

For Immediate Release

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**Georgetown Law hosts U.S. premiere of Documentary on Statelessness Situation of
Dominicans of Haitian Descent**

September 23, 2016, Washington, D.C. – On the third anniversary of Judgment 168-13 by the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Court, Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute, the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness, and Minority Rights Group International showcased the first-ever U.S. screening of the documentary *Our Lives in Transit* and hosted a panel discussion concerning the ongoing challenges of statelessness in the Dominican Republic. The event marked three years since Judgment 168-13, which revoked the Dominican citizenship of tens of thousands of people born in the Dominican Republic, most of them of Haitian descent.

The documentary *Our Lives in Transit* by Minority Rights Group International and MUDHA portrays the life of Rosa Iris Diendomi and her fight to obtain her citizenship documents. It sheds light on the harsh realities faced by Dominicans of Haitian descent who were once recognized as citizens, but who are now rendered stateless by the Dominican government's refusal to issue their birth certificates, identity cards, and other essential documentation. After the film screening, a panel of experts, including Rosa Iris Diendomi herself, spoke about their stories, the impact of the new citizenship regime under Law 169-14, and the recent migration policies, such as the Regularization Plan for Migrants, which were implemented by the Dominican government as a response to Judgment 168-13.

During the panel, moderated by Angelita Baeyens of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute presented a report on access to education for stateless children in the Dominican Republic, which highlights that even with Law 169-14, access to education for children of Haitian descent continues to be predominantly affected due to lack of documentation.

"Under Dominican laws, policies, constitutional provisions, and international human rights commitments, all children – regardless of documentation – have a right to education. Yet, some schools have been unable or unwilling to ensure that Dominicans of Haitian descent, who have difficulties obtaining documentation, can attend school," said Georgetown Law graduate and report author Raimy Reyes (LL.M'16). "While the broader issues surrounding access to citizenship are debated, gains could be made in access to education."

One of the panelists, Jenny Moron from MUDHA, highlighted that the lack of documentation affects women and girls disproportionately, making them more vulnerable. With regards to Law 169-14, Francisco Quintana, co-founder of the Americas Network of Nationality and Statelessness, and Director for the Andean, North America and Caribbean Region at CEJIL, affirmed that treating people born in the Dominican Republic as foreigners and making them go through a validation or naturalization process, even for a very limited time, implies a disregard of their right to nationality.

Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute is the focal point of human rights at Georgetown University Law Center and helps ensure its place as a center of excellence in human rights teaching and training as well as in producing policy-relevant and influential human rights ideas and research.

The Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness (Red ANA) is a network of non-governmental organizations, academics and individual experts committed to address statelessness in the Americas.