Committee: The Special, Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)

State: Spain

Agenda: Establishing a Global Framework for the Protection of Stateless People

Today millions of people around the world face serious difficulties owing to statelessness. Citizenship creates a legal bond between the citizen and the government. Statelessness is when people are not recognized as citizens by any country. Even though they were born and lived in that country. Stateless people are not refugees and we cannot treat them as refugees. They are often also not allowed to go to schools and get education, see a doctor and get treatment and even get married with their loved ones. Statelessness is a problem that affects around 12 million people around the world and it creates a lot of problems for the people that lives in their country. There is plenty of reasons why people become stateless.

The gaps between laws can affect it. Normally every country has its own laws and it determines how a person can be citizen and there are also laws stating that it can be cancelled. If these laws are not applied well, some people can be stateless.

Another problem that is complicated is that if a child was born in a different country other than its own state. This child is in a risk of becoming stateless.

Other than that the changes in the borders or changes in the government can affect people and they can become stateless.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) says that “Everyone has the right to a nationality.” We need to work to make certain that everyone holds a majority.

Since the middle of the last century two UN convection has published and it aims to give the stateless people basic rights.

First the 1954 convention relating to the status of stateless people. It helps ensure stateless people can live in security and until their problem is resolved. Then there is the 1961 convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It aims to prevent statelessness and reduce it over time.

Despite these and other international human rights laws are in place, many people still don’t have a nationality . Being stateless, or lacking any country to belong to, makes people very unsafe or unprotected . Without the protection of nationality, stateless people need special help to make sure they can access to their basic rights.

As Spain we have made a progress addressing stateless by joining the 1961and 1954 convection. To follow the rules of the 1954 Convention, a stateless person should also be granted the right to work, access healthcare and be provided with passport and can travel. For example, stateless people who are recognized as such are given the right to work.

However, Spain has not signed the European Convention on Nationality, an important regional agreement that would help reduce statelessness.

People in detention can't apply for statelessness status, and Stateless individuals in Spain can apply for statelessness status, but the application process must be in Spanish and followed by specific guidelines. This can be difficult for the people that are not fluent in the language. Legal aid is limited, and although some protection is given during the process, there are delays in getting social assistance. However, If stateless individuals are granted status, they can live and work in Spain for a long time.

They also receive many protections under international law, such as the right to health care and social services. While individual stateless people can stay and work in Spain they can't easily become citizens. They cannot gain citizenship easily.

We have strong safeguards against statelessness for children. Children born in Spain who would be stateless automatically get Spanish nationality and even refugee kids can get nationality by living in there for 1 year.

Abandoned children or if there parents are stateless and unknown they will be guaranteed Spanish nationality this prevents the children from becoming stateless and being left without nationality.

Since 2019, 278 former stateless persons have been granted Spanish nationality. By the end of 2023, 8,525 persons had a recognized stateless status in Spain.