

April 2016

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Being invisible affects human rights

Jessica Profeta is an invisible person to the government of the Dominican Republic.



Jessica Profeta likes math, reading and learning Spanish. © Amnesty International

It's not because she has special powers. It's because she doesn't have the power of an identity.

You see, when she was born 14 years ago, Jessica's father tried to get a birth certificate but the government said no because the family is from Haiti.

Without a document to prove who she is, Jessica's school nearly stopped her from starting Grade 8 last September. They will let her finish only if she shows identity documents. But that will be impossible because the government refuses to give her any. As she grows older, Jessica will not be able to vote, get married, find a proper job or even get enough health care to stay well.

Jessica wants to go to university and become a civil engineer so she can design and build roads, bridges and other structures. Jessica's dreams are disappearing because her country does not recognize her identity. Sadly, she is not the only person who is invisible.

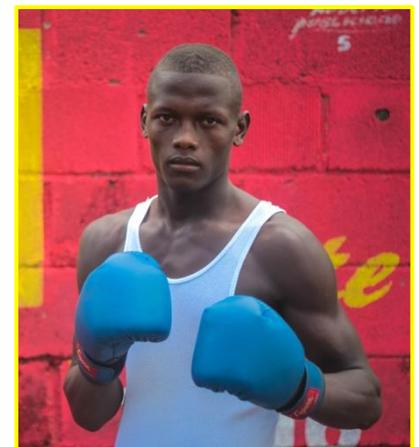
Adonis Peguero is a champion athlete. His passion is boxing. He has already won many medals.

Adonis was born in the Dominican Republic, and his parents are from Haiti, too. The government never made a record of his birth. They said it was because his parents don't have their own birth certificates or other identity documents. (Let's call them IDs for short.)

His trainer thinks that Adonis will be a great boxer. Last November, he was picked to be on the Dominican Republic boxing team November. When officials found out he has no ID, they would not let him join the team.

If Adonis manages to finish high school two years from now, he would need to pass an exam before going to university. But no one is allowed to write the exam without ID.

Like Jessica and Adonis, thousands of other people in the Dominican Republic also lack identity documents. They live like ghosts in their own country because they cannot participate fully in life's activities and events.



Adonis Peguero spends hours every day boxing and playing sports like baseball. © Santiago Vidal



WHAT CAN I DO?

Please write to the president of the Dominican Republic.

- Start your letter with Dear Mr President.
- In your first sentence, tell him something about yourself, such as where you were born or what ID you have.
- Ask him to give Jessica Profeta and Adonis Peguero identity documents from the Dominican Republic. If you wish, you could use these examples of IDs in your sentence: birth certificate, cédula (ID card) or passport.
- Ask him to allow Jessica and Adonis to finish their school years and continue their education.

WHERE DO I SEND MY MESSAGE?

Danilo Medina
Presidente de la República
Palacio Nacional
Avenida México esquina Doctor Delgado
Gazcue
Santo Domingo
República Dominicana

Postage: \$2.50
Fax: 1 809 682 0827
Email: prensa2@presidencia.gob.do
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PresidenciaRD>



See how Haiti and Dominican Republic share the same piece of land? It can be easy to cross the border.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO? Both Jessica and Adonis would love to get a card, drawing or letter from someone in Canada. Spanish will be easiest for them to read, or you can write in English. You may include your address and mention Amnesty International if you wish. You can email your greeting to caribbean@amnesty.org or mail it with \$2.50 postage to

Jessica Profeta / Adonis Peguero
c/o Caribbean Team
Amnesty International, Regional Office for the Americas
Luz Saviñón 519, Col. Del Valle, Del. Benito Juárez
CP 03100, Ciudad de México
MEXICO

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Watch a five-minute video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mtPJ2D3kag&feature=youtu.be>

If you have not received this Lifesaver directly from Amnesty International's Toronto office and would like future actions, reach us at the contact information in the header. There is no cost.