



City Tech

19th Annual Poster Session

Statelessness in the Western Hemisphere: An Ethnographic Analysis of Testimonies

Javiela Evangelista, PhD

Department of African American Studies

ABSTRACT

In 2013, the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Tribunal ruling 168/13 retroactively revoked the citizenship of over 200,000 Dominican nationals of Haitian descent, thus creating the fifth largest stateless population in the world at the time, and the largest in the Western Hemisphere to date. The ruling simply made legal the longstanding, racialized and clandestine practice of converting Haitian descendant Dominican citizens into foreigners. The ruling, as well as the laws that precede it, demonstrate how anti-blackness and racialization are processes through which citizenship is measured and mobilized to reorder society and formalize hierarchies.

TIMELINE



Statelessness by country or territory | Late 2014

Country	Number of stateless persons
1 Myanmar	810,000
2 Ivory Coast	700,000
3 Thailand	506,197
4 Latvia	262,802
5 Dominican Republic	210,000
6 Syria	160,000
7 Iraq	120,000
8 Russian Federation	113,474
9 Kuwait	93,000
10 Estonia	88,076



In 2014, the year after the ruling, globally 59.5 million people were forcefully displaced, 8.3 million more than the year prior. In 2014, the UNCHR noted "if they were to be a nation, they would be the 24th largest in the world" and 10 million of those displaced were stateless. In 2020 however, only 3.9 million stateless people were documented, which the UNHCR admits reflects underreporting. This research dissects the omissions embedded in underreporting and in common misrepresentations exemplified in *The New York Times* article that renders Dominican nationals set for deportation invisible. Documenting a dangerous global precedent, the legalization of mass statelessness under a democracy in the Dominican Republic, must be understood within frameworks of racialized governance, intersectionality, imperial continuity, and expulsion.

Ahmed, Azam and Paulina Villegas. "Dominican Republic Set to Deport Haitian Migrants," *New York Times*, June 17, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/world/americas/dominican-republic-set-to-deport-haitian-migrants.html>

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). "Situation of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic," *Country Report on Dominican Republic*, December 31, 2015. <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/DominicanRepublic-2015.pdf>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Better Statistics to Help End Statelessness," 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/better-statistics-to-help-end-statelessness/>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "World at War Global Trends: Forced Displacement," 2014. <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html>