

Introduction

Early in its organisational development The Equal Rights Trust (ERT) recognised that the unique situation of stateless people makes them particularly vulnerable to marginalisation, stereotyping, discrimination and inequality by both the state and wider society. In 2007 ERT submitted legal arguments to the European Court of Human Rights explaining why the treatment of the applicants in the case of *Makuc and Others v. Slovenia* constituted a violation of article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In the first volume of the Equal Rights Review, ERT publicised the testimony of an "erased" man from Slovenia who has suffered immeasurably since his unlawful removal from the Slovenian registry of permanent residents. So it is unsurprising that one of the first research and documentation projects undertaken by ERT has focused on statelessness.

Since May 2008, the Stateless Persons in Detention project has been working to document the experiences of stateless people who are or have been held in detention. Through the project, ERT has been analysing the factors which have led to their statelessness and their subsequent detention and has been devising solutions to address the core issues and concerns which have rendered stateless persons vulnerable to human rights violations. This special presents a snapshot of the issues currently being examined by the ERT staff and consultants who are working on the Stateless Persons in Detention project and the inequality and discrimination experienced by stateless persons globally.

One of the main purposes of this section as indicated in the opening article by Katherine Perks and Amal de Chickera is to generate de-

bate around the issue of statelessness. With this object in sight their article sheds light on some of the most difficult aspects of not only the Stateless Persons in Detention project but on the statelessness phenomenon generally. "The Silent Stateless and the Unhearing World: Can Equality Compel Us to Listen?" unpacks, from an equality perspective, many of the issues that have been closely associated with the deficiencies of the international stateless regime and demonstrates how in many ways the right to equality (through its entrenchment in international human rights law) can and should be used to overcome these shortcomings.

The second piece in this section captures the story of a child from the Democratic Republic of Congo who is currently in detention in Egypt. Told from the perspective of his journey through Africa, the testimony reflects the cycles of discrimination often experienced by stateless persons, from the discriminatory mechanisms that rendered him statelessness to the discrimination he faced owing to his statelessness.

In his article "Detention at Guantanamo Bay and the Creation of a New Brand of Statelessness", David Baluarte considers the plight of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay who, as a consequence of their association with the "war on terror" and terrorism, find themselves languishing in a detention limbo unable to return to their countries of habitual residence because of the persecution they are likely to suffer. This "new brand of statelessness" has been fuelled by stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes towards those associated with terrorism.