3 POPULATION STATISTICS

3.1 OVERVIEW AND FUNCTION

Population statistics provide the basis for efficient and accurate emergency response, and are one of the most important data elements in an emergency. Reporting these figures in a systematic and standardized manner throughout an emergency is a priority.

From the onset of an emergency, the process of harmonizing population figures will be a continuous effort requiring a collaborative approach among all stakeholders. It is essential for the integrity and credibility of an emergency response that partners use the same figures, to the extent possible.

3.2 HOW-TO GUIDE

3.2.1 Conduct a desk review, consolidating baseline population data

When a recent (less than two years) and reliable census data is available, consult the national bureau of statistics of the concerned country for baseline population data. Census data provides a detailed disaggregation of the population by administrative area/locality and according to specific categories – for example, the average number of children per woman or the average household size in a specific administrative area.

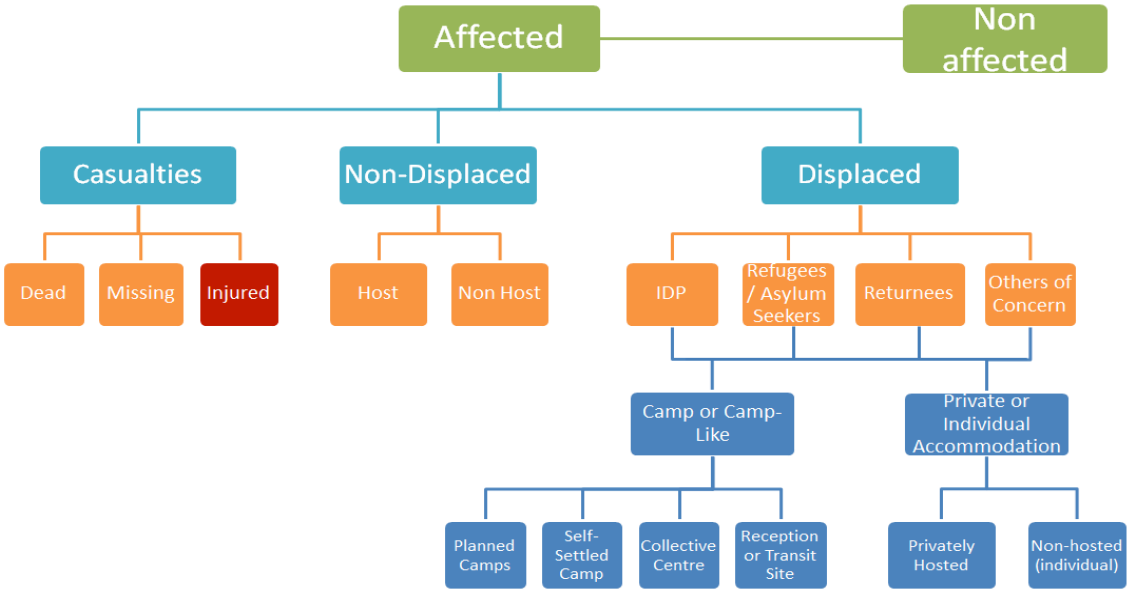
Such data may be used to estimate populations in affected areas when only an estimate of the number of families or households is available. Thus, this provides valuable baseline data both for the sampling process in household surveys and for the design and planning of registration activities.

When recent census data is lacking, data on the number of households or average household size and related statistics in a given region can be gathered through the following:

- Government administrative records from the country of origin, which may be indicative of the overall size of the population to be assisted (for example, land parcel data used for taxation and land tenure purposes; utility data collected for billing purposes; and information on community health, water and food consumption, education, electricity and phone statistics).
- Household- or community-level surveys: These include the emergency needs assessment conducted by UNHCR, the Emergency Food Security Assessment conducted by the WFP or surveys conducted by more specialized agencies or partners such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), the International Household Survey Network (IHSN), the Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) or assessments and surveys conducted after an emergency.
- Projection or forecasting methods and tools that update census data and estimate current populations: Redatam, online population calculators, official United Nations demographic estimates and projections, the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Data Base of the United States Census Bureau (IDB), and the World Gazetteer.
- Online global spatial databases: the common operational datasets (CODs), the Population Estimation Service, and the Fews Net Population Explorer.

- The humanitarian profile: This is the numbers and categories of the populations assessed to be affected by a disaster or crisis; the humanitarian profile should eventually contain basic information on demographics (i.e. sex, age, location). Define the humanitarian profile to classify groups of interest and to disaggregate data per affected group: how many refugees in camps, how many in host populations, how many affected residents, etc. The structure, population and maintenance of this humanitarian profile will be of crucial importance. One affected person should not be counted twice, and therefore may not fall into several of the identified categories (e.g. an affected resident may also be hosting displaced persons). Therefore, it is necessary to create levels of hierarchy where all categories on the same level add up to their "parent" in the next higher level in the structure, and where each category in a specific level is mutually exclusive of all others (see Figure 1 for an example of such a "hierarchy tree"). In this way, the sum of categories in a specific level equals the total number of people affected.

Figure 1: Example of Hierarchy Tree



Provide metadata: This should include date of the collected data, current location of the population being reported (use codes if available), sex and age categories, place of origin, nationality, number of persons, method and source.

Note: Additional information on the above tools has been included in this section of the Toolkit, under 3.C Reference Documents and Links.

3.2.2 Harmonization of figures

The Information Manager will need to set and adhere to a known statistical format and frequency of reporting. Define roles and responsibilities for reporting population figures at the onset of an emergency. Work in a collaborative and respectful manner with NGOs, the Government and other sources of population figures. Ensure the proper clearance of figures with the relevant host Government authorities, and share such figures predictably and responsibly with the inter-agency community, through the RIM WG. Refer to the Information/Data Management Strategy (Section 2) of this Toolkit for additional information on the RIM WG.

The Information Manager should set up the RIM WG with partners who have population data, if possible, and with the participation of a concerned Government counterpart. The RIM WG, which should at minimum consist of UNHCR and the Government, needs to ensure coordinated reporting on affected population figures throughout the emergency.

The Information Manager will present population figures to the RIM WG, which should agree on the affected population figures to be reported, the sources of information to be used, and reporting frequency and units (such as demographic and location information, and types of categories to be used for reporting figures), use the UNHCR Population Reporting Template, included in the annexes of this section. The Information Manager will need to invest the required effort to obtain agreement on the sources for figures and the methodologies for updating the figures as early as possible.

3.2.3 Reporting figures: Level of disaggregation

Depending on the context (type of emergency, information available prior to crisis, number of actors on the ground, etc.), the level of disaggregation of figures may change from the highest level (information for only the overall affected population) to the lowest (information at the individual level). The Information Manager will need to report on the lowest level of disaggregation available and triangulate population figures for each location.

3.2.4 Methodology

Initial population figures may come from a variety of sources, including estimates from Government sources, WFP food distribution lists and NGOs that have undertaken rapid needs assessments. The sources of and methodologies used for gathering population figures are relevant to understanding the quality of the population statistics, and should be included along with the statistical reports.

The most common population data collection methodologies used for reporting on population figures are the following:

- Rough estimates;
- Estimates based on Government census data (of country of origin);
- Estimates based on aerial photographs;
- Estimates based on dwelling counts;
- Population movement tracking reports;
- Name lists (from communal leaders, partners working with the population, etc.); and
- Individual or household registration.

If a combination of several methodologies is used, these figures should be reported separately using the population reporting template, whenever possible. When a figure is a combination of a registration result and an estimate, the overall figure is considered an estimate, regardless of the degree to which the registration may have been completed (i.e. 90 per cent registered + 10 per cent estimated = estimated population figure).

The reliability of population data sources will remain dependent on who collected the information, how it was collected, and when and where it was collected. For instance, does the population data stand in contrast to other known data or facts about the population? Can the data be verified? Is it clear where the data came from and is it properly referenced and cited (who, when, how collected)? It is also important to consider why the data may have been cited, inflated or otherwise incorrectly (or incompletely) presented.

3.2.5 Source and date

Population data is often collected from a number of overlapping sources at various points in time. In many cases, the strength and validity of population statistics depend on when and from where the data was collected, both of which should be clearly cited in the population reporting template.

3.2.6 Reporting time frame

Population figures must track new arrivals, departures, births and deaths in order to ensure the population statistics remain accurate and also reflect the continuous registration as required in an emergency. Population statistics must be shared regularly and in a predictable manner with other humanitarian actors.

The population reporting template should be updated each time validated data is received. The most up-to-date population figures should appear in all reports, internal or external. If updated population statistics were not available to be issued with a report, this should be noted in the report, along with the date for which the figures were valid. Whenever possible, the completed UNHCR Population Reporting Template (see Annex 1) should be shared along with reports.

3.2.7 Reporting and dissemination

The Information Manager or the registration officer (if available) and an alternate should be designated by the Representative to report on population statistics.

The official population statistics should go through a number of steps before being officially reported. Such data must be gathered, verified, validated, cleared (an overview of the steps for which are referenced earlier) by the UNHCR Representative and disseminated using the UNHCR population template (see Annex 1: UNHCR Population Reporting Tool).

Population statistics updates should be coordinated and shared with the RIM WG, and population figures must be regularly updated on the UNHCR web portal. Population statistics may also be updated and disseminated via hardcopies of the population reporting template and related charts and analysis, CDs, e-mail lists, or other mechanisms when Internet access is not available or not common.

3.3 A TEMPLATE

- Annex 1: UNHCR Population Reporting Tool

3.4 B EXAMPLES

- Annex 2: Niger Population Statistical Report
- Annex 3: Mauritania Registration Profiling Report
- Annex 4: UNHCR Djibouti Population Statistical Report
- Annex 5: Dollo Ado Refugee New Arrival Statistics Narrative for Weekly or Monthly Reporting

3.5 C REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

- DHS surveys are administered by ICF International, through USAID Funding, and seek to collect and disseminate population and health data on developing countries. The DHS website and survey database may be accessed at: http://www.measuredhs.com/data/available-datasets.cfm (accessed 1 May 2014).

- MICS surveys provide data on women and children and are conducted by UNICEF. The MICS survey database may be accessed at: http://www.childinfo.org/mics_available.html (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Developed by the World Bank, the IHSN catalogues census, survey or other micro-data, which is stored online and made available for research and other purposes. The IHSN archive may be installed and assessed at: http://www.ihsn.org/nada/ (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Also developed by the World Bank, the LSMS works to collect household living standards data, which is needed to inform policy decisions. The LSMS livings standards and studies may be assessed online at: http://iresearch.worldbank.org/lsms/lsmssurveyFinder.htm (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Redatam: A database management tool developed by Cipol for the processing and analysis of population micro data, available at: http://www.cepal.org/redatam/default.asp?idioma=IN (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Online population calculators: For very basic calculations based on growth rate, the following web page allows for quick processing: http://www.metamorphosisalpha.com/ias/population.php (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Official United Nations demographic estimates and projections: The official United Nations demographic estimates and projections may be found at the United Nations Population Division: http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm (accessed 1 May 2014).
- A great resource for demographic and social topics, standards and methods, statistical products and databases, in addition to listing demographic, social statistics, world population and housing census information: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Offers a variety of demographic indicators and the ability to search by country and key indicator: http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Also referenced in the Mapping section of this Toolkit, the World Gazetteer provides population statistics and related data, searchable by country or region: http://world-gazetteer.com (accessed 1 May 2014).
- Additional resources that require GIS skills include: Gridded Population of the World and the Global Rural-Urban Mapping Project, LandSmay, the Night Time Lights dataset, the AfriPop / Asia Pop project.
- The Common Operational Datasets are those that have been agreed upon and are in use throughout the humanitarian community. The CODs may be accessed online at the following: http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/country-region/ (accessed 1 May 2014).
- The Population Estimation Service, developed by the CIESIN section of NASA, is a user-defined web-based tool for estimating populations, which may be accessed online at: http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/gpw/wps.jsp. A tutorial on how to use the Population Estimation Service has been produced by Columbia University, and is available online at: http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/documents/pop-est-svc_classroom.pdf (accessed 1 May 2014).