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**Items for discussion and decision: civil registration, vital statistics
and statelessness statistics**

Background document

Available in English only

Country examples of data collection on statelessness statistics

Prepared by the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS)

Country examples of data collection on statelessness statistics

Prepared by the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS) and presented as a background paper to the [*Report of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics on statelessness statistics*](#) E/CN.3/2022/10

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Introduction

1. This document serves as a background paper to the [Report of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics on statelessness statistics E/CN.3/2022/10](#) and provides further details regarding the country examples cited in the Report. It should thus be read in conjunction with this report rather than as a standalone document. These examples provide evidence that data on stateless persons can be collected, while highlighting some of the constraints and issues faced. Some of the good practices identified in this paper, as well as additional examples still to be collected, will be further explored in the forthcoming International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) that are currently under development.

2. The elaboration of this background paper is aligned with the EGRISS efforts to develop statistical recommendations informed by the real experience of countries and their national statistical institutions in combination with international legal and normative frameworks and statistical best practices. This methodology mirrors the successful approach taken in the development of the *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS)* and the *International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS)*¹. Building on country experience – both successes and lessons learned – is essential to ensure the practicality of the recommendations and their applicability at the country level, as well as to foster peer-to-peer learning between countries with the view of reinforcing good practices at the global level.

3. Many countries have taken concrete steps towards the inclusion of stateless persons in the national statistical systems. These efforts have used a variety of data collection methods; some focus on the inclusion of questions in national population censuses, others on household surveys or changes in administrative data systems, and finally some are exploring the use of experimental methods. Each example contributes to the development of practical international standards that can provide guidance to countries who may wish to include statistics about statelessness in their systems, so that affected populations are not left behind. This document presents some of these examples below. Specifically, the Report introduces country cases that collect statelessness data in a) housing and population censuses, b) population registers, c) household surveys, and d) administrative data.

Examples of countries collecting statelessness data

4. This section provides six examples of countries that have included stateless persons in their data collection exercises. Specifically, the (1) Kenyan Population and Housing Census 2019, (2) Norwegian Population Register, (3) Côte d'Ivoire Statelessness Survey, (4) Kenya Shona Survey, (5) Thailand's measures to promote birth registration and prevent statelessness, and (6) National coordination of statelessness statistics in The Philippines.

¹ See [International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics \(IRRS\)](#) and [International Recommendations on IDP Statistics \(IRIS\)](#)

Example 1: The Kenyan Population and Housing Census 2019

The 2019 Kenyan and Population and Housing Census was successfully conducted in August 2019. For the first time the same detailed questionnaire was used for the whole population including refugees, asylum seekers and stateless populations. Previously a shorter version of the questionnaire was designed for these specific population groups. In the 2019 Census, no additional questions were included for these populations, but additional response categories for existing questions were included to accommodate stateless populations.

The question on nationality included codes for stateless/no nationality/none and codes for the various Kenyan ethnicities. It was possible to select known stateless groups in the tablet used to collect data after selecting stateless or no nationality.

Question P16: What is <NAME>'s ethnicity or nationality?

- For Kenyans, write ethnicity code.
- For non- Kenyans, write code for nationality

The question on reason for migration (both internal and international) captured IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers with respect to their last move.

Question P23 Why did <NAME> move to the current place of residence?

- 1=Work/ Employment
- 2=Business
- 3= Marriage
- 4=Education
- 5=Settlement
- 6=Relocation due to development
- 7=Conflict/Disaster displacement
- 8=Refugee
- 9=Asylum Seeker
- 10=Family Related Movement
- 11=Retirement
- 12=Visiting
- 99=DK

UNHCR contributed to the preparation of the census manuals especially with respect to the additional information on refugees/asylum seekers and stateless populations as well as training of field staff and monitoring of the census. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) together with UNHCR developed information materials for refugee and stateless populations and together with partners reached out to the stateless communities to help them understand the census, questions, and protection of the data. The communities were also assured that there would be no changes in their legal status or other associated risks as a result of the responses provided.

The results of the census however indicated that the public education campaign did not adequately convince the stateless populations to self-identify, as the number of respondents was lower than expected. In addition, the drop-down menu on the tablet used for data entry did not list all the known stateless communities. Post-census evaluation also indicated that most stateless populations felt safer to self-identify with other known Kenyan tribes or did not provide any information on nationality.

Published results from the census (Kenya Population and Housing Census 2019 Volume IV – Distribution of population by age and sex, December 2019) show a total figure of 6,272 individuals who self-identified as stateless. Another 33,358 did not provide any information on nationality. Results are found in Table 2.3.1 on pages 423 and 424 in census report 4. See <https://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/VOLUME-IV-KPHC-2019.pdf>

Example 2: Identifying Stateless Persons in the Norwegian Population Register

In the Norwegian Population Register there is a code for citizenship for every resident of Norway, including a code for statelessness. There is also a code for unknown citizenship, which is used for very few individuals.

Information about the background of stateless persons may be obtained from the variables “country (or place) of birth” and “country of previous residence” (for immigrants). These variables are drawn from a number of data sources including both the population register and censuses, and do not necessarily correspond to nationality, but they can indicate historical connections to other countries. In addition, for stateless children, data are usually linked to the parents’ records via their ID number, which contain data on the parents’ citizenship status, country of birth and where they emigrated from.

Of Norway’s total resident population of 5.4 million on 1 January 2021, there were 4.8 million Norwegian citizens, 0.6 million citizens of other countries, 1,708 stateless persons and 42 with unknown nationality.¹ Stateless people in Norway can apply for Norwegian citizenship after 3 years and most of them do so. Half of the stateless persons identified become citizens after 3½ years. 95 per cent of all stateless persons had received citizenship after 7½ years.²

For non-Nordic immigrants to Norway their identity, including their citizenship, is checked and registered by the police and/or the Directorate of Immigration following a thorough procedure that utilizes all available information about the person, including passport, birth certificate and other available documents, as well as interviews. For citizens of the European Economic Area, the procedure is less comprehensive, and it is usually sufficient to show the passport or ID card. The process is particularly thorough (and lengthy) for asylum seekers, including stateless asylum seekers since citizenship or lack thereof is an important factor for the granting of asylum in Norway. Asylum seekers are assigned a temporary number (called D-number) when they apply for asylum and a regular person number (F-number) once they are recognized as a refugee and given permission to live in Norway for six or more months.

NOTES

¹ Statbank, Statistics Norway. Retrieved from <https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/05196/tableViewLayout1/>

² Kåre Vassenden, *Kåre: Fra utenlandsk til norsk statsborgerskap gjennom mer enn førti år. [From foreign to Norwegian citizenship through more than forty years.] Reports 2020/31, Statistics Norway. Retrieved from <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/from-foreign-to-norwegian-citizenship-through-more-than-forty-years>*

Kåre Vassenden of Statistics Norway and Trude Åsrum of the Tax Authority provided important input to this text, as did Helge Brunborg Senior Research Fellow Statistics Norway.

Example 3: Côte d'Ivoire Statelessness Survey

Context and background

Following the [Abidjan Declaration](#), an Action Plan for the eradication of statelessness over the period 2017-2024 known as the "[Banjul Plan of Action of the Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\)](#)" was adopted in Monrovia in June 2017. The [Mapping of People at Risk of Statelessness \(CAPRA\)](#) is in line with the overall policy of the Banjul Plan of Action and, specifically, with Strategic Objective 2, which encourages States to strengthen data management systems for effective responses to the challenges of statelessness.

The National Institute of Statistics (INS) of Côte d'Ivoire in collaboration with several Government Ministries and with support from UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF conducted the CAPRA study, with the aim of estimating the number of people at risk of statelessness in the country. The definition of "a person at risk of statelessness" used in the CAPRA study is a person who is unable to meet the necessary conditions or produce the necessary documents to be certified or assigned a nationality. This approach is different from that currently proposed in the draft IROSS.

The study was regarded as 'experimental statistics' or a trial survey for potential collection of official statistics, and has been used by officials in considering policy options for resolving the risks of statelessness in the resident population.

- Those at **risk of statelessness** were assessed using a complex set of variables including country of birth, lack of registration of birth, lack of proof of nationality or documentation proving parentage.
- Those at **high risk of statelessness** were either born abroad and without documents to prove their nationality or parentage, or they were born in Côte d'Ivoire but had no proof of nationality or proof of nationality for deceased parents.
- Persons who have tried and failed to obtain proof of nationality were assessed to be at **very high risk of statelessness**.

Methodology

A household survey was conducted in 2018 using a sample of 9,240 households living in 462 Enumeration Zones (ZD): together with a qualitative study through 81 contextual interviews, 150 individual interviews and 20 focus group discussions. A two-stage sample design was used to sample from the resident household population. At the first stage, the sampling framework used was the General Population and Housing Census of 2014. From this, the 462 Enumeration Zones (ZD) were drawn systematically, with a probability proportional to size (PPS) of each District. At the second stage the selected ZDs, a systematic sample of 20 households was drawn from all the households identified by household listing.

Results

The preliminary results of the study provided an initial estimate of the population living in Côte d'Ivoire who are at varying degrees of risk of statelessness, most of them are at a low risk of statelessness, with some three quarters of those assessed were likely to be eligible for Ivorian nationality. Only 15% of the surveyed population did not have their births registered, but only half held birth certificates or their equivalent, with two thirds of those aged over 16 years holding proof of nationality.

Despite the relatively high incidence of the risk of statelessness, the results show that more than half of people (54.6%) have not heard of the concept of statelessness.

See <https://www.refworld.org/docid/615463624.html> and <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/mapping-statelessness-cote-divoire/>

Example 4: Kenya Shona Survey

During the first half of 2019 UNHCR Kenya, in close cooperation with the Government of Kenya Department of Immigration Services and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, conducted a documentation and socio-economic study (SES) among the stateless Shona community in Kenya.

The Shona community migrated to Kenya from Zimbabwe and Zambia in the early part of the 20th century and had been living as stateless until they were granted Kenyan citizenship at the end of 2020.

The study collected information on the migration history, residence in Kenya, family circumstances and documentation held with the aim to prepare their registration as Kenyan citizens. Additionally, the socio-economic part of the study aimed to generate an overall picture of the socioeconomic conditions of the Shona community compared to Kenyan nationals. A listing of all Shona households using key informant lists and respondent-driven referrals to identify further households was conducted before the start of enumeration.

The study's aim was to interview all households in Kenya with at least one Shona person living in them, and as a consequence of this full enumeration approach through a household survey no probabilistic sampling design was needed. This resulted in the collection of documentation data for 2,084 individuals in 465 households. The questionnaire used in the Shona SES produces data comparable to national household surveys and other standard instruments. Modules on education, employment, household characteristics, and consumption and expenditure are aligned with the most recent national poverty survey, the 2015/16 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS), and provides comparable results reported at the county and national levels.

See <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3960> and <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/socioeconomic-impacts-of-statelessness-shona-community-in-kenya/> and <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/socioeconomic-profile-stateless-shona-kenya>

Example 5: Thailand's measures to promote birth registration and reduce vulnerability to statelessness

Law: The Registration of Residential Inhabitant Act B.E. 2534 (1991) and its Amendment B.E. 2551 (2008), provides for birth registration and a birth certificate to all children born in Thailand.

Resolutions: On 7 December 2016, the Cabinet approved two resolutions to further address the issue of statelessness and promote the rights of stateless persons in Thailand.

1. The first resolution specifies the status and conditions to stay in Thailand for persons who are born in Thailand but do not possess Thai nationality. It grants non-Thai children born in Thailand the right to legally stay in Thailand, following the rights of their parents, and preventing them from being criminalised as illegal immigrants. This policy can potentially grant access to Thai nationality for up to 80,000 children, especially those living in the highlands and hinterlands in Thailand.
2. The second resolution enables non-Thai children born in Thailand to apply for Thai nationality, given one of the following conditions are met: either their parents are from ethnic minority groups who were registered with the Ministry of Interior and have lived in Thailand for no less than 15 years, or their parents are from other groups but the children themselves have received a bachelor's degree or equivalent in Thailand. Children who are currently studying can also apply for Thai nationality to the Minister of Interior. Abandoned children can also apply if they have lived in Thailand no less than 10 years, certified by relevant agencies under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

Source: Statement issued by Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN, 10 October 2017. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/BirthRegistrationMarginalized/Thailand.pdf>

Example 6: National coordination of statelessness statistics in The Philippines

The Philippines incorporated Statelessness in the Philippine Statistical Development Program (PSDP) 2018-2023. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) serves as the central statistical authority of the Philippine Government on primary data collection. Its mandate is provided for under the Republic Act 10625, otherwise known as the Philippine Statistical Act of 2013. It has a wide range of functions, including coordination functions. The PSA is one of the agencies working on the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) to End Statelessness. The PSA, together with the Department of Justice (DOJ), co-leads the implementation of activities related to relevant actions of the NAP:

- Action Points 5: (Ensure Birth Registration for the Prevention of Statelessness), and
- Action Point 7: (Improve Quantitative and Qualitative Data on Stateless Populations).

The PSA is currently exploring ways to include statelessness statistics in the census. It is also a member of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) on the Protection of Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Stateless Persons, the inter-agency mechanism that provides for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons in the country.

New Laws and Regulations

The Philippines is committed to achieving the SDGs and “Leaving no one behind”. Ensuring birth registration helps to prevent statelessness and recognises the right of every child to a name and identity.

New laws related to civil registration and their corresponding Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) are being prepared, with the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA) taking the lead. A new Bill will replace the Civil Registry Law of the Philippines (1931), once passed, the new law removes discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples and Muslim Filipinos and includes foundlings. For foundlings a birth certificate will be issued instead of a foundling certificate.

Training and Publicity

Once the IRR become final, PSA will conduct three levels of training to ensure that all Local Civil Registrars are aware of the provisions of the new laws and to ensure a standard implementation of the laws. Consultative meetings with stakeholders are also being conducted. Radio and TV guest appearances are underway to inform the citizens about the new laws relating to civil registration.

Business processes revised

To address the late or non-submission of the monthly reports of the local Civil Registry Offices, the Vital Statistics Division coordinates with the concerned PSA Provincial Offices. Status reports on submission are distributed to the Regional Directors or to the Provincial Statistics Officers.

The civil registry forms are divided into two parts: the legal and statistical portions. The legal portion contains the items on the facts of occurrence of the event including the remarks portion. The statistical portion consists of the codes, which are entered in the appropriate boxes.

The codes are derived from the information in the legal portion. Coding is the process of assigning numeric and alphanumeric digits to represent information for purposes of facilitating the production of vital statistics. Coding is done at the Local Civil Registry Office.

See <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/15022-philippines-launches-action-plan-to-end-statelessness> and <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/ending-statelessness-next-generation>

Conclusion

5. Different data sources can and have been used to produce data on stateless persons and persons of undetermined nationality or at risk of statelessness. However, each approach holds its strengths and weaknesses, and the choice of method will depend on the national context and the local circumstances of people who are in the proposed scope of the IROSS. The IROSS will be further developed during the remainder of 2022 to strengthen recommendations on the collection, analysis, and coordination of official statistics on stateless populations.

6. It will still take time for countries to implement the recommendations and to produce more reliable and comparable national statistics on statelessness. Stateless populations are often difficult to identify and may not be willing to participate in data collection activities. To complement traditional statistical approaches, methodologies will be developed to estimate the stateless population size using statistical and demographic techniques in the presence of low-quality and missing data. Such approaches are needed to improve the reliability of regional and global estimates and are complementary to improved primary national data collection.

7. Despite the current challenges and the importance of exploring alternative methods, this paper has provided evidence on the feasibility of collecting statelessness data. The inclusion of stateless people in national statistical systems is essential to improve the lives of affected populations by facilitating evidence-based policy and visibility in the Agenda 2030. Therefore, the IROSS will continue to be developed in collaboration with country statistical experts and international experts to ensure that country perspectives are incorporated into the international statistical standards.

8. In addition to the country cases highlighted in this background paper, the EGRISS is aware of additional examples of incorporation of stateless persons into national statistical systems, including the 2021 Population Census of Kazakhstan² and the registration of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh initiated in 2018³. Additional efforts to incorporate stateless persons into data collection exercises are planned for 2022 and 2023, including population and housing censuses in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe⁴ and Ukraine⁵. The Expert Group will continue to explore these initiatives and further examples will be drawn from Member States to strengthen the IROSS ahead of its submission to the 54th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

² See <https://www.unhcr.org/centralasia/en/15163-unhcr-welcomes-data-collection-on-stateless-persons-in-the-2021-population-census-of-kazakhstan.html>

³ See <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2019/5/5cde6fd34/250000-rohingya-refugees-identity-documents-first.html> and <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2019/5/5cde66b84/registration-gives-rohingya-refugees-identification-first-time.html>

⁴ See <https://southafrica.un.org/en/156766-addressing-statelessness-southern-africa>

⁵ See <https://voxukraine.org/en/stateless-persons-in-ukraine-rightless-but-with-hope/>