

## Experts urge Sudan and South Sudan to agree on citizenship laws

Thursday 21 June 2012

June 20, 2012 (KAMPALA) - The new combined efforts of both law on nationality introduced in newly-independent South Sudan, and amendments made in response to partition last year by the Republic of Sudan, may leave many stateless, argues a report released by the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa and the Africa Governance Monitoring and the Advocacy Project of the Open Society Foundation.

Most of those at risk of statelessness are people of South Sudanese origin who have lived in the Republic of Sudan for decades or even generations. Many South Sudanese were displaced and moved to the north during the civil wars.

Since the split in July last year Sudan and South Sudan have established new nationality laws but have failed to reach a negotiated for solution on who will become citizens of South Sudan and who to remain as the citizens of Sudan.

South Sudanese by origin lived for many years in the Republic of Sudan are being stripped of their Sudanese nationality, irrespective of the strength of their connections to the new state of South Sudan and their views on which state they would wish to belong to, the new report says .

Those populations at risk include individuals with one parent from Sudan and one from South Sudan, members of cross-border ethnic groups and people separated from their families by war, including unaccompanied children.

“Some people living in Sudan will end up stateless, without either a Sudanese or South Sudanese nationality and lose their basic rights. People without citizenship or the papers to prove it will be deprived of the right to vote, to cross borders, and to access state health and education services,” said Binaifer Nowrojee executive director of the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa.

The report recommends that, in order to prevent statelessness, the Republic of Sudan should not strip an individual of his or her Sudanese nationality without proof that he or she has actually acquired South Sudanese nationality.

It also calls on the both Sudans to work together to ensure that potential citizens of South Sudan can easily obtain South Sudanese nationality documents if they are living in the Republic of Sudan.

(ST)