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A day in the life of... Tendayi Bloom, Postdoctoral Associate and Lecturer at the Global Justice Program, Yale University.

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Read the full interview in this month's "A day in the life of..." at the bottom of this bulletin.

Spotlight on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda: Legal Identity

The new development agenda, as adopted by the UN [General Assembly on September of 2015](#), establishes a series [of goals to be achieved in the next 15 years](#). Many of the Goals, which address issues such as discrimination, exclusion, and inequality, are of direct relevance to statelessness. In particular, Goal 16.9, which reads: “*by 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration*” has been at the core of discussions between academics, practitioners, statisticians, policy makers, and human rights defenders committed to addressing statelessness.

Two events at which stakeholders from diverse backgrounds were able to discuss legal identity took place in the last quarter of 2015. In October, a [legal identity workshop was jointly held by the Open Society Justice Initiative and the Civil Registration Centre for Development](#) in New York City. This gathering of experts from academic institutions, research centres, government entities, international organisations and civil society, aimed to develop recommendations for country-level policy and practice to achieve SDG 16.9. After two and a half days of discussions, a working group was established to write up the workshop recommendations, which are expected to be publicly available during the first trimester of 2016.

In November, at a second event titled [“21st Century Identification Systems, data, politics, protection”](#) was hosted by Harvard’s Center for Health & Human Rights. Even though legal identity was not at the centre of the discussion, it was a recurring theme which was addressed by panellists and participants, when discussing identification systems, birth registration policies, new identification models, privacy protections and stateless populations. Both events demonstrate that there is an opportunity for human rights advocates to utilise the development agenda, to strengthen guarantees to the rights of at risk and excluded populations, including stateless persons. They also highlight the danger inherent in formulating and pursuing development targets which are not centred on principles of human rights. Vigilance and further engagement are essential to ensure that these targets and goals are structured and pursued in compliance with existing human rights frameworks.

What's new: Publications, Tools & Resources

The State we're in: Ending Sexism in Nationality Laws: On 26 January 2016 Equality Now released its report on the negative consequences of sex discrimination in nationality and citizenship laws, calling on all governments to end gender discrimination. On Human Rights Day 2015, Equal Rights Trust launched the [short documentary: "My Children's Future"](#), a film that highlights gravely negative consequences of gender-discriminatory laws that are still implemented in 27 countries and which prohibit women the ability to transmit nationality to their children. The film is related to a [report](#) with the same title of September 2015.

[Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion: Statelessness Working Paper Series](#): The first edition of the Statelessness Working Paper Series was published on 10 December 2015, coinciding with Human Rights Day. Four working papers on diverse topics that all relate to statelessness issues in different parts of the world: From statelessness in the Gulf Cooperation Council and gender discrimination in Nepal to statelessness at the UN Compensation Commission and acts of citizenship and alternative perspectives on voice amongst stateless Vietnamese children in Cambodia. The deadline for consideration in the next cycle of the series is **15 March 2016**.

[Praxis Implements the Project Aimed at Prevention and Elimination of Child, Early and Forced Marriages](#): As part of the project “Legal Assistance to Persons at Risk of Statelessness in Serbia”, Praxis aims to work towards the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriages (CEFM) in relation to Roma communities. Generally considered part of Roma tradition, CEFM has been insufficiently and inadequately addressed while at the same time “*being one of the causes leading to statelessness*”. Praxis seeks greater visibility and solving of the issue.

[Telling the Stories of Stateless Persons through Animation by the European Network on Statelessness](#): This blogpost visualises statelessness through 3 short videos that portray the life stories of stateless individuals. Visual artist Daniela Krajčová captured Ibrahim, Ali and Natalia on camera to discuss the problems of being stateless that affect their lives.

[Understanding and Addressing Root Causes of Displacement in the Asia-Pacific](#): The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network prepared this briefing paper for the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges. It discusses statelessness as one of the root causes, as well as a consequence of displacement.

[ENOC Report \(European Network of Ombudspersons for Children\): Safety and Fundamental Rights at Stake for Children on the Move](#): The first report of the [ENOC Task Force on Children on the Move](#) was presented 25 January. The report mentions stateless children in relation to among other issues the information provided by Ombudspersons for Children, members of the Task Force and in recommendations to the relevant national and supranational authorities.

[Problems with Facts about Rohingya Statelessness](#): In this article Nick Cheesman explores and critiques the history of legal provisions which rendered the Rohingya stateless. In January the Calcutta Research Group, in their report “[Rohingyas: The Emergence of a Stateless Community](#)” focused on the Rohingya in India “*in the historical perspective of the evolution of the Rohingya problems as well as in the light of the general question of statelessness in South Asia*”.

[Ad-Hoc Query on Recognition of Stateless Persons](#): This European Migration Network document sheds light on the implementation of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons by 23 European States: EU Member States were asked to provide information on having a statelessness determination procedure in place, the rights and status granted to recognised stateless persons and statistics on the number of people applying and being recognised as stateless in the past five years.

The Beirut based NGO **Legal Agenda** has published a series of statelessness related articles in January. The [stateless in Lebanon: Between Shame and Shadows](#), describes the phenomenon of the issue in Lebanon. The next article considers the long road from census to citizenship for the [Kurds of Syria 1962-2011](#). The last article was one on [statelessness in Mauritania](#) and the relation with discrimination.

[Everyday Statelessness in Italy: Status, Rights, and Camps](#): Nando Sigona wrote an article that sociologically reflects on statelessness and how statelessness is experienced by Roma living in Italy. It sheds light on Roma as the undeserving stateless as well as the experience of Roma having lived in Italy for years being a complication to Hannah Arendt’s characterisation of stateless individuals as rightless.

Announcements & events

[European Network on Statelessness Vacancy: Policy and Communications Internship](#): ENS is looking for an intern, March through August, to help undertake a project on innovative policy research and communications work on statelessness in Europe. ENS is a network made up of NGOs, academic initiatives and individual experts committed to address statelessness in Europe. Anyone interested in working with ENS on policy and communications is welcome to apply. The candidate will work from the ENS secretariat in London. **Deadline: 15 February 2016**.

[Call for Papers: Statelessness Working Paper Series](#): The Statelessness Working Paper Series are an online, open access resource aimed at sharing and centralising the latest knowledge, developments and research findings from different field. Following the first edition of the Statelessness working Paper Series contributions to the upcoming cycle of Working Papers are now again welcome for consideration. **Deadline: 15 March 2016**.

[Call for Panels and Papers: Borders, Otherness and Public Law](#): ICON-S invites paper and panel submissions for the third Annual Meeting that will be held in Berlin, June 17-19, 2016. The overarching theme of the [conference](#) is on ‘Borders, Otherness and Public Law’, in response to the questions of movement, displacement and belonging, equality and inequality, borders and otherness that have become “hot-button issues”. The call deadline is **February 15 2016**.

Seminar: Axis of Protection: Human Rights in International Law: Professor H el ene Lambert (Westminster) will discuss ‘arbitrary deprivation of nationality and refugee status’ as part of a seminar series on the protection of human rights in international law. The seminar will be held at the University of Reading, UK, on **3 February 2016** at 4 pm. Entry is free but an RSVP is required.

Seminar: On the threshold of statelessness: Palestinian narratives of loss and erasure: On **16 March 2016** Dr Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (UCL) will speak at the seminar on how Palestinians living in France, Sweden and the UK negotiate, mobilise and/or resist and ultimately problematize notions of statelessness, both as a concept and as a marker of identity.

What’s new: Law & Policy

French Government considers deprivation of nationality as possible sentence to all citizens:

The French Socialist Party government is considering depriving French nationals of nationality following a conviction of terrorism or crimes against the state, even if that leaves the person stateless. This became clear following the announcement by French president Hollande in December that France might deprive dual nationals of nationality for such convictions.

Important Statelessness Ruling (Sameda):

In the UK, the Upper Tribunal considered the stateless provisions under part 1 of the immigrations rules for the first time and ruled that the Secretary of State for the Home Department (SSHD) had deviated in law and breached policy. The Tribunal held that when deciding on someone’s statelessness status decision makers “must address each of [the] components [of the 1954 Convention statelessness definition] in every case”

Popular on Twitter this Month

UNHCR Ireland @UNHCRireland Jan 27 Short video on the difficulties faced by the over 10 million [#stateless](#) people throughout the world <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjHuYq-YVYk...> [#statelessness](#)

ENS @ENStatelessness Jan 18 A great interview with Zahra Albarazi from [@institute_si](#) on growing number of stateless children <http://bbc.in/1NN9iI8> [#statelesskids](#)

Maung Zarni @drzarni Jan 25 Myanmar creates the stateless for the Rohingya and uses the old colonial ethnic divide and rule... <http://fb.me/5Eqq82JoA>

A day in the life of...

Tendayi Bloom

Postdoctoral Associate and Lecturer at the Global Justice Program, Yale University



Can you give us a short description of the type of work you do?

I work as an academic and an academic-activist, looking at questions of justice and in particular the implications of the relationships between individual noncitizens and States. I think that there are specific State obligations that arise within such relationships and I spend my time trying to understand the nature of those obligations. I don’t only work on statelessness, but on noncitizenship more broadly. I see statelessness as an extreme example of noncitizenship that urgently needs to be addressed.

Academic work involves reading, writing, and speaking with others about the subjects I study. That includes teaching. Right now, that mainly means teaching undergraduate students about noncitizenship, justice and statelessness. This is an important part of what I do, as it is an opportunity to communicate about statelessness and noncitizenship with people that will go on to contribute to society in a wide range of ways. On a selfish note, I also enjoy teaching. It helps me re-examine my own thinking and provides the opportunity to work with individuals who have fresh ideas and new perspectives.

My academic work can also spill over into activism, where I use the same skills and networks to put into practice the conclusions that I reach in my research. In fact, I am now also part of a wider network of academics working in this way, Academics Stand Against Poverty, or ASAP. This global network brings together people working on questions relating to poverty in various ways to help them to pool efforts to make more effective difference in the world.

Briefly describe what type of statelessness activities your organization is involved in.

I work for the Global Justice Program. It is an interdisciplinary group that works on the assessment and reform of global institutional arrangements. It engages in areas relating to poverty, access to health, and responsibility for climate change, to name but a few, and is now developing new projects in the areas of noncitizenship (including migration) and statelessness. Two quite different current projects may be of particular interest to this audience.

One is theoretical and I am working on it under the auspices of the GJP. It is a book project, Understanding Statelessness, bringing together scholars from around the world that are challenging the way in which statelessness is understood and, as a result, how it is addressed theoretically, legally and politically. I am co-editing it with two great scholars in this area: Katherine Tonkiss and Phillip Cole. It includes detailed analyses of specific case studies from experts working on very different forms of statelessness in different global regions, as well as broader critiques from legal experts, political scientists and philosophers. It is hoped that this can challenge traditional approaches to statelessness which can be harmful to those affected.

The other project is much more practical, and departs from the sorts of methodology I usually adopt in my work. I am working on it as part of my contribution to ASAP. It became clear among some of us working in the area of both the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA) and statelessness that there is a lack of acknowledgement of statelessness in work on development. As countries are developing plans on how to live up to their commitments within the SDA, we are providing a country-by-country analysis of how statelessness must be factored into that. We are just finalising the template that the experts will complete and are hoping that the finalised data will be available in the second half of 2016. We plan to be able to make the disaggregated data freely available, and are currently planning some launch events for the report.

There are still ways to get involved in the report. We are looking for country experts for some countries - do get in touch with a CV and recent publication if you are interested. We are looking for some help with displaying data and developing a web presence, and also help applying for funds to support our dissemination strategy. We are also offering the opportunity for people to apply to use the raw data a month before it is released - just let us know what you'd plan to do with it (blog / video / press piece / academic work / artistic expression / ... the more creative the better) and commit to publish your work in coordination with our public launch of the report and we'll consider whether it would fit in with our strategy. Finally, if you have some other ideas of things we might need help with, do get in touch. The report email address is statelessnessreport@gmail.com.

What do you most enjoy about this work?

I'll be honest, I still find it incredible that the problems associated with statelessness and noncitizenship are not more widely talked - and worried - about. What I enjoy about what I do is the opportunity to engage in, and hopefully make some small change in, an area that is so fundamental to the pursuit of justice as I see it. It is a privilege to be able to do work that I enjoy, and about which I feel passionate.

What do you find are the biggest challenges you face in your work? What advice would you give to someone who wants to get involved in / others working on statelessness?

Working in this area is exciting and interesting, though it is not always easy. While there is fantastic work being done and some long-established scholars working in this area, there are not many and noncitizenship and statelessness are still quite dynamic and developing fields. As such, you may well find that you are working with colleagues who do not specialise in your area and may not immediately understand the kinds of questions that you are addressing. This can be challenging, but it is also a great opportunity to raise awareness - as well as clarify your own thinking by speaking with non-specialists. As the community of scholars is small, I have found that even leading thinkers working in this area are, for the most part, quite approachable and I think that it is therefore probably easier to enter the community of scholars than it might be in some other areas. I want to welcome anyone thinking to start work in this area - and wish them good luck!

What do you hope to accomplish through your work?

Usually, my aspirations are small. I hope to be part of the incremental struggle to find a route to a world in which statelessness and noncitizenship do not cause quite so many of the problems for individuals that they currently do. But if somewhere along the road I can be part of helping a wider public see the enormity of the madness of failing to acknowledge the injustice of the dominance of citizenship and the extreme and inevitable vulnerabilities for stateless persons and noncitizens as a result - and if this could lead to greater change - that would be fantastic.

**Contribute to the Statelessness Monthly Bulletin via
news@InstituteSI.org or visit www.InstituteSI.org**