



**This rape survivor is being sheltered by a local host family** in Katanga Province, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recurrent conflict in the region and the heavy presence of armed groups continues to uproot civilians and expose women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence.



# Sources, Methods, and Data Considerations

## Introduction

The foundation of any robust body of statistics is its sources and methods. Particularly in the humanitarian field, statistics are not exempted from providing authentic sources and methods, which are critical at every stage in the processing of statistical information. In compiling this Yearbook, the various sources of all data collected were critically verified, and the various data collection methods were carefully evaluated. All of these processes were undertaken to ensure that the data and information provided satisfy required statistical standards. The primary purpose of these processes is to ensure reliable and credible statistics in order that sound decisions can inform effective programming for all persons under the UNHCR mandate.

UNHCR has a mandate to collect and disseminate global statistics on refugees, as enshrined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>10</sup> and affirmed by the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>11</sup> These two instruments oblige States to provide statistical data on refugees to UNHCR, and with their backing, UNHCR works closely with States to ensure that statistical data on refugees are provided to the organization. As a global leader for the provision of refugee statistics, UNHCR ensures that information on refugees is used solely for its intended purposes. Thus, the confidentiality of refugee data and information is highly respected by UNHCR and its partners.

As in previous years, governments, UNHCR, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

remained the primary agents of refugee data collection in 2014. Even though there are differences between these three entities in terms of capacity, each follows a standard and systematic approach in order to ensure the consistency needed for effective data analysis and comparison.

To improve data quality, UNHCR introduced an online data collection system in 2014. UNHCR offices around the world are now required to enter data through this dedicated, uniform online application. This system has automatic self-validation rules, which allow obvious data-entry errors to be corrected before submission for final verification by the UNHCR statistics team. This method of data compilation ensures the systematic, consistent, and easy validation of figures. The new system is not only easy to use, but it improves the detection of errors while offering mechanisms for easy data cleansing and processing.

This chapter provides the definitions and scope of all persons of concern to UNHCR. The various methods used in collecting data are then explained, followed by a description of the various actors and consumers of UNHCR data. Finally, this chapter concludes with a contribution by three statisticians from Statistics Norway, analysing the potential to identify forcibly displaced populations through national censuses.

<sup>10</sup> See: Chapter VI, Article 35: Co-operation of the national authorities with the United Nations: '...the Contracting States undertake to provide them in the appropriate form with information and statistical data requested...'

<sup>11</sup> See: Chapter II, Paragraph 8: Functions of the High Commissioner: 'The High Commissioner shall provide for the protection for refugees falling under the competence of his Office by ... obtaining from Governments information concerning the number and conditions of refugees in their territories...'



### Definitions and scope

UNHCR identifies seven population categories, collectively referred to as ‘persons of concern’: refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees who have returned home (returnees), IDPs who have returned home, persons under UNHCR’s statelessness mandate, and others who do not fall under these categories but to whom the agency extends protection. Since 2007, two additional sub-categories have been added: individuals in refugee-like situations (included under refugees) and those in IDP-like situations (included under IDPs).

**Refugees** include individuals recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, individuals recognized under the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, individuals granted complementary forms of protection,<sup>12</sup> and those enjoying temporary protection.<sup>13</sup> The refugee category also includes individuals in a refugee-like situation.<sup>14</sup>

**Asylum-seekers (with ‘pending cases’)** are individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined. Those covered in this report refer to claimants whose individual applications were pending at the end of 2014, irrespective of when those claims may have been lodged.

**Internally displaced persons** are persons or groups of persons who have been forced to leave their home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border.<sup>15</sup>

UNHCR is involved in situations of internal displacement in a number of countries. The populations reported in its statistics are limited to conflict-generated IDPs or persons in an IDP-like situation<sup>16</sup> to whom the agency extends protection or assistance. Therefore, UNHCR’s IDP statistics do not necessarily reflect the entire IDP population in a given country but only those who are protected and/or assisted by the agency. Moreover, under the

cluster approach,<sup>17</sup> UNHCR provides support to both IDPs and other affected persons, though the latter are not included in these statistics. Hence, UNHCR’s statistics provide a comprehensive picture neither of global internal displacement nor of total numbers assisted by the agency in such situations.<sup>18</sup>

**Returned refugees (returnees)** are former refugees who have returned to their country of origin, either spontaneously or in an organized fashion, but are yet to be fully integrated. Such returns would normally take place only under conditions of safety and dignity. For the purposes of this report, only refugees who returned between January and December 2014 are included, though in practice operations may assist returnees for longer periods.

**Returned IDPs** refers to those IDPs who were beneficiaries of UNHCR’s protection or assistance activities and who returned to their area of origin or habitual residence between January and December 2014. In practice, however, operations may assist IDP returnees for longer periods.

**Persons under UNHCR’s statelessness mandate** are defined under international law as those not considered as nationals by any State under the operation of its law. In other words, they do not possess the nationality of any State. UNHCR statistics refer to persons who fall under the agency’s statelessness mandate as those who are stateless according to this international definition, but data

<sup>12</sup> ‘Complementary protection’ refers to protection provided under national, regional, or international law to persons who do not qualify for protection under refugee law instruments but are in need of international protection because they are at risk of serious harm.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Temporary protection’ refers to arrangements developed to offer protection of a temporary nature, either until the situation in the country of origin improves and allows for a safe and dignified return or until individual refugee or complementary protection status determination can be carried out.

<sup>14</sup> This term is descriptive in nature. It includes groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to refugees but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained.

<sup>15</sup> See: United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1997/39. Addendum: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 11 February 1998.

<sup>16</sup> This term is descriptive in nature. It includes groups of persons who are inside their country of nationality or habitual residence and who face protection risks similar to IDPs but who, for practical or other reasons, could not be reported as such.

<sup>17</sup> In December 2005, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed the ‘cluster’ approach for handling situations of internal displacement. Under this arrangement, UNHCR assumes leadership responsibility and accountability for three of the nine clusters: protection, emergency shelter, and camp coordination and camp management.

<sup>18</sup> Global IDP estimates are provided by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), available at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).



from some countries may also include persons with undetermined nationality.

UNHCR has been given a global mandate by the United Nations General Assembly to contribute to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons. The agency also performs a specific function, under Article 11 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in receiving claims from persons

who may benefit from the statelessness safeguards contained in that convention and in assisting them and the States concerned to resolve these claims.

**Other groups or persons of concern** refers to individuals who do not necessarily fall directly into any of these groups but to whom UNHCR has extended its protection and/or assistance services, based on humanitarian or other special grounds.

## Refugee data

### DATA SOURCES

In 2014, refugee data were predominantly collected by governments, UNHCR, and NGOs, three groups that have been the sources of humanitarian statistics for many years. While UNHCR and NGOs collect refugee data predominantly in developing countries, governments tend to be responsible for doing so in many industrialized countries. In general, data collection is a function of the operational role of each agent. For instance, in countries where UNHCR has an operational role, the Office tends to be the main agent of data collection.

At the end of 2014, UNHCR and governments combined accounted for 82 per cent of all refugee data collection. It is important to reiterate that States have the primary responsibility of providing international protection for refugees, and hence the governments of those States have the responsibility for refugee data collection. However, lack of resources tends to inhibit some governments from undertaking this task. Instead, UNHCR has become the main refugee data collector in countries where governments lack the capacity – or are unwilling – to do so.

Global refugee data collection involves the interaction of key actors and stakeholders, thus providing a potentially conducive environment for the humanitarian community to evaluate and assess the integrity and credibility of humanitarian statistics. These interactions also allow for high-level negotiation on how to move toward the common goal of improving data collection methods in general as well as refining those methods in particular contexts, especially during emergencies. For the most part, these interactions are witnessed during humanitarian emergencies rather than during stable situations.

Fig. 11 Trends in sources of refugee data | 2009 - 2014

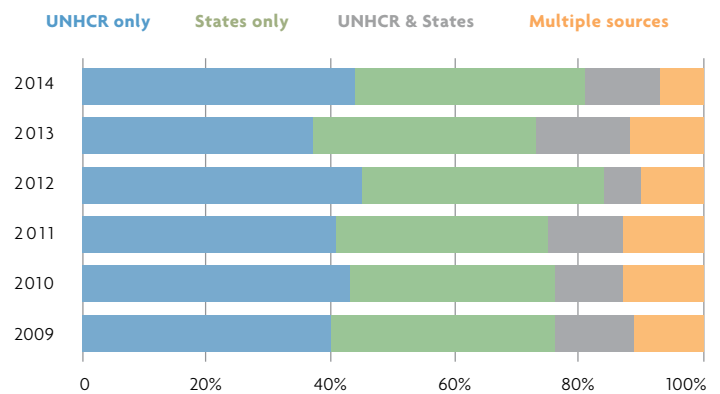
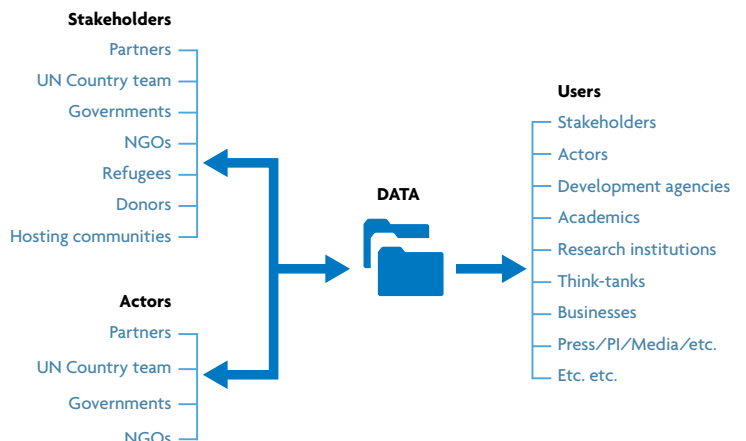


Fig. 12 Stakeholders', actors' and users' interaction in refugee data collection





## Sources, Methods and Data Considerations

The main stakeholders and actors in this process are governments, UN Country Teams, donors, partners, refugees, NGOs, and hosting communities. The involvement of stakeholders and actors in data collection has contributed significantly toward improving common understanding in the sharing and dissemination of humanitarian statistics at the global level. Figure 1.2 depicts the data collection processes and related interactions among these key actors, stakeholders, and data users.

Refugee data, like many other humanitarian data, can be described as a public good. This data has recently seen rising use, with both demand and the number of consumers increasing substantially. Besides the key actors and stakeholders who are regular users of refugee data, academics, development agencies, the media, and the general public are increasingly and regularly demanding refugee data. Therefore, UNHCR has provided various sources offering public access to refugee data and information.

### DATA COLLECTION METHODS

At the end of 2014, the principal methods of refugee data collection remained registrations, surveys, censuses, and estimations. The use of each or a combination of these methods does not affect the quality and credibility of the data collected, with decision on the use of a particular method generally being driven by the availability of resources and capacity. The use of various data collection methods follows the standard assumptions of statistical methods. Further, UNHCR ensures that the choice of a particular method is appropriate for the country concerned. Given that some data are collected in emergency situations, the environment and general conditions (such as security concerns) are typically taken into consideration during the decision to use a particular method.

this tool is used to generate a significant proportion of refugee statistics and allows registration to provide more comprehensive information than the other data collection methods. Some 80 countries use proGres to register refugees and other persons of concern. In some countries, this software is complemented with biometric registration, under which refugees are fingerprinted to minimize double counting. The introduction of such mechanisms continues to improve the quality of refugee data collection.

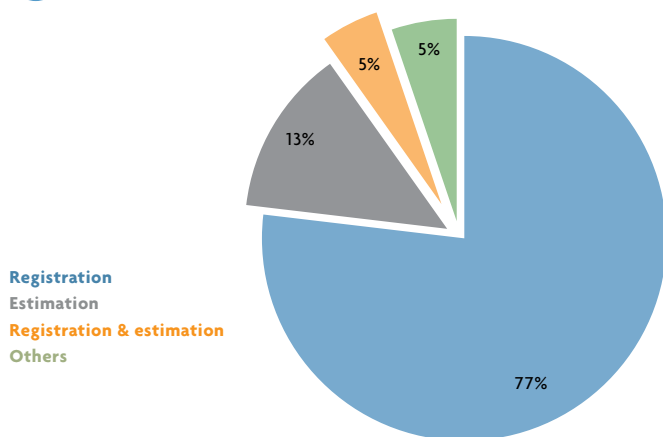
In general, refugee registration is the most widely available method to UNHCR offices. It is used almost exclusively in refugee camps established either by or in collaboration with UNHCR. Refugee registration in UNHCR operations includes unique software, proGres,<sup>19</sup> whose use has significantly improved the delivery of protection, monitoring, and assistance activities. Today,

In 2014, 173 countries provided refugee data to UNHCR, three more than the previous year. Of these, 133 reported using registration as a data collection method, compared to 114 a year earlier. UNHCR offices in 72 countries used registration exclusively as a means of data collection, as opposed to 38 countries where governments did so. Registration alone accounted for 77 per cent of all methods used for collecting refugee data in 2014, followed by estimation with 13 per cent. While most countries exclusively used registration, 17 countries employed a combination of data collection methods in 2014.

On estimation, only governments reported using this method exclusively in the refugee context in 2014, predominantly in industrialized countries. For the most part, UNHCR uses estimation in industrialized countries that do not have dedicated refugee registers. Such estimations are based on positive decisions rendered to asylum-seekers over 10 years, building on the assumption that refugees have become naturalized after this period and thus are no longer in need of international protection. Finally, surveys and censuses as methods of data collection are used predominantly in urban environments. ■

Fig. 13

### Basis of refugee data | 2014



<sup>19</sup> Profiling Global Registration System (proGres).



**Yurvi and Tatiana stand in the ruins of their family home in Nikishino**, eastern Ukraine. The outbreak of conflict in eastern Ukraine had a major impact on the 2014 displacement figures, with more than 271,000 or close to 99 per cent of the asylum claims in the Russian Federation lodged by Ukrainians. The last time a country registered a comparable figure was in 2009, when South Africa reported that 222,300 persons had lodged individual asylum requests, many of them from Zimbabwe.

## *The population census as a tool to capture statistical information on forcibly displaced persons*

– Contributed by Vebjørn Aalandslid, Kari-Anne Lund, and Frode Berglund<sup>20</sup> –

### INTRODUCTION

**G**lobally, there is a growing concern about the availability and quality of statistical information about forcibly displaced persons, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced

persons. For most countries, the population and housing census is the main source of demographic information about the population in general. The census also has a potential to give a description of the

<sup>20</sup> All Statistics Norway staff on secondment to UNHCR and the Joint IDP Profiling Service. The work on this article was administered and funded by the NORCAP programme of the Norwegian Refugee Council. The authors acknowledge Lene Sandvik for her assistance in translating the Spanish census forms. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.



demographic composition of forcibly displaced populations, yet in most affected countries it rarely allows for the proper identification and measurement of these populations in a systematic and comparable way. This is in large part due to technical, financial, and political constraints, but

it may also be related to a lack of clear and systematic guidance and recommendations on best practices.

There is a clear gap between the potential use of the census to describe forcibly displaced groups and its current practice. To better understand this gap, some 150

census questionnaires used in the 2010 census round (2005-2014) have been analysed with the aim of identifying whether information on forcibly displaced population groups can be extracted. The findings of that analysis are presented in this article.

### ARE FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS COUNTED IN THE CENSUS, AND CAN THEY BE IDENTIFIED?

A review of the 2000 round of censuses showed that in some countries refugees or asylum-seekers were not counted, either because they were outside of the nationally defined mandate of the census or because they formed a 'special category'.<sup>21</sup> To study this further for the 2010 round would require analysis not only of the questionnaires but also enumerator guidelines as well as a verification of data from the different censuses in order to check coverage. This is beyond the scope of this study.

If refugees, asylum-seekers, and IDPs are included in the population census, is it possible to identify these population groups? For most countries, the census will be the only tool to keep track of the stock of refugees and IDPs, and many countries do publish data on flows of asylum-seekers and refugees. However, data on the stock of refugees and on persons granted refugee status or a complementary form of protection after an asylum procedure are not commonly published by immigration authorities or national statistical offices. Population change as well as change of legal status or nationality makes this group difficult to identify and

follow, and the national numbers are hard to obtain.<sup>22</sup> As such, the population census could play an important role in obtaining such numbers, and for many countries it could be the only opportunity to include forcibly displaced persons in their population statistics.

Some censuses do contain questions on a person's year of arrival to the country, while a limited number of countries also include questions for the non-national or foreign-born population by asking about their reason for migration. It is only when the latter question is included, along with the relevant response categories, that one can more directly estimate the number of individuals with a refugee background in a country.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, a question on reasons for internal migration can allow for estimates on the number of IDPs, though with similar limitations.

If such data are not available through information generated by these direct questions, a combination of other variables can be used to indirectly estimate the number of refugees and asylum-seekers – for instance, country of birth, citizenship, former place/country of residence, or year of arrival or duration of residence. Census

data on internal migration, together with other data, can be used to give estimates of the number of IDPs. Moreover, a question on citizenship/nationality, combined with relevant response categories, may provide an overview of the number of self-identified stateless persons in the country.

The census is a costly exercise, and for most countries it is carried out only every 10 years. Further, the datasets are often so comprehensive and detailed that it may take many years to disseminate them; hence, the data are not as timely. Nevertheless, for many countries, the population census will be the only opportunity to obtain nationwide coverage or to make direct or indirect estimations of forcibly displaced population groups. After all, surveys and other registration procedures cannot achieve the same national coverage. Even if more-targeted surveys are used, most countries would still have to rely on some form of census data as a sample frame.

In summary, the census has a potential to identify forcibly displaced populations, but this approach has rarely been capitalized upon.

<sup>21</sup> "Counting Forcibly Displaced Populations: Census and Registration, Issues Symposium on Global Review of 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses: Mid-Decade Assessment and Future Prospects", UN Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 7-10 August 2001.

<sup>22</sup> In the absence of official refugee numbers published by States, UNHCR may estimate such numbers based on a combination of official asylum data and its own registration records.

<sup>23</sup> As this is based on direct questions to respondents, some with open response categories, such figures will not necessarily correspond to formal definitions and classifications used in national administrative registers or by the UNHCR.

## INTERNATIONAL CENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Ahead of every census round, the United Nations publishes international census recommendations<sup>24</sup> that provide guidance on operational aspects, what areas and topics to cover, and what tables to produce.<sup>25</sup> The UN recommendations distinguish variables and questions by core and non-core topics. The former are areas the United Nations recommends for inclusion in the census, while the latter are areas that countries may wish to include based on national interest.

The UN census recommendations

issued for the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme contain only four references to forcibly displaced groups. This includes the rather narrow approach stipulating that refugees and IDPs residing in camps should be counted and their numbers distinguished as separate groups. Based on this approach, refugees residing outside of camps cannot be identified separately.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, the regional guidelines developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

(UNECE) do include a question on reason for migration, but only as a non-core topic. The UNECE recommendations also include 'the population with a refugee background' and 'internally displaced persons' as derived non-core topics, with guidance on how to obtain such data.

Overall, the official census recommendations do not go very far in helping to address the gap in the context of forced displacement mentioned above, although they do have the potential to do so.

## REVIEW OF THE 2010 CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRES

For the purpose of this study, some 150 census questionnaires used in the 2010 round were analysed.<sup>27</sup> Overall, the data show that most countries included the core topics, with questions on country of birth (82%) and citizenship (62%).<sup>28</sup> Table 1.1 illustrates that on average 4 out of every 10 countries (39%) have included a question on year of arrival, making it possible to create a migration history.

Reason for migration is the single most important variable in estimating the size of forcibly displaced populations in a country. Yet on average, reason for international migration was requested in less than one out of four countries (23%). This

proportion drops to an average of roughly one out of five countries (21%) with regard to reason for internal migration. The 35 countries in Table 1.1 include all those

which included a question on reason for migration, irrespective of whether national borders were crossed.

**TABLE 1.1** Inclusion of topics in national population censuses by world region (2010 round of censuses)

Region	Number of countries	Country/ place of birth	Citizenship/ nationality	Year of arrival	Reason for migration
Africa	37	32	30	8	8
Americas	32	27	8	21	6
Asia	35	24	20	8	11
Europe	32	29	26	18	8
Oceania	14	11	9	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>% of total</b>		<b>82</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: UNSD, NSO websites

## ANALYSIS OF 'REASON FOR MIGRATION' QUESTIONS

As Table 1.1 illustrates, 35 countries (23%) included a question on reason for migration (RFM) in their most recent census. These countries can be broken down further into groups of countries that aim to

capture either external or internal migration depending on how the RFM question performs in relation to the migration category captured. This, in turn, depends on two issues: first, how the targets for the

RFM questions are defined by the questionnaire structure and second, how the question itself is operationalized (phrasing of question). In other words, who answers the question(s) and how the question(s) is asked.

<sup>24</sup> UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, available at: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/seriesm\\_67Rev2e.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/seriesm_67Rev2e.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> The UN Statistics Division reports that around 80 per cent of countries use the recommendations in preparations of their censuses.

<sup>26</sup> According to UNHCR estimates, more than 60 per cent of refugees reside in non-camp locations. See UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps, 22 July 2014, UNHCR/HCP/2014/9, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5423ded84.html>. Estimations of IDPs residing in non-camp locations are even higher.

<sup>27</sup> See: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusquest.htm>. In addition to the census forms available from the UNSD website, the authors included questionnaires from Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia (not a full count of the population and thus not included in the UNSD overview), and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 (1999)). Some 20 countries, mostly European, carried out a census based on administrative registers without using a questionnaire. These are not included in this analysis.

<sup>28</sup> This deviates from UN figures that show a slightly higher share of countries that have included the core topics. The number of censuses studied differs and cannot be directly compared. For UN figures, see "Use of Population Censuses to Collect Statistics on International Migration", paper presented at the CES Seminar on Migration Statistics 2014, Session 1: Measuring Recent and Changing Migration Patterns: Challenges and Opportunities. Prepared by United Nations Statistics Division.



**TABLE 1.2 RFM coverage in 2010 round of censuses, by world region**

Region	Total no. of countries reviewed	RFM coverage	Reason for international migration	Reason for internal migration	Forced displacement
Africa	37	22% (N=8)	6	3	5
Americas	32	19% (N=6)	3	4	0
Asia	35	31% (N=11)	7	10	2
Europe	32	25% (N=8)	7	4	3
Oceania	14	14% (N=2)	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: UNSD, NSO websites

Following on a detailed review of the questionnaires, Table 1.2 provides an overview of how many countries per region captured external migration, internal migration, and forced displacement. A salient and common feature among the 35 RFM countries is that each asked respondents only for the main reason for migration, rather than offering the possibility of indicating more than one such reason.

As illustrated by Table 1.2, the share of countries that included RFM is highest in Asia (31%) and lowest in Oceania (14%). A higher number of countries aimed at capturing external migration rather than internal migration (25 compared to 21). Questions on forced displacement were considered to be dealing with neither external migration nor internal displacement; however, as 10 countries have included separate questions aiming to capture displacement, this information is included in Table 1.2.

In order to analyse the RFM response categories, the reasons for migration were grouped according to four key categories: employment (which are covered by 9/10 of the analysed countries), family (8/10),

education (8/10), and humanitarian reasons (5/10). The number of countries included in each of these categories per region is presented in descending order in Table 1.3. Coverage of the most common reasons for migration is high in all areas with the exception of the humanitarian field, which is covered by only 19 of these 35 countries (54%). No regional differences could be traced on coverage of humanitarian reasons for migration with the exception of Oceania, where neither of the two countries in the region provided answer options within this category.

In addition, while the employment/economic category is the most popular option included across countries, education is the one with the least operational variation (i.e. how answer options are phrased in the questionnaire). This contrasts with the humanitarian category, where a high level of operational variation is observed. Answer options within the humanitarian field can be further divided into three sub-categories: human conflict/violence, natural disasters, and a more general/unspecified lack of safety.

A number of answer options remained

without a clear grouping. These are included in the 'open category' in Table 1.3 and have been sub-divided into temporary reasons (nine cases), such as tourism or visiting family, which should not be measured as migration; housing (11 cases), if for example a house is too small; and return (10), which could be considered a description of the movement and hence not a reason, per se. Even after this sub-division, several reasons remained difficult to group and thus were beyond the scope of this exercise to analyse. While some traditional census areas, such as education and employment, are standardized according to international classifications, the humanitarian field appears to be far less standardized in terms of answer options.

Overall, analysis of RFM and the inclusion of forced displacement in census questionnaires demonstrates a mixed practice relating both to coverage and operationalization. As noted earlier, this is likely connected to the limited focus on this topic in official statistical recommendations, but it could also be due to other technical, financial, or political dimensions.

**TABLE 1.3 Inclusion of RFM categories by world region (2010 round of censuses)**

Region	Number of RFM countries	Employment/economy	Family	Education	Humanitarian	Other	Open category
Africa	8	7	6	7	5	7	7
Americas	6	5	5	3	3	4	4
Asia	11	10	8	8	6	9	10
Europe	8	8	8	7	5	6	4
Oceania	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: UNSD, NSO websites

### CENSUS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Among the 150 census questionnaires analysed, only 13 countries included questions with the potential to directly identify IDPs. Globally, this is far lower than the number of countries with a recognized and sizeable IDP population.<sup>29</sup> This article is limited to censuses where IDPs can be identified directly.<sup>30</sup>

Broadly, there are two approaches to directly identifying IDPs in population censuses. Either there is a separate question on the topic (four countries), or 'IDP' constitutes a response category for a question about type of household (eight countries) or reason for migration (seven countries). Among the 13 countries, internal displacement was captured along four dimensions: Is there a separate question included to identify IDPs? Can they be

identified through the response options of another question? Is it possible to identify current or former IDPs? And, is it possible to identify the reason for becoming an IDP?

As with the RFM analysis above, the practice of capturing internal displacement in censuses has revealed sparse and mixed practices. Very few of the affected countries have included an opportunity to capture internal displacement in their censuses; those that have done so have included this focus in various ways. Even if a census has questions on IDPs, it still may not necessarily be easy to identify this population. For instance, a person's status can be confused in the question sequence, if that sequence has not been developed specifically in order to identify IDPs.

At the same time, a well-designed question sequence can offer important insights. A good example of this was found in Côte d'Ivoire's 2014 census, where the sequence of questions covered all necessary dimensions in a logical fashion and could enable identification of internal displacement at the national level. Since only a few such examples are available, however, and this study is limited solely to the analysis of questionnaires, it is difficult to make recommendations on the most appropriate formulation of questions.

<sup>29</sup> For global IDP statistics, see [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

<sup>30</sup> Indirect identification of IDPs through census is also a possibility in some cases, although beyond the remit of this article.

### CONCLUSIONS

Questions on IDPs and refugees are rarely integrated in national censuses, even though they may be relevant for countries with sizeable IDP or refugee populations to gain a better understanding of both the demography and living conditions of these groups.

One reason questions on refugees and IDPs are not included in censuses may be the absence of these groups in the international census recommendations. Integrating forced displacement into these recommendations would likely increase the number of countries that include questions on this subject and ensure a more unified approach among those countries that already include such questions in their censuses. Such integration,

however, would need to be accompanied by specific guidelines on how these data are to be analysed once they have been collected.

The fact that a sizeable number of forcibly displaced populations resides in camps may be a deterrent for their inclusion in national censuses. Doing so may not seem relevant because targeted data collection in locations with a high concentration of displaced populations would render the data more operational. Yet given that an increasing number of refugees and IDPs are located in non-camp locations, the census could play an important role, as it is one of few available tools to cover these out-of-camp populations and integrate statistics on these groups

into national systems. Even if censuses are not the ideal instrument to count forcibly displaced populations due to the long processing time before statistical data become available, such an approach is nevertheless relevant in situations of protracted displacement. ●