

Voices for Justice

Adolescent Girls and Young Women Confront Barriers to Justice and Discrimination

Barriers to justice and experiences of discrimination for adolescent girls and young women who have experience of being refugees, forcibly displaced, stateless, or impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws



Acknowledgements

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About the Organizations

Women's Refugee Commission

The Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) improves the lives and protects the rights of women, children, youth, and other people who are often overlooked, undervalued, and underserved in humanitarian responses to displacement and crises. We work in partnership with displaced communities to research their needs, identify solutions, and advocate for gender-transformative and sustained improvement in humanitarian, development, and displacement policy and practice. Since our founding in 1989, we have been a leading expert on the needs of refugee women, children, and youth and the policies that can protect and empower them.

www.womensrefugeecommission.org

Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights

The Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights mobilizes international action to achieve law reform in the [24 countries](#) that prevent mothers from conferring their nationality on their children on an equal basis with fathers; and to achieve law reform in the [40+ countries](#) which deny women equal nationality rights with men, including conferral of nationality to non-national spouses.

<https://www.equalnationalityrights.org/>

Global Refugee Youth Network

The Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN), formed in 2020, is a global network empowering refugee youth leaders to instigate change in their communities. By bridging the gap between refugee youth involvement and representation, GRYN recognizes and capitalizes on the potential of youth-led initiatives. As a refugee-led and youth-led organization, GRYN aims to address the challenges faced by young people by supporting the work of refugee youth. This includes providing training and seed funding to support groups, particularly those led by adolescent girls and young women. GRYN has developed an innovative approach to partnering with refugee youth-led organizations (RYLOs) that strengthens their leaders, especially young women. This focus on refugee-youth gives GRYN a powerful foundation for empowering refugee communities.

www.gryn.network

“To me, justice means fairness, dignity, and equal treatment for every person—regardless of their background or situation. ... Justice is the foundation of our work. It means ensuring that vulnerable individuals are protected, heard, and allowed to rebuild their lives in safety and hope.”

Consultation participant

Executive Summary

Adolescent girls and young women who have experience of being refugees, forcibly displaced, stateless, or are impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws face significant barriers to justice and unique forms of discrimination based on their displacement or legal status, gender, and age. A lack of nationally-recognized legal documentation, as well as restrictive or discriminatory national laws, can leave forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women excluded from healthcare, education, protection, and justice services. Cultures of xenophobia or gender discrimination can further compound these legal constraints, leaving forcibly displaced women and girls at risk of many forms of exploitation, violence, and abuse, and without any recourse to justice.

In November and December 2025, the Women's Refugee Commission, Global Refugee Youth Network, and the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights conducted a joint global consultation with adolescent girls and young women who were forcibly displaced, stateless, or were impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws, to better understand their unique experiences of discrimination and the barriers they faced to accessing justice. The consultation took place via an online workshop on Zoom, accompanied by a survey, in English, French, Arabic, and Spanish. In total, 45 people participated, aged 15-35, including 29 female participants, 5 male participants, 1 transgender participant, and 10 who did not disclose their gender. Participants were asked a series of questions about barriers and enablers to accessing justice in their contexts.

Key Findings:

- 1. Lack of legal documentation or status:** Without nationally-recognized legal identity or documentation—such as birth certificates, refugee cards, or citizenship documentation—forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women face significant barriers and discrimination in accessing basic services and rights, such as education, healthcare, housing, or employment—barriers and discrimination also faced by those lacking citizenship in their country of residence.
- 2. Discrimination against forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those impacted by discriminatory nationality laws:** Participants reported experiences of police refusing to take reports from refugee survivors of violence, demanding identification before taking complaints, or delaying recording cases; of prosecution services dropping cases involving refugees or undocumented girls; and of judges dismissing cases involving non-citizens.
- 3. Language barriers and poor access to information:** Many participants spoke of police, prosecutor, and court processes as being long, complex, and intimidating to navigate. A lack of interpretation services prevent adolescent girls' and young women from navigating justice systems, and also mean that forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women are unaware of their rights or how to engage the justice system in the first place.
- 4. Inaccessible, inappropriate, or underfunded services:** Remote locations of camps and settlements can mean long and costly journeys to access services. Camps (or hosting authorities) often enforce rules restricting travel in and out of the camp, while adolescent girls and young women may also face further restrictions by family members from travelling outside of the safety of a camp, leaving survivors at risk of being trapped with abusers.
- 5. Stigma and harmful social norms:** Fear of retaliation and backlash, isolation, shame, victim-blaming, and pressure to protect family honor can inhibit women and girls from reporting discrimination or violence. These factors can be compounded for adolescent girls and young women from forcibly displaced communities. One participant highlighted that the “tight-knit” nature of refugee communities can heighten the social costs of reporting—including isolation or retaliation.

6. Poverty, economic insecurity, and the high costs of justice: In the context of economic insecurity, the high costs associated with accessing justice can further exclude forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls from accessing their legal rights and protection. Participants highlighted the numerous costs incurred in pursuing justice mechanisms, including transport costs, legal fees, the costs of documentation, and costs incurred from missing work.

Recommendations

- 1.** National and local service providers must remove requirements for survivors and victims to present documentation, identification, or legal status in order to access services and support.
- 2.** National governments must prioritize legal pathways to regularization, legal stay, resettlement, and citizenship for forcibly displaced, stateless, and non-citizen adolescent girls and young women, and they must end gender discriminatory laws to address the root causes of vulnerability, discrimination, insecurity, and exclusion from justice mechanisms.
- 3.** Governments, humanitarian agencies, and civil society must invest in protection, shelter, healthcare, reporting, legal aid, and counselling services that are safe, dignified, culturally appropriate, and accessible to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws.
- 4.** Governments must simplify legal processes, work with civil society to increase accessibility of legal processes to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws, and ensure these individuals are aware of their legal rights.
- 5.** Governments, humanitarian agencies, and civil society must invest in policies, systems, and services that support the long-term self-reliance and resilience of forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws, by ensuring their rights to access healthcare, education, employment, and shelter.
- 6.** Governments must work with civil society groups and local communities to address harmful social norms that enable discrimination and inhibit access to justice for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws.

Introduction

Adolescent girls and young women who are forcibly displaced, stateless (not recognized as a citizen by any state), or who are impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws face multiple forms of discrimination and multiple barriers to accessing justice. A lack of nationally-recognized legal documentation, as well as restrictive or discriminatory national laws, can leave forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women excluded from healthcare, education, protection, and justice services. Cultures of xenophobia or gender discrimination can further compound these legal constraints, leaving forcibly displaced women and girls at risk of many forms of exploitation, violence, and abuse, and without any recourse to justice.

Research by the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC) has highlighted how forcibly [displaced adolescent girls face](#) heightened risks of violence while also experiencing significant restrictions on their movement and access to services as a result of their age, gender, and displacement status. The Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN), which works directly with refugee youth leaders and refugee youth-led organizations (RYLOs) all over the world, have highlighted the [heightened risks of gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#) faced by refugee adolescent girls and young women, as well as the [restrictions faced by RYLOs](#) when trying to establish community-based organizations and activities. The Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights (GCENR) has documented how [gender discrimination in nationality laws](#)—in which women are prevented from conferring their nationality to their children or spouse or acquiring, changing, or retaining their own nationality on an equal basis with men, a reality in over forty countries (including 24 where women lack the right to confer nationality on their children on an equal basis with men)—is one of the leading causes of statelessness, resulting in children being excluded from education, healthcare, or social services and being at greater risk of GBV, poverty, exclusion, and discrimination.

The priority theme for the seventieth session of the [Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW70\)](#) is “ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers.” As part of UN Women’s youth consultation ahead of CSW70, WRC, GRYN, and GCENR conducted a joint global consultation with adolescent girls and young women who were forcibly displaced, stateless, or were impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws, to better understand their unique experiences of discrimination and the barriers they faced to accessing justice.



Youth participants during a training session led by RYLO Umoja People with Disabilities.

About the Consultation

The consultation used a **dual format** for engaging with young people.

- ▶ An **online survey** was circulated among partners (available in English, French, Arabic, and Spanish), for young people to directly submit their responses between November 24 and December 10, 2025.
- ▶ A **virtual consultation** was hosted on Zoom on December 9, 2025, in which partners and networks were invited to participate. The virtual consultation was interactive and conducted primarily in English, with Arabic, French, and Spanish interpretation available. The discussion was facilitated by two young refugees (one male and one female) from GRYN.

Consultations used the following questions to prompt responses:

- ▶ What does “justice” mean to you? What does “access to justice” mean? How do you understand these terms? *(Virtual consultation only)*
- ▶ What do you think prevents displaced, refugee, or stateless adolescent girls and young women from accessing justice? This can refer to formal justice systems, informal/community-based justice mechanisms, or broader issues of human rights and justice in your context. Barriers might include costs, distance, legal aid, documentation, citizenship or displacement status, language barriers, digital access, disability, stigma, and bias. *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ In your experience, which laws or policies create discrimination or exclude displaced, refugee, or stateless girls and young women from protection or remedy/compensation? This might include family law, inheritance, nationality, identity documents, child marriage, age-based consent rules, criminalization that affects sexual and reproductive health rights, and school discipline. *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ In your experience, what practices in police, prosecution, courts, customary or religious systems, or administrative bodies block access to justice for displaced, refugee, or stateless adolescent girls and young women? This might include fees, delays, evidence standards, parental or spousal consent requirements, and age caps that exclude adolescents and young women. *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ In your experience, what forms of remedy matter most to you or displaced, refugee, or stateless adolescent girls and young women in your community? This could include compensation, restitution, services, guarantees of harms not being repeated, and policy or legal change. Please share examples of good practice, if possible. *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ Based on your experience, what changes are needed for survivor-centered, child sensitive responses to GBV, including online abuse, for displaced, refugee, or stateless adolescent girls and young women? Please share examples of good practice, if possible. This could include awareness raising, trained service providers, policy or legal change, hotlines or virtual platforms, or more. *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ In your experience, which approaches help displaced, refugee, or stateless adolescent girls and young women understand and claim their rights? This could include legal clinics, peer paralegals, school curricula, and hotlines. What else needs to be considered in relation to access to justice? *(Virtual consultation and survey)*
- ▶ Any other thoughts or recommendations you would like us to include in our report to UN Women? *(Survey only)*

About the Participants

Survey

13 people responded to the survey. The surveys included questions to determine the respondent's age bracket, gender identity, country of origin, and experiences of being forcibly displaced, stateless, or impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws. Survey results indicate that respondents included:

- ▶ 2 people aged 20-24 years old; 10 people aged 25-35 years old
- ▶ 9 people who identified as female, 3 people who identified as male, and 1 person who identified as transgender
- ▶ 6 people who have had experience of being a refugee; 2 people who have experienced statelessness; and 4 people who have been impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws
- ▶ People who originated from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mauritania, Sudan, and South Sudan
- ▶ Several participants shared that they were currently living in Kenya or Uganda, with some living in refugee settlements or camps in these countries

Virtual Consultation

32 people participated in the virtual consultation. The virtual consultation offered an option for participants to share their name, age, location, and displacement status, although not all participants chose to disclose these details.

Of the participants who chose to disclose details about themselves, the virtual consultation included (but was not limited to):

- ▶ 20 people aged 15-25 years; 6 people aged 25-35 years
- ▶ 20 people who identified as female; 2 who identified as male
- ▶ Refugees, stateless individuals, and people impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws
- ▶ People who originated from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Rohingya community, and Rwanda
- ▶ People currently living in Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, and Uganda, including those living in refugee settlements or camps in these countries

Key Findings from the Consultations: Barriers To Accessing Justice

● 1. Lack of legal documentation or status

A lack of nationally-recognized legal identity or documentation—such as birth certificates, refugee cards, or citizenship documentation—remains a critical barrier to accessing justice for adolescent girls and young women affected by displacement, statelessness, or gender discrimination in nationality laws. Without legal documentation, forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women face significant barriers and discrimination in accessing basic services and rights, such as education, healthcare, housing, or employment- barriers and discrimination also faced by those lacking citizenship in their country of residence

Some countries have strict documentation or citizenship status requirements for accessing justice, with police unable to open cases without ID cards, birth certificates, or refugee cards—excluding many forcibly displaced or stateless adolescent girls and young women from formal justice mechanisms, and leaving them without any form of legal protection. As one respondent said, *“Without papers, they cannot file cases or be recognized by authorities. This makes them effectively invisible in the justice system.”* Moreover, in countries which enforce mandatory reporting rules for *“illegal stay,”* adolescent girls and young women without documentation expressed fears of accessing medical, police, or legal services, for fear of arrest. In certain contexts, health, social, and other survivor services refuse to treat survivors of GBV without identification. Participants from RYLOs highlighted that restrictions on documentation and registration for refugee-led organizations also impacted the ability of their organizations to engage in advocacy on rights and justice for young refugees.

● 2. Discrimination against forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those impacted by discriminatory nationality laws

These legal exclusions from justice mechanisms are compounded by discriminatory practices by police, prosecutors, courts, and judges. Participants reported experiences of police refusing to take reports from refugee survivors of violence, demanding identification before taking complaints, or delaying recording cases; of prosecution services dropping cases involving refugees or undocumented girls; and of judges dismissing cases involving non-citizens. As one respondent said, *“Courts do not provide safe environments for young women to speak freely.”* Respondents claimed that many forcibly displaced or stateless adolescent girls and young women avoided reporting abuse to police due to past experiences with corrupt or abusive police services, who were known for mistreating refugee women, threatening to detain or deport undocumented girls, and engaging in insensitive and re-traumatizing questioning processes—leading to a mistrust in formal justice institutions.

While all forcibly displaced and stateless communities can face discrimination or legal exclusion from accessing services, adolescent girls and young women face multiple layers of exclusion: on the basis of their gender, age, and status. Several participants highlighted further layers of intersectional discrimination and exclusion faced by forcibly displaced or stateless transgender women and women and girls with disabilities.

3. Language barriers and poor access to information

Even where forcibly displaced or stateless adolescent girls and young women do have rights to engage with formal justice mechanisms, language barriers and poor legal literacy can mean that formal justice mechanisms remain inaccessible to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women. Many participants spoke of police, prosecutor, and court processes as being long, complex, and intimidating to navigate. For adolescent girls and young women with limited proficiency in a local language, a lack of interpretation services can not only prevent their ability to navigate justice systems, but it can also mean that forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women are unaware of their rights or how to engage the justice system in the first place.

4. Inaccessible, inappropriate, or underfunded services

A lack of accessible and appropriate services was highlighted as a major barrier to adolescent girls and young women accessing justice or protection mechanisms, particularly for those living in refugee camps or settlements. Remote locations of camps and settlements can mean long journeys to access services, which could prove unsafe or costly for adolescent girls or young women. Camps (or hosting authorities) often enforce rules further restricting travel in and out of the camp, such as curfews or exit permits, further limiting access to police, courts, or health services. Adolescent girls and young women may also face restrictions by family members from travelling outside of the safety of a camp, leaving survivors at risk of being trapped with abusers for fear of arrest, relocation, or deportation.

Where services do exist, a lack of funding and infrastructure means that safe spaces, shelters, counselling, medical and forensic care, and legal aid services are often insufficiently available or accessible to adolescent girls and young women. Participants described case workers being “overloaded or undertrained,” few women police officers, limited safe reporting channels, and inappropriate or insensitive practices in the justice system, leading to survivors being “retraumatized.”

5. Stigma and harmful social norms

Participants raised stigma and harmful social norms as key factors deterring adolescent girls and young women from seeking justice. In many contexts, social norms can perpetuate patriarchal attitudes, normalize practices such as child marriage or GBV, and discourage reporting, emphasizing community unity over individual rights. Fear of retaliation and backlash, isolation, shame, victim-blaming, and pressure to protect family honor can further inhibit women and girls from reporting discrimination or violence. These factors can be compounded for adolescent girls and young women from forcibly displaced communities. One participant highlighted that the “tight-knit” nature of refugee communities can heighten the social costs of reporting –including isolation or retaliation–particularly when the perpetrator of a crime is a close relative or community leader. Moreover, trauma from past conflict, violence, and disruption may create psychological barriers for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, who may find it traumatizing or overwhelming to repeat their stories.

Stigma and harmful social norms can be compounded by family laws that enable discriminatory or harmful practices and further limit the decision-making power of adolescent girls and young women, regardless of their displacement or citizenship status. Laws that permit child marriage or do not criminalize marital rape leave adolescent girls and young women exposed to violence without access to legal recourse when they experience it. Guardianship laws in some contexts mean that women—and particularly girls—are unable to report violence, file complaints, consent to legal action, or access basic healthcare services (including sexual and reproductive healthcare) without parental or spousal consent. Discrimination in inheritance and property laws in some contexts means that forcibly displaced or stateless girls cannot own or inherit property. Gender discrimination in nationality laws results in women being unable to pass citizenship onto their children (both male and female) or to equally acquire, change, or retain citizenship, resulting in women and their children being denied the right to access basic services or legal protections or to own and inherit property.

6. Poverty, economic insecurity, and the high costs of justice

Forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those impacted by discriminatory nationality laws can experience heightened economic insecurity due to their age, gender, and displacement or citizenship status. A lack of documentation, or policies that restrict access to work for forcibly displaced, stateless, or non-citizen individuals, can leave these communities— and especially women and girls—excluded from labor rights and compensation and more at risk of exploitation and violence in informal labor markets. Women and girls can find themselves economically dependent on their abusers, inhibiting them from reporting cases of violence as they fear losing shelter and income for themselves and their family.

In the context of economic insecurity, the high costs associated with accessing justice can further exclude forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls from accessing their legal rights and protection. Participants highlighted the numerous costs incurred in pursuing justice mechanisms, including transport costs, legal fees, the costs of documentation, and costs incurred from missing work.



Women leader participating in a training workshop organized by GRYN in Uganda.

Recommendations

1. National and local service providers must remove requirements for survivors and victims to present documentation, identification, or legal status in order to access services and support.

Justice and support systems, including healthcare services, legal assistance, police reporting, prosecution, and court systems must remove requirements to present legal identity or documentation for victims and survivors. Justice and support systems must end the practice of mandatory reporting mechanisms, which may prevent adolescent girls and young women from accessing justice, and which can be used to threaten forcibly displaced, stateless, or non-citizen victims and survivors with deportation, detention, or arrest. Legal systems and policies must guarantee equal protection regardless of nationality, status, or gender identity.

2. National governments must prioritize legal pathways to regularization, legal stay, resettlement, and citizenship for forcibly displaced, stateless, and non-citizen adolescent girls and young women, and they must end gender discriminatory laws to address the root causes of vulnerability, discrimination, insecurity, and exclusion from justice mechanisms.

Governments must invest in administrative capacity to prioritize access to legal documentation for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, particularly those at risk of violence, abuse, or exploitation. They must ensure that facilities, staff, and pathways to regularization are accessible to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, and that they protect the dignity and safety of impacted communities. National laws and constitutions must end gender discrimination in nationality laws, ensuring that women have equal rights to pass their citizenship on to their children and spouse and to acquire, change, and retain their citizenship on an equal basis with men. Laws must be updated to end child marriage, acknowledge marital rape, criminalize GBV, and protect the rights of women and girls to access healthcare and legal support without requiring the consent of a guardian.

3. Governments, humanitarian agencies, and civil society must invest in protection, shelter, healthcare, reporting, legal aid, and counselling services that are safe, dignified, culturally appropriate, and accessible to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws.

This includes creating more emergency shelters and long-term safe housing options for adolescent girls and young women most at risk; accessible, confidential, and culturally appropriate psycho-social support and trauma counselling, such as peer support groups for adolescent girls; free and dignified medical and forensic care; support for community-based protection mechanisms; training for frontline service providers on how to provide culturally-sensitive, gender-responsive, age-appropriate, safe and dignified support specifically for forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls, including those with intersecting needs such as transgender women and women and girls with disabilities; and investment in confidential and safe reporting mechanisms and child-friendly, female staff reporting points.

4. Governments must simplify legal processes, work with civil society to increase accessibility of legal processes to forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women, and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws, and ensure these individuals are aware of their legal rights.

Governments must simplify legal processes, lower or remove costs associated with navigating the legal system, remove documentation barriers to accessing the legal system, and support mechanisms to ensure justice and legal systems are accessible to forcibly displaced, stateless, and non-citizen communities. This should include working with civil society to offer language interpretation services and facilitating access to legal aid or paralegal/caseworker accompaniment for victims and survivors. Governments must put in place laws and policies guaranteeing that forcibly displaced, stateless, and non-citizen individuals will not face deportation or detention when attempting to access legal systems. Governments and civil society must work together to support accessible legal clinics, pro bono legal assistance, and community-based and digital training and guidance for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women to ensure they are aware of their legal rights, how to access them, and how to advocate for themselves and others.

5. Governments, humanitarian agencies, and civil society must invest in policies, systems, and services that support the long-term self-reliance and resilience of forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws, by ensuring their rights to access healthcare, education, employment, and shelter.

Governments must amend laws to ensure forcibly displaced and stateless individuals are able to access safe shelter, employment, education, and healthcare (including sexual and reproductive healthcare). Particular efforts must be made to invest in safe and accessible education and employment opportunities for adolescent girls and young women, to reduce their dependence on perpetrators and provide them with the knowledge and resources they need to access justice. These could include skills training, scholarships, or providing start-up kits. Restrictions on movements should be eased for forcibly displaced women and girls living in camps, so that they are able to access services and opportunities outside camp environments. Support should be given to women-led, refugee-led, and community-based organizations, who are on the frontlines of supporting forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls.

6. Governments must work with civil society groups and local communities to address harmful social norms that enable discrimination and inhibit access to justice for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women and those denied citizenship because of discriminatory nationality laws.

Governments and civil society groups must work in partnership with adolescent girls and young women to engage with religious leaders, community elders, and forcibly displaced and stateless families to address harmful social norms that perpetuate GBV or child or forced marriage, and prevent women and girls from reporting violations and pursuing justice. Actors must work together to raise awareness about the harms of these practices, the pathways for reporting and accessing justice, and the legal repercussions for perpetrators. Governments and civil society groups should work in partnership with women-led organizations, young women, and adolescent girls to raise awareness, design programming, and create peer support groups to address harmful social norms and to create safe spaces for reporting and support.

Conclusion

Adolescent girls and young women who are forcibly displaced, stateless, or impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws face intersecting vulnerabilities based on their age, gender, and legal or displacement status. These circumstances expose adolescent girls and young women to heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and abuse, while simultaneously excluding them from spaces and services that would support their safety and wellbeing, including education, healthcare, safe housing, and employment.

Meanwhile, these same structural barriers also restrict the ability of adolescent girls and young women to seek justice. Too many vulnerable women and girls are shut out of the justice system due to the absence of citizenship or nationally-recognized legal documentation, non-existent interpretation or legal aid services for forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls, or restrictions on movements in and out of camps or displacement settlements. As a result, abuses often go unreported and unaddressed, reinforcing cycles of exclusion and exploitation while enabling impunity for perpetrators.

Yet these barriers could be mitigated by immediate policy changes, such as removing requirements to show legal identification when accessing justice services, or investing in language interpretation, legal aid services, and informational workshops for forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women. As world leaders gather for the seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, it is essential that the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless adolescent girls and young women remain visible; and that equal access to justice for all - regardless of age, gender, or legal status - is upheld.

