

CHAPTER VI

SOURCES, METHODS AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The 1951 Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention provide a clear refugee definition. The fact that more than 140 countries have acceded to the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and many of these countries have incorporated the refugee definition in their national legislation, makes refugees relatively easy to count.

Refugees can only be adequately protected when they are registered. Refugee statistics are generally based on individual registration records, kept by the host government. UNHCR often supports countries in registering and documenting refugees.

Although many countries have implemented the international refugee definition in their national laws and procedures, keeping accurate statistics is not always straightforward. First, there may be a difference of opinion between UNHCR, NGOs and the host country about who is a refugee. For instance, nationals fleeing conflict in their country of origin may be officially recognized as refugees by some countries, but not by others. UNHCR statistics generally reflect the views of the host country. Second, although refugees are often registered individually, the accuracy of registration varies greatly, depending on the protection and operational environment. Third, refugees may not be aware of the need to register or may perceive the costs of registration

higher than its benefits. Fourth, some countries grant not only Convention refugee status, but also subsidiary forms of protection which are more difficult to compare internationally. Fifth, even though there is an international refugee definition, the administrative rules governing the granting of refugee status vary greatly. For instance, some countries have implemented strict criteria for asylum-seekers to be admitted to the asylum procedure. Sixth, administrative records tend to overestimate the actual number of persons, because it is easier to register than to de-register persons. This is particularly the case when registration is linked to the provision of services or benefits.

SOURCES

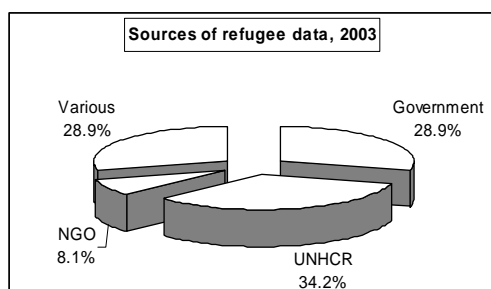
In most countries, different sources are used to establish the size of the population of concern to UNHCR. Whereas the refugee or aliens register may be the source of refugee statistics, asylum-seeker data are often derived from a separate administrative system. Adding to the complexity, voluntary repatriation and resettlement are often managed by separate government agencies. Sources may also differ within countries. In many countries, refugee registration is not centralized, but maintained at the local level. Refugee characteristics, such as gender, age and special needs, may not be available from the register, but collected on an *ad hoc* basis through surveys.

In most industrialized countries, the host government is generally the sole data provider. In most non-industrialized countries, UNHCR assists the host country in refugee registration for the purpose of international protection, assistance or durable solutions. This assistance may vary from providing technical advice and limited assistance in countries with a more developed statistical

infrastructure to managing the entire registration in countries with limited means.

To ensure that the refugee register is up-to-date, a record should be kept of all changes in the size of the population, including births, deaths, new arrivals, durable solutions and changes in legal status. In mass refugee situations and when populations are highly mobile, maintaining a refugee register is a serious challenge.

By the end of 2003, UNHCR was reported as the single source of refugee statistics in 51 countries (34%); governments were the sole data provider in 43 countries (29%), whereas NGOs maintained data at the request of UNHCR in 12 countries (8%) (see *Table VI.1*).



In 43 countries, there was more than one refugee data source (29%). In 24 countries, statistics were a combined responsibility of the government and UNHCR, while 10 countries reported that the data were provided by the government, UNHCR and NGOs.

In total, UNHCR was quoted as either the single source or one of the sources for refugee statistics in 90 countries. Governments were the single source or one of the sources in 80 countries (see *Table VI.1*).

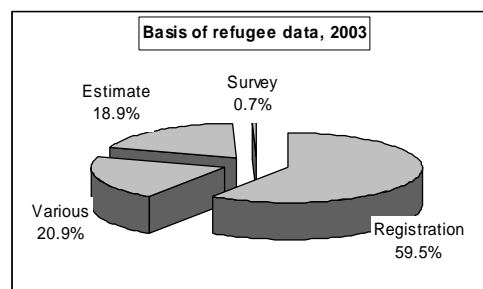
DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Each data collection method has its own strengths and limitations. A register is created to establish a legal record, to administer entitlements or to

deliver services. In a register, all persons are included and records should be updated regularly. As pressures to register outweigh those to de-register, data from a register may become inflated, requiring periodic verification. Registers have also a tendency to underestimate the total population as not all those who qualify are able or willing to register.

Surveys and censuses are excellent sources for planning purposes, but do not allow for follow-up at the individual level. Although a census includes each individual, it provides only a "snapshot" of the situation and becomes quickly outdated. Surveys are cost-effective, but, unless carried out according to strict rules, they may not provide a representative picture. In general, various data methods should be combined to obtain the best possible picture.

Registration was reported as the sole source of refugee statistics in 88 countries (59% of the countries) and estimates formed the basis in 28 countries (19%). More than one method of data collection was reported by 31 countries (21%). In 24 of the 31 countries where more than one method of data collection was reported, registration was mentioned as one of them (see *Table VI.1*).



Among the 28 countries where only estimates were used, 17 are industrialized countries without a refugee register. In these 17 countries, UNHCR estimates the size of the refugee population based on official data on refugee arrivals and the number of asylum-seekers who are

recognized (see below).

Refugees who are living outside camps, sometimes unlawfully, are more difficult to track and are underrepresented in UNHCR's statistics. Nevertheless, estimates for self-settled refugees are included in the statistics of a number of countries.

As noted earlier, refugee registers require periodic verification to align the administrative records with the fast changing situation on the ground. Consequently, the population size in refugee camps is sometimes subject to significant periodic adjustments. The major population adjustments due to registration were discussed in some detail in Chapter II.

ESTIMATING REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Most industrialized countries lack a refugee register and are thus not in a position to provide accurate information on the number of refugees residing in their country. To ensure that the refugee population in these countries is reflected in the global statistics, the number of refugees is estimated by UNHCR, based on refugee arrivals and the recognition of asylum-seekers over a 10-year (Europe) or 5-year (North America and Oceania) period respectively. These different cut-off periods reflect the time it generally takes for a refugee to acquire the nationality of his/her host country.

In the below two examples, the refugee population is calculated based on the above method.

Example 1. Canada

- Immigration ("landings") of Convention refugees, 1999-2003: 76,433;
- Immigration ("landings") of resettled refugees, 1999-2003: 56,692;
- **UNHCR estimate of the refugee**

population, end of 2003: 133,125.

Example 2. United Kingdom

- Asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status at the first instance, 1994-2003: 75,374;
- Asylum-seekers allowed to remain for humanitarian reasons ("exceptional leave to remain") at the first instance, 1994-2003: 104,514;
- Asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status and "exceptional leave to remain" under the backlog programme of 1999-2000: 29,249;
- Asylum seekers recognized on appeal during 1994-2003: 66,424⁷;
- Resettlement arrivals (1994-1996): 350
- **UNHCR estimate of the refugee population, end of 2003: 275,911.**

⁷ Number of persons estimated by UNHCR based on an average of 1.3 persons per asylum case (51,095 recognized cases x 1.3 = 66,424 persons recognized).

VI.1 Sources and methods of data collection, 2003

See footnotes at the end of the table.

Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³	Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³
	Source ¹	Basis ²			Source ¹	Basis ²	
Afghanistan	U	R	U	Gambia	U/N	E	V
Albania	U	R	G	Georgia	G/U	R	-
Algeria	U	R	U	Germany	G	R	G
Angola	G/U	R	G	Ghana	U	R	G
Argentina	N	R	G	Greece	G	R	G
Armenia	G/U/N	ES	G	Guatemala	U/N	R	G
Australia	G	E	G	Guinea	G/U/N	RE	G
Austria	G	E	G	Guinea-Bissau	G/U/N	ES	G
Azerbaijan	U	R	U	Honduras	U	R	G
Bahamas	-	-	-	Hong Kong SAR, China	G/U	R	U
Bahrain	U	R	U	Hungary	G	R	G
Bangladesh	U	RV	U	Iceland	N	E	G
Belarus	G	R	G	India	U	R	U
Belgium	G	R	G	Indonesia	U	R	U
Belize	G	R	G	Iraq ⁴	U	R	U
Benin	U	R	G	Ireland	G	E	G
Bolivia	N	R	G	Islamic Rep. of Iran	G/U	RE	U
Bosnia and Herzegovina	G/U	RE	U	Israel ⁴	U	V	U/V
Botswana	N	R	G	Italy	G	E	G
Brazil	N	R	G	Japan	G/U	RE	G
Bulgaria	G	R	G	Jordan	U	R	U
Burkina Faso	U	RE	G	Kazakhstan	G/U/N	RE	G/U
Burundi	G/U	RE	G/U	Kenya	U	RE	U
Cambodia	U	R	U	Kuwait	U	E	U
Cameroon	U	R	U	Kyrgyzstan	G/U	R	G
Canada	G	E	G	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	-	-	-
Central African Rep.	G	R	G	Latvia	G	R	G
Chad	G	E	G	Lebanon	U	R	U
Chile	N	R	G	Lesotho	-	-	-
China	G/U	R	U	Liberia	U	RE	-
Colombia	U	R	G/U	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	U	R	U
Comoros	-	-	-	Liechtenstein	G	E	G
Congo	U/N/V	RE	U	Lithuania	U	V	G
Costa Rica	G	RE	G	Luxembourg	V	E	G
Côte d'Ivoire	G/U	RE	G/U	Madagascar	-	-	-
Croatia	G/U	R	G/U	Malawi	G	R	G
Cuba	U	R	U	Malaysia	U	R	U
Cyprus	G/U	R	G/U	Mali	U/N	E	G
Czech Rep.	G	R	G	Malta	G/U	R	G
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	G/U/N	RE	U	Mauritania	U	R	U
Denmark	G	E	G	Mauritius	-	-	-
Djibouti	U	E	G	Mexico	G/U/N	RE	G
Ecuador	U	R	G	Mongolia	-	-	-
Egypt	U	R	U	Morocco	G/U	V	U
El Salvador	U	R	G/U	Mozambique	G	R	G
Eritrea	U	R	U	Myanmar	-	-	-
Estonia	G	R	G	Namibia	U	R	G
Ethiopia	G/U	R	G	Nepal	G/U/N	RE	G/U
Finland	G	R	G	Netherlands	G	E	G
France	G	R	G	New Zealand	G	E	G
FYR Macedonia	G/U	R	G	Nicaragua	G/N	RE	G
Gabon	U	R	G	Niger	G	R	U

VI.1 Sources and methods of data collection, 2003 (cont.)

See footnotes at the end of the table.

Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³
	Source ¹	Basis ²	
Nigeria	G	R	G
Norway	G	E	G
Oman	U	-	U
Pakistan	U	E	U
Panama ⁴	G	R	G
Papua New Guinea	G/U/N	E	G
Paraguay	N	R	U
Peru	N	R	G
Philippines	G/N	R	G
Poland	G	R	G
Portugal	G	E	G
Qatar	N	R	U
Rep. of Korea	U	R	G
Rep. of Moldova	G	R	G
Romania	G/N	R	G
Russian Federation	G/U	R	G
Rwanda	U	E	U
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-
Saudi Arabia	U/N	RE	U
Senegal	G/U/N	ES	G
Serbia and Montenegro	G/U/N	RES	U
Sierra Leone	G/U	RE	U
Singapore	N	R	U
Slovakia	G	R	G
Slovenia	G	R	G
Somalia	U	R	U
South Africa	G/U	RE	G

Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³
	Source ¹	Basis ²	
Spain	G	E	G
Sri Lanka	U	R	U
Sudan	U	V	G/U
Swaziland	N	E	G
Sweden	G	E	G
Switzerland	G	R	G
Syrian Arab Rep.	U	R	U
Tajikistan	G	E	G
Thailand	G/U	R	U
Timor-Leste	U	R	U
Togo	U	E	U
Tunisia	U	R	U
Turkey	U	R	U
Turkmenistan	G/U	RE	U
Uganda	G/U	R	G/U
Ukraine	G/U	R	G
United Arab Emirates	U	R	U
United Kingdom	G	E	G
United Rep. of Tanzania	U	RV	G
United States	G	E	G
Uruguay	N	R	U
Uzbekistan	U	R	U
Venezuela ⁴	U	R	G
Viet Nam	G	S	-
Yemen	U	R	U
Zambia	G/U	RE	G
Zimbabwe	G	R	G

¹ Source: G = Government, U = UNHCR, N = NGO, V = Various/other/unknown.² Basis: R = Registration/census, E = Estimate, S = Survey, V = Various/other/unknown.³ Type of refugee status determination procedure: G = Government, U = UNHCR, V = Government and UNHCR combined, unknown.⁴ Iraq, Israel, Panama and Venezuela refers to end-2002.

VI.2 Sources and classification of data in industrialized countries							
Country	Level*	Source	Recognized	Humanitarian	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Notes
Australia (asylum)		Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)	Granted, Remitted		Rejected, Affirmed	Closed otherwise	
Australia (resettlement)		DIMIA					Resettlement arrivals include "refugee arrivals", "special humanitarian programme" and "special assistance".
Austria		Ministry of Interior	Positive		Negative	Closed otherwise	
Belgium	FI	Commissariat général aux réfugiés et apatrides (CGRA)					Excludes decisions taken during the admissibility procedure.
Belgium	AR	Commission permanente de recours des réfugiés (CPRR)					
Canada (asylum)		Immigration and Refugee Board	Positive		Negative	Abandoned; Withdrawn and Other	
Canada (resettlement)		Government					Resettlement arrivals include "refugee landings" and "humanitarian landings".
Cyprus		Government, UNHCR					Data for 1994-2001 refer to applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate while data for 2002-2003 refer to the Government of Cyprus.
Czech Rep.		Ministry of Interior					
Denmark		Danish Immigration Service		De facto; B-Status	Refusal		Excludes asylum applications lodged at embassies abroad. Data for 1994-1997 refers to "net application figure" thus excluding persons who are returned to a safe third country or processed under the Dublin procedure. Data for 1998-2003 refers to "gross application figure". Number of rejections for 1994 is not available. Resettlement arrivals include 4,915 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who arrived during 1994-1996 (Source: UNHCR).
Estonia		Government					
Finland	FI	Government		De facto (B-) Status; Humanitarian; Other			Pending applications end-2000 estimated by UNHCR. Data on appeal procedure 2001-2003 not available.
France	FI	Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)	Certificat de Réfugié		Rejet		Recognition of asylum-seekers refers to first instance and re-opened applications. Data for 2001-2003 includes applications submitted by minors.
France	AR	Commission de Recours de Réfugiés	Annulations; Non-lieux		Irrécevabilités; Desistements; Rejets au fond		
France	RA	Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)	Certificat de Réfugié				
Germany	NA	Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees	Recognized under the German Constitution and the 1951 Convention (paragraph 51)	Recognized otherwise (paragraph 53)	Rejected	Otherwise closed	
Germany	RA	Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees	Recognized under the German Constitution and the 1951 Convention (paragraph 51)	Recognized otherwise (paragraph 53)	Rejected	Otherwise closed; repeat application not reopened	
Greece		Ministry of Public Order (Asylum Department)		Humanitarian status		No-show, revocation, withdrawals	Recognition and allowed to remain for humanitarian reasons in 2003 refers to January-November only.
Hungary		Office for Immigration and Nationality		Tolerated			Excludes applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate (1994-1998).
Iceland		Government					
Ireland	FI	Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner	Convention status	Temporary leave to remain	Refused	No show; withdrawals	Resettlement arrivals in 1994 include 1993 arrivals (no separate breakdown available).
Ireland	AR	Refugee Appeals Tribunal	Convention status	Temporary leave to remain	Refused	No show; withdrawals	

VI.2 Sources and classification of data in industrialized countries (cont.)							
Country	Level*	Source	Recognized	Humanitarian	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Notes
Italy		Ministry of Interior					
Japan		Government					Resettlement arrivals refer to settled Indochinese "boat people", resettled Indochinese refugees and arrivals under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP).
Latvia		Government					
Liechtenstein		Foreigner and Passport Office		Temporary protection	Rejected (substantive decisions)	Otherwise closed	
Lithuania		Government					
Luxembourg		Government		Residence permit for humanitarian reasons			No data on decisions taken during 1999 and 2002.
Malta		Government, UNHCR					No data on applications and refugee status determination available for 1994. Data for 1995-2001 refer to applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate while data for 2002-2003 refer to the Government of Malta. Data for 2002 refers to cases.
Netherlands		Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND)	A-Status	Residence permit on humanitarian grounds ("VTV"); provisional residence permit ("VTV")	Rejected	Manifestly unfounded; Inadmissible; Other	Applications in 1999 include 3,434 applications submitted by persons from Kosovo under the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme (HEP).
New Zealand (asylum)	FI	Refugee Status Branch	Allowed		Declined		1998 data refer to July-December only.
New Zealand (asylum)	AR	Refugee Status Appeal Authority	Allowed		Declined		
New Zealand (resettlement)		Government					Resettlement arrivals for 1994-1998 refer to fiscal year while data for 1999-2003 refer to calendar year.
Norway	FI	Government		Humanitarian status; Temporary Protection			Resettlement arrivals include 2,015 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (1994-2000) and 2,462 from Kosovo granted special temporary protection (1999). Data on total number of decisions 2000-2003 includes otherwise closed cases. This type of information is not available for previous years. Data on appeal procedure for 2001-2003 not available.
Poland		Government					Data on appeal procedure for 1999 and 2003 not available.
Portugal		Foreigner and Border Service (SEF)	Granted	Granted (A.R. R.H.)	Rejected	Not admissible	
Rep. of Korea		Government					
Romania		Interior Ministry (National Refugee Office)					
Slovakia		Slovak Migration Office					
Slovenia		Interior Ministry (Asylum Department)					
Spain		Asylum and Refugee Office (OAR)	Convention status granted	Humanitarian status; Other protection	Negative eligibility decision	Inadmissions to procedure; withdrawals	
Sweden		Swedish Migration Board		De facto; B-Status; Allowed to remain; Humanitarian status			Distinction between first instance and appeal only available since 1999. Pending applications end-1999 estimated by UNHCR.
Switzerland	FI	Federal Office for Refugees	Recognized	Temporary protection	Rejected	Otherwise closed, withdrawn, inadmissible	
Switzerland	AR	Asylum Appeal Commission	Approval, preliminary approval		Rejected	Otherwise closed	
Switzerland	CA	Cantons (Foreigner Police)		Humanitarian permits			
Turkey		UNHCR					Data refer to refugee status determination carried out under the UNHCR mandate.

VI.2 Sources and classification of data in industrialized countries (cont.)							
Country	Level*	Source	Recognized	Humanitarian	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Notes
United Kingdom	FI	Home Office	Recognized	Exceptional leave to remain (ELR). Humanitarian protection (HP) and Discretionary Leave (DL) replaced Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) from 1 April	Refused asylum and exceptional leave after full consideration.	Refused on safe third country grounds; Refused under para. 340 of Immigration Rules (failure to provide evidence to support asylum claim within a reasonable period).	Data on rejections and otherwise closed during 1994-2003 are estimated by UNHCR based on an average of 1.3 persons per asylum case. Recognitions and rejections for 1999 and 2000 include the backlog clearance procedure.
United Kingdom	AR	Home Office (Immigration Appellate Authority)	Allowed		Dismissed	Withdrawn; Referred	Data refer to number of cases and includes decisions taken on reopened applications (2001).
United Kingdom	JR	Home Office (Administrative Courts)	Allowed		Dismissed	Inadmissions to procedure; withdrawals	Applications in 1999 is an estimate. All data refer to number of cases.
United States (asylum)	IN	Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)	Granted		Denied; Rejected; Cases to Immigration Judges Interviewed	Cases closed; Cases to Immigration Judges Not Interviewed	Data exclude reopened applications. All data refer to number of cases (except when otherwise indicated) and reflect fiscal year.
United States (asylum)	EO	Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)	Granted		Denied	Abandoned; Withdrawn; Other	Figures refer to fiscal year.
United States (resettlement)		Department of State					Resettlement arrivals generally include family reunification and refer to fiscal year.
Notes							
* Level in the procedure: FI=First instance; AR=Administrative Review, JR=Judicial Review; CA=Cantonal regulations; EO=Executive Office of Immigration Review; IN=Immigration and Naturalization Service; NA=New applications; RA=Repeat applications; BL=Backlog procedure.							