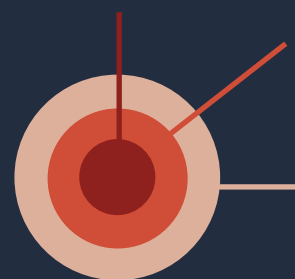


TOGETHER WE CAN: A CONSORTIUM TO PROTECT THE STATELESS IN TIMES OF COVID-19

The world's stateless, those with no nationality, have long been forced to live on society's margins, with little security or protection. The institution of nationality is often instrumentalised and wielded as a weapon to punish and exclude unwanted minorities, migrants and other groups. Even before COVID-19 struck, the value of citizenship had diminished, as the cost of statelessness intensified. The pandemic has only heightened pre-existing vulnerabilities and deepened societal fault-lines. The cost of exclusion is now even greater. The **COVID-19 Emergency Statelessness Fund (CESF)** coordinates and galvanises joint action to protect the stateless and those whose nationality is at risk.

Governments across the world face deeply challenging decisions on protecting public health while averting starvation and warding off economic disaster. Some states have rallied to protect citizens and bolster creaking healthcare systems. Others have grabbed more power, ramped up surveillance and diminished civil liberties. Both pose dangers to the stateless. With the former, the stateless risk exclusion, also by humanitarian and development agencies which are blind to the issue; with the latter, they are targeted and scapegoated.

Protected Citizens: Prioritised for Relief



Vulnerable Groups:
Excluded by states.
Receive humanitarian protection

Most Marginalised, including the Stateless:
Also excluded by humanitarian groups and/or targeted by states

The exclusion or marginalisation of the stateless in COVID-19 responses is characteristic of how they have always been treated. Historically, state-stateless relationships have ranged between enforced invisibility and indifference, bureaucratic violence and exclusion, and targeted persecution or even genocide. Unless the status quo is urgently challenged, the COVID-19 impacts on the stateless will be immense, and for many, irreversible.

ISI is the only human rights organisation dedicated to working globally on behalf of approximately 15 million stateless persons, and tens of millions whose nationality is under threat. We partner with NGOs and citizenship rights activists across the globe. Our knowledge and networks put us in a unique position to respond to the COVID-19 threat faced by the stateless.

The challenge that we (and others) face, is ensuring continued engagement on longer-term structural issues, whilst recognising and addressing the crisis and its immediate (and lasting) impact on the stateless. Both are connected, and one cannot be done without the other, which is why we set up the CESF.

FOUR REASONS TO SUPPORT THE CESF

1 A Blindspot: Statelessness is global and cuts across many issues: children, minorities, migration, gender etc. However, it is a poorly understood, 'invisible' issue falling between the cracks of donor priorities. They are often the least visible, most vulnerable and furthest left behind.

2 The Need: The impact of COVID-19 on the stateless is well documented. Levels of isolation and desperation are rising, as health, wellbeing and livelihoods deteriorate, and racism, xenophobia and insecurity rise.

3 Impact: Through the Consortium, we work with groups rooted in affected communities. They know the needs and we provide financial and other support to achieve real change, tailoring each project accordingly.

4 Value: All projects are planned to maximise impact. 80% of funds go to the field. The rest is invested in enhancing partners' capacities, strengthening the Consortium through cross-learning and engaging in joined-up global advocacy.

THE CESF AT A GLANCE

The CESF is a **targeted and time-bound** initiative to build a consortium of NGOs and citizenship rights activists at the frontline of the COVID-19 crisis. The CESF will implement **research-based action advocacy**, to realise **structural solutions**, challenge the exclusion of stateless persons, and recognise and break down the barriers they face. The CESF is overseen by an **Expert Committee** of citizenship rights activists, humanitarian and human rights actors and donors.

CESF
Launched

JUNE

20
20

DEC

20
21

Proposed End
subject to review

CESF

Awards

min **80%** of funds raised

Action: Large awards (up to EUR 25,000)

Scoping: Small awards (up to EUR 5,000)

ISI's role

max **20%** of funds raised

Direct support, partnership, capacity development
Strengthening the Consortium
Coordinating international advocacy

ISI's in kind contribution
0% of CESF funds

Institutional overheads
Administering the CESF
Growing the CESF

€ 170,000

funds raised

€ 750,000

funding target

€ 34,000 € 36,000 € 100,000

ISI's role

scoping awards

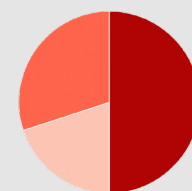
action awards

HOW WE CAN SPEND EACH 100,000 RAISED:

Action Awards
€ 50,000 – € 70,000

Scoping Awards
€ 10,000 – € 30,000

ISI's role
€ 20,000



“

Despite an ever-growing number of people who fall into this classification, statelessness remains a woefully under-resourced and rarely discussed problem, exacerbated by COVID-19. ISI is one of the leading organisations bringing together stateless people globally, putting them at the forefront of the conversation – a model I deeply respect and is not unlike our own – in the pursuit of enduring, people-led solutions to the statelessness crisis.

”

Sam Wolthuis,
American Jewish World Service

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FOUNDATIONS

STICHTING WEESHUIS
DER DOOPSGEZINDEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#)

The CESF allows NGOs and citizenship rights activists working directly with affected groups to develop with ISI, bespoke projects to meet their specific needs. Partners are also supported by ISI's capacity building, advocacy and networking expertise. This blend of local and global expertise, rooted in the experience of communities and obligations of states, allows us to act quickly and flexibly addressing structural issues and **emergency needs**. The Consortium, which connects all country partners, provides an informal and supportive environment for peer to peer learning, exchange and joined-up global advocacy.

As such, we are:

- Identifying/addressing country specific challenges, and directly supporting affected communities.
- Supporting activists/CBOs at a time when other funding sources have dried up.
- Increasing global visibility and advocating for key players (UN, donors, humanitarian actors) to mainstream statelessness in COVID-19 responses.
- Strengthening capacities and solidarity of citizenship rights actors globally, including by facilitating the development of a global statelessness movement.

“
The CESF is very important to us as we have experienced many challenges in advocating for the rights of the Nubians. COVID-19 has worsened the situation of our community, impacting our documentation, access to justice, food, healthcare and livelihoods. Through the CESF, we can increase our advocacy to hold the government accountable, and offer emergency support to excluded families. The Consortium allows us to meet and learn from other groups working around the world.
”
Yassah Kimei,
Nubian Rights Forum, Kenya

MALAYSIA PROJECT

Malaysia's nationality law is gender discriminatory, impacting nationality rights and free movement of families with one Malaysian and one foreign parent. COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation. Foreign spouses and children who previously periodically left Malaysia to renew visas, now cannot return. This project gathers evidence on bureaucratic inconsistencies and challenges faced by such families. **With more funding we will be able to directly support affected people to secure Malaysian citizenship or Permanent Residence and engage in advocacy and strategic litigation to achieve much needed structural law reform.**

CURRENT PROJECTS	POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS subject to funds
Bangladesh Dominican Republic India Kazakhstan Kenya Kyrgyzstan Malaysia Montenegro Nepal North Macedonia Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan	Bangladesh India Kenya Kuwait Lebanon Madagascar Malaysia Myanmar Nepal South Africa Thailand Uganda Zimbabwe



INDIA PROJECT

The discriminatory nationality verification process in Assam India has left 1.9 million people on the brink of statelessness, drained the resources of millions and diminished public services. COVID-19 has added an extra layer of vulnerability for those declared 'foreigners', and those fighting their cases in foreigner tribunals. This project is documenting case studies, collecting and analysing government orders and media reports to better understand impacts of hate speech and exclusion. **With more funding, we will be able to directly support those affected and advocate to address structural mechanisms of exclusion.**

Types of Work

Community outreach: podcasts, radio programmes etc
Paralegal support to navigate COVID-19 procedures
Mapping the COVID-19 impact on stateless communities
Advocacy for inclusion of stateless persons
Emergency relief

Thematic & Group Coverage

Addressing **gender discrimination** in nationality laws
Challenging **racism, xenophobia and hate speech**
Protecting **child rights**
Protecting the **rights of the Rohingya**
Promoting **inclusive societies**

“
The joint statement, ISI impact report and your correspondence draw much-needed attention to matters affecting stateless persons in these challenging times. We welcome your partnership in this regard and commend your advocacy for the human rights of vulnerable communities.
”
Filippo Grandi,
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

A cornerstone of the Consortium approach is **International Advocacy** through which ISI and partners raise the visibility of the issue globally, maintaining international attention and pressure on states which continue to discriminate against, marginalise and exclude the stateless through their COVID-19 responses. Having facilitated a joint civil society statement **'In Solidarity with the Stateless'**, drafted an Impact Report **'Stateless in a Global Pandemic'** and a Briefing Paper **'What Now for the Rohingya?'**, we have engaged in direct advocacy with multiple states, UN agencies, humanitarian and development actors. We have spread awareness through dedicated webinars on COVID-19, through audio-visual materials and op-eds. We have more plans in the pipeline to strengthen advocacy, strengthen capacities and reach out to other, marginalised groups.

We need your help to make these plans a reality. Join us by supporting the CESF.
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

WATCH THE WEBINAR
TOGETHER WE CAN:
A Consortium to
Protect the Stateless
in Times of COVID-19

