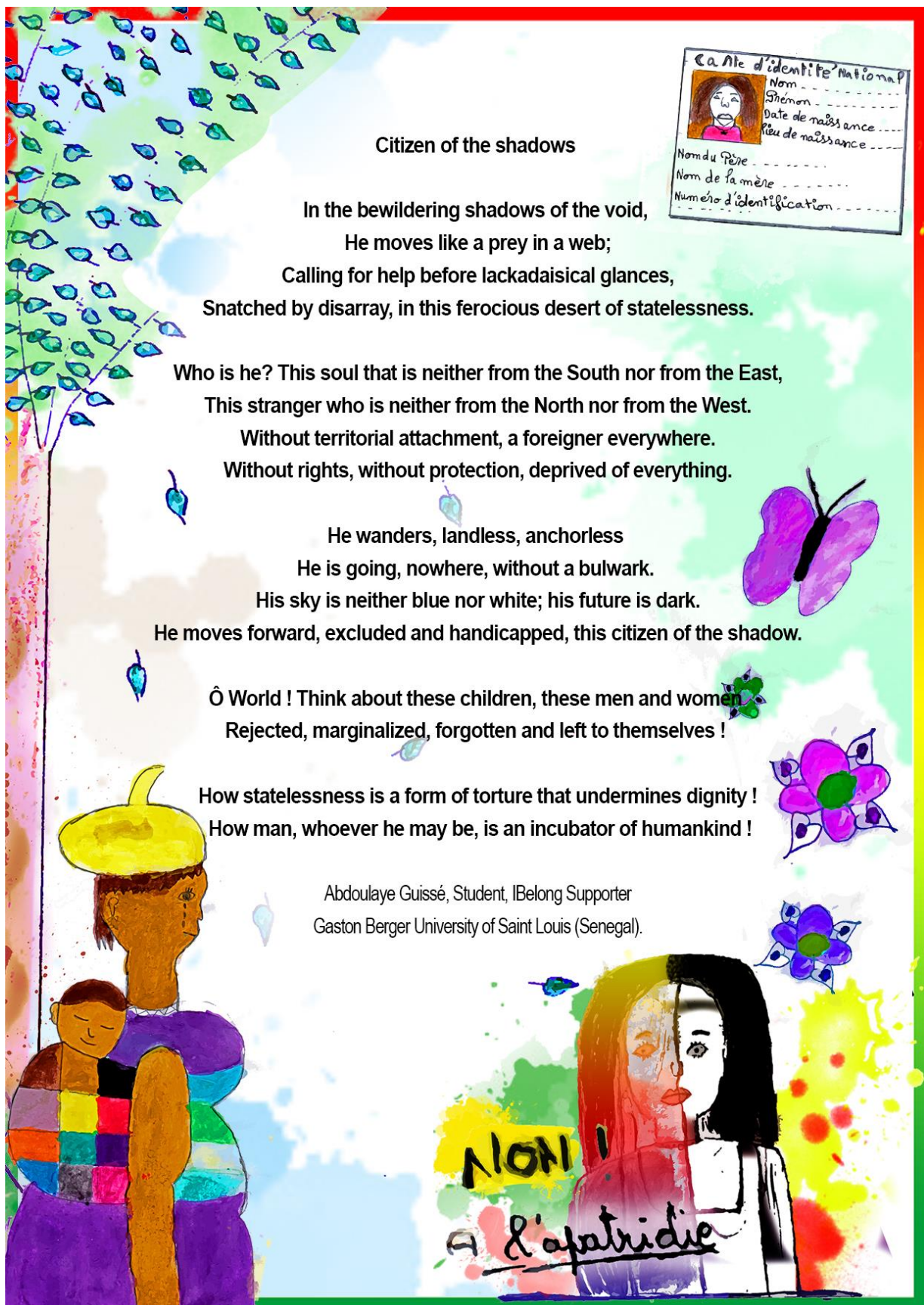
- **Burkina Faso:** The National Action Plan to Eradicate Statelessness in Burkina Faso (PANAB) was adopted by government decree on 2 August 2017, at the regular meeting of the Council of Ministers.

## COMING UP

- **Region:** Follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Banjul Plan of Action to be held from 17-20 October 2017 in Senegal
- **Region:** Celebration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the IBelong Campaign
- **Region:** Training in Portuguese on statelessness for government officials and representatives of civil society organizations to be organized in Senegal in November 2017
- **Region:** University Symposium to be held in Senegal in December 2017
- **Guinea and Guinea Bissau:** Statelessness mapping, October-December 2017
- **Burkina Faso:** A television and legal program on birth registration, November 2017
- **Senegal:** Legal assistance program led by the civil society, October-December 2017



## IN THE ARTS



**Citizen of the shadows**

In the bewildering shadows of the void,  
He moves like a prey in a web;  
Calling for help before lackadaisical glances,  
Snatched by disarray, in this ferocious desert of statelessness.

Who is he? This soul that is neither from the South nor from the East,  
This stranger who is neither from the North nor from the West.  
Without territorial attachment, a foreigner everywhere.  
Without rights, without protection, deprived of everything.

He wanders, landless, anchorless  
He is going, nowhere, without a bulwark.  
His sky is neither blue nor white; his future is dark.  
He moves forward, excluded and handicapped, this citizen of the shadow.

Ô World ! Think about these children, these men and women  
Rejected, marginalized, forgotten and left to themselves !

How statelessness is a form of torture that undermines dignity !  
How man, whoever he may be, is an incubator of humankind !

Abdoulaye Guissé, Student, IBelong Supporter  
Gaston Berger University of Saint Louis (Senegal).

Carte d'identité Nationale

Nom \_\_\_\_\_

Prénoms \_\_\_\_\_

Date de naissance \_\_\_\_\_

Lieu de naissance \_\_\_\_\_

Nom du Père \_\_\_\_\_

Nom de la mère \_\_\_\_\_

Numéro d'identification \_\_\_\_\_

NON !  
A l'apatridie

## STATELESSNESS IN THE NEWS

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- Déclaration des naissances : les enfants lancent un plaidoyer dans le Bas-Mono ([Togo-Français](#))
- Lutte contre l'apatridie au Mali : le Mali, un exemple ([Mali-Français](#))
- Apatridie : fait social ou politique ? ([Régional-Français](#))
- Un enfant sur deux sans identité en Afrique Sub-saharienne ([Régional-Français](#))
- Ghana automated birth registration program commended ([Ghana-Anglais](#))
- Birth registration now at the doorstep of Nigerians ([Nigeria-Anglais](#))
- Etat civil au Burkina : « tous les burkinabè doivent être enregistrés » ([Burkina Faso-Français](#))
- Children U-5 to get birth certificate in Bauchi ([Nigeria-Anglais](#))
- Sierra Leone enshrines equal right of women to pass nationality to children ([Sierra Leone-Anglais](#))

## LOOKING FOR MORE?

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For further information, check out the following resources:

- UNHCR's global [website](#) on Statelessness;
- UNHCR's regional [website](#) on Statelessness in West Africa;
- UNHCR's #IBelong Global Campaign to End Statelessness – [Support it here](#);
- Documents from the [Ministerial Conference](#) on Statelessness in the ECOWAS region in 2015;
- Documents from the [Ministerial Meeting](#) on Statelessness in the ECOWAS region in 2017;
- [KORA](#) - UNHCR's blog dedicated to Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Stateless people in West and Central Africa;
- Look for us on Social Media, we are on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) (@StatelessWA) and [Youtube](#) ;
- You can also reach us by e-mail at [sendawas@unhcr.org](mailto:sendawas@unhcr.org).



www.unhcr.org/statelessness  
<http://www.unhcr.org/ecowas2015/>  
<http://unhcr.org/ecowas2017/>  
<http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/statelesswa>



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