

STATELESSNESS IN NORWAY

9 FACTS

with recommendations from UNHCR

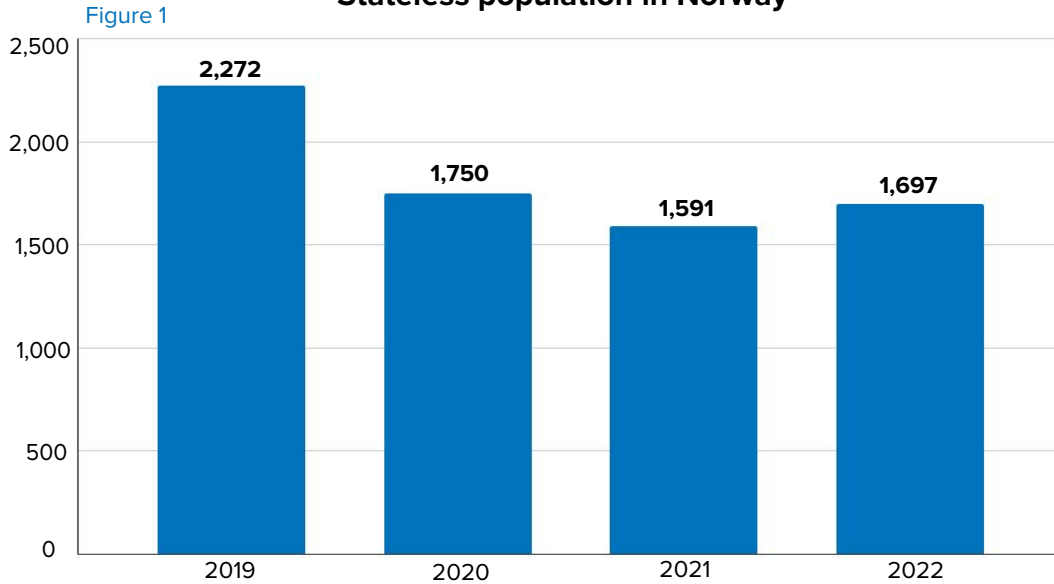
FACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Statelessness in Norway mainly occurs in the migratory context. By the end of 2022, Norway had a stateless population of 1,697 individuals (of which 144 were born in Norway) many of whom were born in Syria, Palestine, and Iraq.
2. Norwegian legislation does not currently contain a definition of a stateless person. During the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2019 Norway committed to incorporate a definition of a stateless person into the Norwegian Nationality Law. **UNHCR recommends that the definition of a stateless person set out in Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons be incorporated in national legislation to strengthen the interpretation and application of the definition in law and in practice.**
3. Establishing an accessible and efficient statelessness determination procedure is crucial for Norway to meet its international obligations towards stateless persons under the 1954 Convention and in human rights law. As Norway currently lacks a centralized procedure, statelessness is addressed within other procedures, such as during the asylum process. **UNHCR recommends that Norway establishes a dedicated statelessness determination procedure with adapted standard and burden of proof, reflecting the inherent difficulties for a person to prove their statelessness. UNHCR also recommends that proactive identification procedures with efficient referral mechanisms between authorities are put in place.**
4. Stateless persons' experiences with Norwegian judicial and administrative processes have mostly been in relation to an asylum application or another type of residence permit. While many stateless people are also refugees, there are also persons who are not refugees. **UNHCR recommends that persons recognized as stateless be granted a specific residence permit, to allow them to have access to the rights guaranteed by the 1954 Convention.**
5. Norway provides for a reduced residence period from eight to three years for stateless persons to be eligible for Norwegian nationality. Legislative changes concerning requirements for permanent residence were introduced in 2021, increasing the required residency period to five years for certain foreigners, consequently creating a legal uncertainty as to the residence period required for naturalisation of stateless persons granted international protection. **UNHCR recommends undertaking a review of how this may affect stateless persons' ability to acquire Norwegian nationality to ensure continued access to citizenship after three years legal residence.**
6. Instruction G-08/2016 clarifies the criteria for acquisition of Norwegian nationality for persons born stateless in Norway, including the alleviation of certain residency requirements. **UNHCR recommends that the authorities raise awareness about these criteria, including through specialized training for legal practitioners and relevant stakeholders, and for the incorporation of the criteria in the Nationality Act.**
7. Despite efforts undertaken to reduce the number of stateless persons in Norway, 454 children and young people (0-19 years old) were recorded as stateless or with unknown nationality by the end of 2022 (of which 130 children born in Norway). Moreover, stateless children born in Norway must apply for and fulfill certain conditions for Norwegian citizenship. Children over 15 years old are in addition required to present proof of no criminal record when applying for citizenship. **UNHCR recommends undertaking an analysis of the circumstances behind the high number of children recorded as stateless or with unknown nationality. In order to further avoid childhood statelessness, UNHCR also recommends that children born stateless in Norway be allowed to acquire nationality automatically.**
8. Children born in Norway to mothers who are nationals of one of the 25 countries that do not allow women to pass on their nationality to their children, and whose fathers are unknown, are sometimes registered as having the same nationality as their mothers. As they may not be able to acquire their mother's nationality, **UNHCR recommends improving the Norwegian National Register's Handbook on population registration to correctly address the registration of children who are stateless to ensure they can enjoy the rights to which they are entitled.**
9. UNHCR's 2015 Mapping Statelessness in Norway revealed challenges with accuracy of data due to different registration methods and applied definitions of a stateless person across Norwegian authorities. **UNHCR recommends that Norwegian authorities review and enhance their current system for collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data on stateless persons and persons recorded without a nationality in Norway, to ensure consistency in registration and reporting on statistics.**

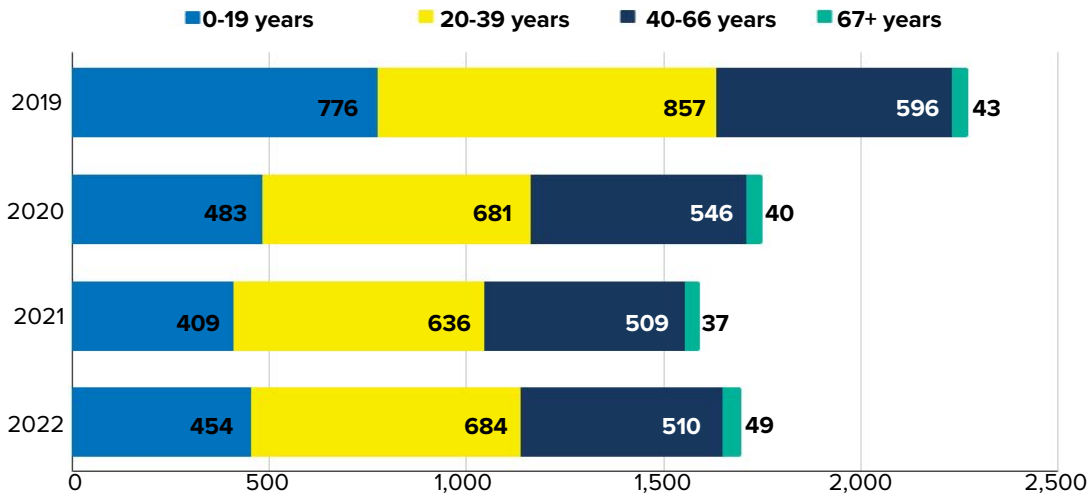
STATISTICAL TRENDS

All figures are as of end of the reporting year

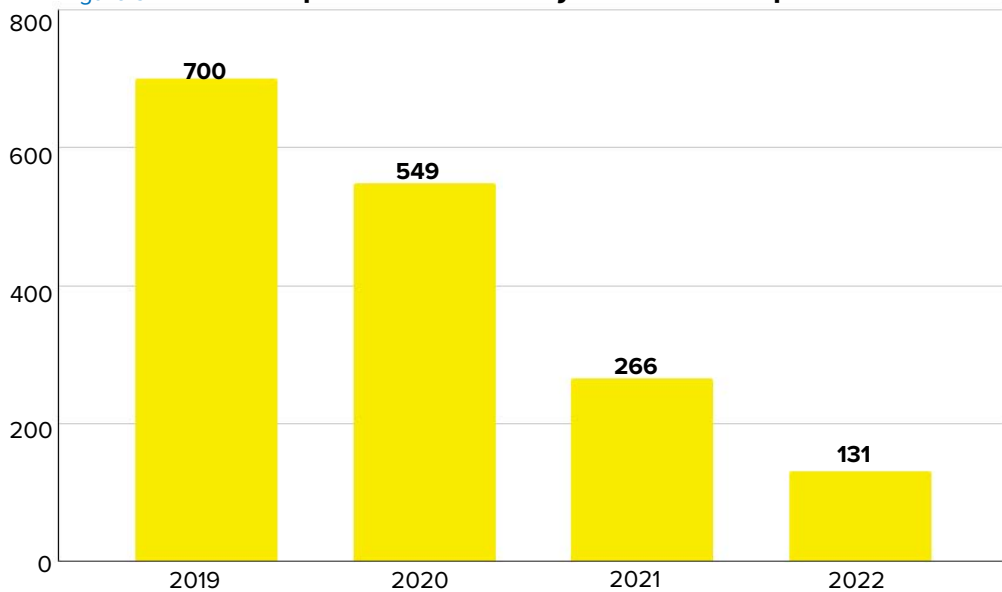
Stateless population in Norway



Stateless population in Norway by age



Stateless persons in Norway who have acquired citizenship



Note for Figures 1, 2, and 3: Statistics Norway's categories of "stateless" and "unknown" are merged to correspond to UNHCR's definition of "Stateless".
Source for Figures 1, 2, and 3: Statistics Norway's database

● UNHCR's #IBelong campaign - Fighting statelessness globally

UNHCR in close collaboration with States, civil society and international organizations launched a **Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014-2024, the #IBelong Campaign**.

Worldwide almost 450,000 stateless people have acquired a nationality across 27 countries and important legislative changes have been adopted.
Read more about UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign at: unhcr.org/ibelong/