Nationality Matters
Statelessness under International Law
The titles published in this series are listed at the end of this volume.
Cover: Picture by Sarah Hayward

Laura van Waas
Nationality Matters. Statelessness under International Law

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I am writing this on the day that I acquire Dutch nationality. It wasn't planned that way, but it is a thought-provoking coincidence. After I attend the “naturalisation ceremony” this afternoon (i.e. share cheese and wine with a local civil servant and the other aspirant-Dutchies), I will be a dual national. British and Dutch. And I cannot deny that this moment has gained added significance thanks to the understanding that I now have of the value of citizenship. As you can see, the PhD manuscript to which I have just put the finishing touches is on statelessness. An entire study devoted to those who have not two nationalities, not even one, but none.

Statelessness is a fascinating anomaly - the idea that a person can be denied membership of every one of the world's states, cast into an officially-sanctioned, legal limbo is somehow incredible. It is a phenomenon that readily captures both the imagination and the heart. My own first encounter with statelessness certainly raised many questions, like how does statelessness come about, how does it impact people's lives and what are we doing to tackle it? It is a good thing that I found (and still find) the topic so compelling because it meant that these and other questions kept me very happily occupied for the last four years.

I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to devote so much time to what really began as a personal interest. This would not have been possible without my supervisor, Willem van Genugten, putting his faith in my ability to turn my personal interest into a worthy academic study. His unrelinquishing encouragement helped me to keep up the momentum in my research and gave me the confidence to take on all sorts of other activities alongside working on my manuscript. I would also like to thank my second supervisor, Helen Oosterom, for her enthusiasm for my research and her continuing willingness to discuss trouble spots and comment on draft texts. I am indebted to the further members of the reading committee, Cees Flinterman, Pieter Boeles and Anton van Kalmthout, for taking the time to read and assess this sturdy document. And I would like to thank my sister, Sarah Hayward, for crafting the perfect cover illustration to accompany my manuscript.

The last four years were made all the more enjoyable by two things: the fact that I was able to participate in several practical projects to satisfy my idealistic drive and all of the fun that I have had with both colleagues and friends. I owe a real
欠款于菲利普·勒克尔克和马克·曼利的UNHCR，以及西蒙·希普的Plan International，允许我参与到“现实世界”中无国籍问题。这为我提供了在学术环境之外所不能获得的洞察。然后，感谢长期以来为Books 4 Life工作，为我提供了灵感的善良和奉献的人们。请继续保持出色的工作。

所以我来到那些与我共享了无数杯茶、蛋糕片、啤酒和笑声的同事。没有什么比“melige woensdag”或自发的埃菲尔城之行更能提升你的士气。感谢耶罗恩、克里斯托弗、维拉、塔玛拉、尼古拉、康妮和费米克，你们让我在某种程度上孤独的职业中保持理智，谢谢。也要感谢那些工作之外的朋友，他们为我的生活增添了色彩；感谢我的父母，尤其是他们做出的决定，让我学英语——这对我帮助很大；当然还有马克，他让我微笑和大笑，让我迫不及待地想要开始下一次冒险。

Laura van Waas
20 August 2008
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Table of contents vii

**Part 1 Why Statelessness?**

**Chapter I**
Nationality Matters: An Introduction 3

1 Research questions 4
2 Research approach 4

**Chapter II**
The Statelessness Phenomenon and a First Encounter with the International Response 7

1 Discovering statelessness 7
2 The worldwide severity of statelessness: magnitude and consequences 9
3 The international response to statelessness 15
4 A first concrete dilemma: defining statelessness 19
5 Conclusion: why statelessness? 27

**Part 2 Preventing Statelessness**

**Chapter III**
Background to Preventing Statelessness 31

1 The attribution of nationality: doctrines and competences 31
2 International law and the attribution of nationality 36
3 The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 40
4 Purpose and method of part 2 47

**Chapter IV**
Addressing the Technical Causes of Statelessness 49

1 Jus sanguinis versus jus soli 49
   1.1 1961 Convention 50
   1.2 International human rights law 68
2 Abandoned and orphaned children 68
2.1 1961 Convention
2.2 International human rights law
3 Marriage (or divorce) and adoption
  3.1 1961 Convention
  3.2 International human rights law
4 Loss, deprivation or renunciation of nationality
  4.1 1961 Convention
  4.2 International human rights law
5 Conclusion

CHAPTER V
ADDRESSING STATELESSNESS RESULTING FROM THE ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF NATIONALITY

1 Discriminatory deprivation of nationality and “denial of citizenship”
  1.1 1961 Convention
  1.2 International human rights law
2 Illegal deprivation of nationality and the lack of due process
  2.1 1961 Convention
  2.2 International human rights law
3 Conclusion

CHAPTER VI
ADDRESSING STATELESSNESS IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE SUCCESSION

1 State succession and the nationality of persons affected
2 1961 Convention
3 International (human rights) law
4 Conclusion

CHAPTER VII
ADDRESSING THE “NEW” CAUSES OF STATELESSNESS

1 Birth and marriage registration
  1.1 Connecting statelessness to (deficient) birth and marriage registration
  1.2 International human rights law
2 Migration
  2.1 Irregular migration
    2.1.1 Connecting statelessness to irregular migration
    2.1.2 International human rights law
  2.2 Trafficking in human beings and refugee situations
    2.2.1 Connecting statelessness to trafficking and refugee situations
    2.2.2 International human rights law
3 Conclusion

CHAPTER VIII
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE PREVENTION OF STATELESSNESS

viii
Table of contents

1 The value of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in the prevention of statelessness 194
2 The role of international (human rights) law in the prevention of statelessness 198
3 Normative gaps in the prevention of statelessness under international law and suggested remedies 201
4 Prospects for the implementation and enforcement of norms for the prevention of statelessness 205
5 Conclusion 212

PART 3 PROTECTING STATELESS PERSONS

CHAPTER IX BACKGROUND TO PROTECTING STATELESS PERSONS 217

1 The substance of nationality: rights and duties 217
2 International law and the substance of nationality 220
3 The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons 225
4 Purpose and method of part 3 233

CHAPTER X PROTECTING THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS OF STATELESS PERSONS 235

1 Non-nationals, non-discrimination and the enjoyment of civil and political rights 236
2 Freedom of movement 240
   2.1 Internal freedom of movement 240
      2.1.1 1954 Convention 240
      2.1.2 International human rights law 240
   2.2 International freedom of movement 240
      2.2.1 1954 Convention 240
      2.2.2 International human rights law 240
3 Right to legal personhood 262
   3.1 1954 Convention 262
   3.2 International human rights law 262
4 Access to courts 265
   4.1 1954 Convention 265
   4.2 International human rights law 265
5 Freedom of religion 275
   5.1 1954 Convention 275
   5.2 International human rights law 275
6 Right to property 280
   6.1 1954 Convention 280
   6.2 International human rights law 280
Table of contents

7 Civil and political rights absent from the 1954 Statelessness Convention 285
  7.1 Freedom from arbitrary detention
  7.2 Freedom of opinion, expression and (political) assembly
  7.3 Right to participate in government
  7.4 Minority rights
8 Conclusion 297

CHAPTER XI
PROTECTING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS OF THE STATELESS 301

1 Non-nationals, non-discrimination and the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights 302
2 Right to work and labour-related rights
  2.1 1954 Convention
  2.2 International human rights law
3 Freedom of association
  3.1 1954 Convention
  3.2 International human rights law
4 Right to social security
  4.1 1954 Convention
  4.2 International human rights law
5 Right to an adequate standard of living
  5.1 1954 Convention
  5.2 International human rights law
6 Right to education
  6.1 1954 Convention
  6.2 International human rights law
7 Right to intellectual property
  7.1 1954 Convention
  7.2 International human rights law
8 Economic, social and cultural rights absent from the 1954 Statelessness Convention 353
9 Conclusion 356

CHAPTER XII
PROTECTING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE STATELESS 359

1 Naturalisation
  1.1 1954 Convention
  1.2 International (human rights) law
2 Documentation
  2.1 1954 Convention
  2.2 International (human rights) law
3 Special needs absent from the 1954 Statelessness Convention 380
4 Conclusion 385
### Table of contents

#### CHAPTER XIII
**INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE PROTECTION OF STATELESS PERSONS**

1. The value of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in the protection of stateless persons  
2. The role of international (human rights) law in the protection of stateless persons  
3. Normative gaps in the protection of stateless persons under international law  
4. Prospects for the implementation and enforcement of norms for the protection of stateless persons  
5. Conclusion

#### PART 4  WHAT FUTURE FOR THE STATELESSNESS CONVENTIONS?

#### CHAPTER XIV
**FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

1. Nationality and statelessness in the 21st century  
2. Prevention, protection and more  
3. Meeting the challenge of identification  
4. What future for the Statelessness Conventions?

#### ANNEX 1
The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

#### ANNEX 2
The 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons

#### ANNEX 3
Schematic overview of the 1954 Statelessness Convention

Summary

Samenvatting (Dutch summary)

Bibliography

Index

Curriculum Vitae

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