Everyone has the right to a nationality. It doesn’t matter who you are!

But countries can decide the rules by which people get nationality. These rules are usually based on who has strong connections to the country because...

- They were born there
- Their parents are nationals
- They live and work there
- They are married to or are adopted by nationals

But some countries have bad laws, or do not apply their laws correctly. And so...

- People who should have nationality are denied it
- People who would have nationality cannot prove it
- People who do have nationality can lose it

Through my travels and adventures, all that I’ve read and the experts I have spoken to, I have begun to learn a fair bit about statelessness. There is so much though, and it can be complicated. So I decided to draw it all up in a way that made sense to me. Here it is. I hope this make sense to you too!

Have a Nationality

People who have no nationality are stateless. Their right to a nationality has been denied. All people have human rights. Those who have lost their right to a nationality should not lose their other rights.

But countries treat stateless people badly. They discriminate against them and deny their rights:

- Rosa’s children could not go to school
- Kezia’s children could not go to hospital
- Rami and Aasif had to work like grown-ups
- Aasif’s father was put in jail, and may even have been sent to another country
- Damili couldn’t play football abroad
- The Rohingya were persecuted

Some things that we can do:

- Make sure that every child receives a birth certificate
- Make sure that every country has a safeguard against statelessness
- Fight against laws that discriminate — especially against ethnic minorities, women and disabled people
- Protest if any country tries to take away someone’s nationality
- Welcome and protect all refugees

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