

CHAPTER VI

SOURCES, METHODS AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The international refugee instruments, such as 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 incorporated the refugee definition in their national legislation makes refugees relatively easy to count. As refugees can only be adequately protected when they are registered, refugee statistics are generally based on individual registration records, kept by the host Government. In many instances, UNHCR supports countries in the registration of refugees.

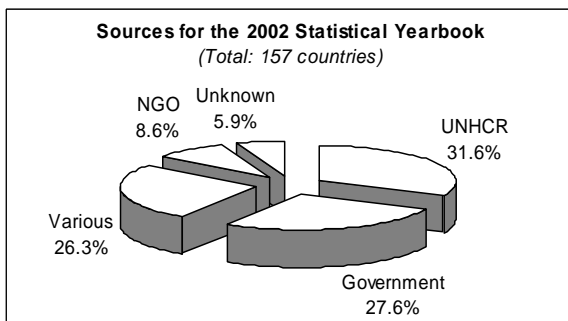
Although there is a clear refugee definition and administrative procedures to support this, keeping accurate statistics may not be as straightforward as it seems. First, there may be a difference of opinion between UNHCR, NGOs and the host country about who is a refugee. For instance, nationals fleeing conflict in their country may be welcomed as refugees by some countries, but not by others. 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 difficult to compare internationally. Fifth, even though there is an international refugee definition, the administrative rules governing the granting of refugee status vary. Sixth, administrative records tend to overestimate the actual number of persons, because it is easier to register than to de-register. This is particularly the case when registration is linked to the provision of services or benefits.

Sources

In most countries, there is no single source from which the population of concern to UNHCR can be derived. 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 or implementing partners. Sources may also differ between regions. In many countries, refugee registration is not centralized, but maintained at the local level, requiring periodic consolidation. Some refugee characteristics, such as gender, age and special needs, may not be available from the register, but only collected through surveys. In short, a combination of sources is generally required to obtain a comprehensive statistical picture.

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 thousands registration records on a daily basis in countries with limited means.

In addition to the size of the population, UNHCR records and collects other data which have an impact on population size, including births, deaths, new arrivals, durable solutions and changes in the legal changes.

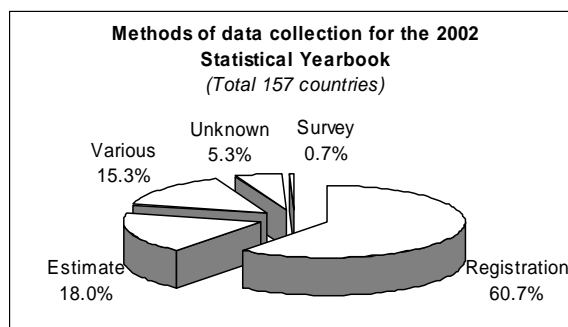


By the end of 2002, UNHCR was the single source of statistics in 48 countries (32%); governments were the sole data provider in 42 countries (28%), whereas NGOs maintained data at the request of UNHCR in 13 countries (9%).

In 40 countries, there was more than one data source (26%). In 31 of these 40 countries, statistics were a combined responsibility of the Government and UNHCR. In total, UNHCR was quoted as either the single source or one of the sources for statistics in 86 countries. Governments were the single source or one of the sources in 81 countries (see *Table VI.1*).

Methods of data collection

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 corrective action. 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 “snap-shot” of the situation and quickly becomes outdated.



Registration was the sole source of refugee statistics in 91 countries (61% of the countries), estimates formed the basis in 27 countries (18%), more than one method of data collection were reported by 23 countries (15%), whereas surveys were the data source in only one country (0.7%). In 22 of the 23 countries where more than one method of data collection was used, registration was mentioned as one of the methods (see *Table VI.1*).

Among the 27 countries where only estimates are used, 16 are industrialized countries without a refugee register. In these 16 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).

UNHCR carries out registration and data collection in support of its activities to protect and assist refugees. Most attention is focused on refugees in immediate need of support. Refugees who are living outside camps, sometimes unlawfully, are more difficult to track and are underrepresented in the UNHCR statistics. Nevertheless, estimates for self-settled refugees are included in the statistics for a number of African countries.

Refugee registration is often subject to significant adjustments as a result of verification campaigns. As a result, the population size in refugee camps is sometimes subject to

significant periodic adjustments. Population adjustments due to registration were discussed in some detail in Chapter II.

Refugee population estimates in industrialized countries

As noted earlier, a number of 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 these countries are nevertheless reflected in the global refugee statistics, UNHCR estimates the refugee population in these 16 countries, located in Europe, North America and Oceania, 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.

To illustrate the above methodology, two examples are provided below, using official Government statistics.

Example 1: Canada

- a. Immigration ("landings") of Convention refugees, 1998-2002: 74,371
 - b. Immigration ("landings") of resettled refugees, 1998-2002: 55,576
- UNHCR estimate of the refugee population, end of 2002: 129,947**

Example 2. United Kingdom

- a. Asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status in first instance, 1993-2002: 72,855
 - b. Asylum-seekers allowed to remain for humanitarian reasons ("exceptional leave to remain") in first instance, 1993-2002: 112,190
 - c. Asylum-seekers granted Convention refugee status and "exceptional leave to remain" under the backlog programme of 1999-2000: 29,249
 - d. Asylum seekers recognized in appeal during 1994-2002: 45,533¹⁵
 - e. Resettlement arrivals (1993-1996): 860
- UNHCR estimate of the refugee population, end of 2002: 260,687**

¹⁵ Number of persons estimated by UNHCR based on an average of 1.3 persons per asylum case (35,025 recognized cases x 1.3 = 45,533 persons recognized). Data for 1993 not available or not applicable.

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VI.1 Sources and methods of data collection, 2002

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	G/U	E	U
Albania	G/U	R	G	Georgia	G/U	R	-
Algeria	U	R	U	Germany	G	E	G
Angola	G/U	E	G	Ghana	G/U	RE	G
Argentina	N	R	G	Greece	G	R	G
Armenia	G/U	ES	G	Guatemala	U	R	U
Australia	G	E	G	Guinea	G/U/N	RE	G
Austria	G	E	G	Guinea-Bissau	G/U	RE	G
Azerbaijan	U	R	U	Honduras	G/U/N	R	G
Bahamas	-	-	U	Hong Kong SAR, China	G/U	R	U
Bahrain	U	R	U	Hungary	G	R	G
Bangladesh	U	R	U	Iceland	N	E	G
Belarus	G	R	G	India	U	R	U
Belgium	G	RE	G	Indonesia	U	R	U
Belize	U	R	U	Iraq	U	R	U
Benin	U	R	G	Ireland	G	E	G
Bolivia	N	R	G	Islamic Rep. of Iran	G/U	R	G/U
Bosnia and Herzegovina	G	R	U	Israel	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	R	G	Kazakhstan	G/U/N	V	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	R	G
Canada	G	E	G	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	-	-	-
Central African Rep.	G	R	G	Latvia	G	R	G
Chad	V	V	G	Lebanon	U	R	U
Chile	N	R	G	Lesotho	V	R	-
China	G/U	R	U	Liberia	U	RE	G
Colombia	U	R	U	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	U	R	U
Comoros	V	R	-	Liechtenstein	G	E	G
Congo	G/U	V	U	Lithuania	U	V	G
Costa Rica	G	RE	G	Luxembourg	V	E	G
Côte d'Ivoire	G/U	RE	G/U	Madagascar	V	R	-
Croatia	G/U	RE	G/U	Malawi	V	V	G
Cuba	U	R	U	Malaysia	U	R	U
Cyprus	U	R	G/U	Mali	G/U	E	G
Czech Rep.	G	R	G	Malta	G/U	R	G/U
Dem. Rep. of Congo	G/U/N	RE	U	Mauritania	U	R	U
Denmark	G	E	G	Mauritius	V	R	-
Djibouti	U	R	U	Mexico	G/U/N	RE	G/U
Ecuador	U	E	G	Morocco	G/U	V	U
Egypt	U	R	U	Mozambique	G/U	R	G
El Salvador	N	R	G	Myanmar	-	-	-
Eritrea	G	R	U	Namibia	U	R	G
Estonia	G	R	G	Nepal	G	R	G
Ethiopia	V	R	G	Netherlands	G	E	G
Finland	G	R	G	New Zealand	G	E	G
France	G	R	G	Nicaragua	G	R	G
FYR Macedonia	G/U	RS	U	Niger	V	R	U
Gabon	U	R	G	Nigeria	U	R	G

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VI.1 Sources and methods of data collection, 2002

See footnotes at the end of the table.

Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³
	Source ¹	Basis ²	
Norway	G	E	G
Oman	-	-	U
Pakistan	U	R	U
Panama	G	R	G
Papua New Guinea	G	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	G/U	R	G
Rep. of Moldova	U	R	U
Romania	G/N	R	G
Russian Federation	G/U	R	G
Rwanda	U	S	U
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-
Saudi Arabia	U/N	RE	U
Senegal	G/U	E	G
Serbia and Montenegro	G/U/N	RES	G/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	E	G
Spain	G	E	G

Country	Refugee data		Type of procedure ³
	Source ¹	Basis ²	
Sri Lanka	U	R	U
Sudan	U	RE	U/V
Swaziland	N	R	G
Sweden	G	E	G
Switzerland	G	R	G
Syrian Arab Rep.	U	R	U
Tajikistan	G/U	RE	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	R	G
United Arab Emirates	U	R	U
United Kingdom	G	E	G
United Rep. of Tanzania	G/U	R/V	G
United States	G	E	G
Uruguay	N	R	U
Uzbekistan	U	R	U
Venezuela	U	R	G
Viet Nam	G	V	-
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.

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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 1993-2001 refer to applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate while data for 2002 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 1993-1997 refers to "net application figure" thus excluding persons who are returned to a safe third country or processed under the Dublin procedure. Data for 1998-2002 refers to "gross application figure". Number of rejections for 1993-1994 are not available. Resettlement arrivals include 7,626 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who arrived during 1993-1996 (Source: UNHCR).
Estonia		Government					
Finland	FI	Government		De facto (B-) Status; Humanitarian; Other			Pending applications end-2000 estimated by UNHCR. Data on appeal procedure 2001-2002 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 excludes applications submitted by minors.
France	AR	Commission de Recours de Réfugiés	Annulations; Non-lieux		Irrécevables; 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	

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VI.2 Sources and classification of data in industrialized countries							
Country	Level*	Source	Recognized	Humanitarian	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Notes
Hungary		Office for Immigration and Nationality		Tolerated			Excludes applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate (1993-1998).
Iceland		Government					
Ireland		Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner		Temporary leave to remain	Refused		Resettlement arrivals in 1994 include 1993 arrivals (no separate breakdown available).
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 1993-1994. Data for 1995-2001 refer to applications and refugee status determination under the UNHCR mandate while data for 2002 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 1993-1998 refer to fiscal year while data for 1999-2002 refer to calendar year.
Norway	FI	Government		Humanitarian status; Temporary Protection			Resettlement arrivals include 2,972 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (1993-2000) and 2,462 from Kosovo granted special temporary protection (1999). Data on total number of decisions 2000-2002 includes otherwise closed cases. This type of information is not available for previous years. Data on appeal procedure for 2001-2002 not available.
Poland		Government					Data on appeal procedure for 1999 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	

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VI.2 Sources and classification of data in industrialized countries							
Country	Level*	Source	Recognized	Humanitarian	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Notes
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. Pending applications end-2002 not available.
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.
United Kingdom	FI	Home Office	Recognized	Exceptional leave to remain (ELR)	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 1993-2001 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 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.							

