USE OF DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES TO INFORM PROTECTION ACTIVITIES: CASE STUDIES

Introduction

Collecting and analyzing operational information is imperative for identifying progress and gaps in UNHCR's performance. There have been significant improvements in the statistical reporting on protection and well-being of UNHCR's beneficiaries in recent years. Factors which contributed to this improvement included the use of Focus, the Standard and Indicators data collection programme, participatory assessments in refugee contexts, needs assessments and enhanced IDP profiling methodologies.

However, important gaps remain which mainly pertain to the difficulty of ensuring data quality, geographic and time trend comparability. These difficulties are due to the fact that data from different years, locations and countries are not fully comparable. The use of different and not always comparable data collection methodologies and the various changes in the reporting instruments make the provision of a good picture of UNHCR's protection and assistance activities difficult. Two case studies using comparable methodologies and reliable data are therefore used in this chapter to illustrate some of the protection concerns refugees and IDPs face.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first presents an overview of the profile of Somali refugees. By including information on their numbers, characteristics, countries of asylum, asylum applications, recognition rates and resettlement arrivals, this section provides a good picture of a population for whom voluntary repatriation is not a viable option given the situation in their country of origin.

The primary responsibility for providing reliable information on refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern lies with States. However, where government capacity is weak or insufficient, UNHCR and its partners conduct data collection activities in an inter-agency context. Various methodologies could be used to ensure that protection and assistance gaps are well monitored. As an example, the second part of this chapter discusses the use of IDP profiling methodologies, including registration, to collect data that are relevant for the protection and assistance of IDPs in Yemen.
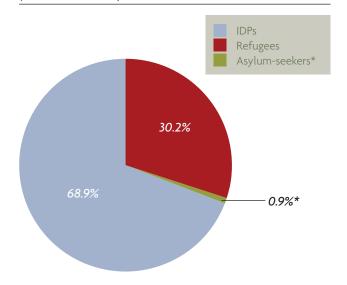
A. Somalis on the move: a profile of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers

Background

In 2009, the situation in the south-central part of Somalia continued to deteriorate with little sign of possible improvement in the near future. May 2009 saw a resumption of major fighting between Government troops and insurgents resulting in large-scale displacement. By the end of 2009, there were some 1.5 million persons internally displaced, while the number of Somali refugees in the world rose to more than 678,000. Access to an estimated two million people affected by the conflict in Somalia was limited due to general insecurity, targeted attacks against humanitarian workers and, in some cases, deliberate rejection of relief assistance by armed groups. However, for the past few years, the situation in the north Puntland and Somaliland regions has remained stable and in 2009 there were no significant population movements from these areas.

While the vast majority of Somali refugees continued to be received and provided with asylum, hostile acts and cases of harassment increased. Fatigue in asylum countries, twenty years after the Somali conflict began, has contributed to these acts. There is also an erroneous perception by governments and populations that the movement of Somalis beyond the region was motivated by economic reasons rather than by protection needs. Finally, threats expressed by

Fig. VI.1 Persons of concern from Somalia, 2009 (Total=2.24 million)

* IDPs
* Refugees
* Asylum-seekers*

30.2%

68.9%

0.9%*

* The number of Somali asylum-seekers is under-reported because a number of countries, notably South Africa, did not provide the information.

Al Shabab, one of the main insurgent groups, against countries in the region and in particular those having contributed troops to AMISOM,[70] further fuelled negative sentiments towards Somali nationals.

Some 554,700 (81%) Somali refugees could be found in the East and Horn of Africa[71] and in Yemen. By the end of 2009, Kenya and Yemen alone hosted 70 per cent of all Somali refugees. Movements towards southern Africa, Europe and the Middle East continued over the past few years. A Working Group was established in early 2009 to identify the state of knowledge within UNHCR on drivers for such movements, in order to assess the responses across the countries affected by their movement, and to put in place measures to mitigate hazardous and preventable onward movements. Some of the main conclusions of the report of this Working Group (hereafter referred to as the Working Group Report) are outlined below. The routes used by Somalis to reach these destinations remain difficult and perilous. It is estimated that in 2009 some 180 Somalis attempting to cross into Yemen lost their lives. Some of those who manage to reach their final destinations risked being forcibly returned to their country of origin.

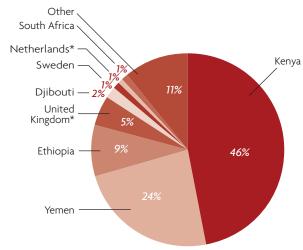### Situation in countries neighbouring Somalia

The year 2009 saw a 20 per cent increase in the number of Somali refugees compared to 2008. This growth was been similar to the one observed every year for the past four years. Somalis primarily sought refuge in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen. The Somali refugees have been received and recognized on a *prima facie* basis in all of these countries and accommodated mostly in camps - with the exception of Yemen, where most refugees are living among host populations. In the other countries, congestion, security constraints and inadequate assistance standards resulting from limited resources were the main challenges faced by UNHCR operations. In all countries, UNHCR had to request additional land to accommodate new arrivals. In Kenya and Djibouti, additional land had to be requested to decongest existing camps in the Dadaab and Ali Adeh areas. An increasing number of refugees have been registering in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, away from camps, straining the limited registration capacity in this urban context.

Movement towards Europe, the Middle East, Southern Africa and other regions

For many years, Somalis seeking protection have been travelling to Southern Africa, the Middle East and Europe, transiting through countries bordering Somalia.

Fig. VI.2 Somali refugees by country of asylum, end-2009

*UNHCR estimate

In southern Africa, there were more than 12,300 Somali refugees, mostly in South Africa. Although the number of new asylum applications submitted in South Africa in 2009 decreased slightly as compared to 2008, the movement continued and contributed to the challenges faced by the country receiving the highest number of individual applications from asylum-seekers of all origins.

In the Middle East, several countries besides Yemen received a significant number of Somalis seeking protection. It is believed that an important number of Somalis who transited through Yemen, where they have been recognized on a *prima facie* basis, now reside in Gulf countries.[72] Hundreds of Somali nationals were forcibly returned to the south-central part of their country in the course of 2009. A number of countries in Asia, mainly India, Malaysia and Pakistan, are hosting relatively small numbers of Somali refugees.

The main European countries hosting Somali refugees were Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway,

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70 The African Union Mission for Somalia

71 Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda

72 The Working Group Report confirmed that the Middle East is one of the main destination regions for Somali nationals traveling away from the East and Horn of Africa region.

Table VI.1 Applications and refugee status determination of Somali citizens, 2009

Countries are listed if the total number of claims exceeded 500 during 2009.

| Country of asylum | T[1] | L[2] | Applied during 2009 | Decisions during 2009 | | | | | Recognition rates[3] | |
				Convention status	non-Convention status	Rejected	Otherwise closed	Total	Ref. status	Total
Canada	G	FI	508	170	-	6	32	208	96.6%	96.6%
Egypt	U	FI	659	603	-	3	7	613	99.5%	99.5%
Ethiopia	J	FI	3'051	2'201	-	492	851	3'544	81.7%	81.7%
Finland	G	FI	1'169	2	540	23	670	1'235	0.4%	95.9%
Italy	G	FI	1'604	252	2'248	123	24	2'647	9.6%	95.3%
Kenya	U	FI	1'183	674	-	11	1'049	1'734	98.4%	98.4%
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	U	FI	517	91	-	-	167	258	100.0%	100.0%
Malta	G	FI	1'445	3	1'446	132	4	1'585	0.2%	91.7%
Netherlands	G	FI	5'889	93	3'443	1'925	-	5'461	1.7%	64.8%
Norway	G	FI	1'901	296	350	64	834	1'544	41.7%	91.0%
Norway	G	AR	846	5	32	657	33	727	0.7%	5.3%
South Africa	G	FI	3'580	1'213	-	638	-	1'851	65.5%	65.5%
Sweden	G	FI	5'874	472	3'202	644	215	4'533	10.9%	85.1%
Sweden	G	AR	903	15	411	581	70	1'077	1.5%	42.3%
Switzerland	G	FI	753	50	696	696	428	1'870	3.5%	51.7%
Uganda	G	FA	3'607	1'942	-	-	366	2'308	100.0%	100.0%
United Kingdom	G	FI	1'105	535	85	590	115	1'325	44.2%	51.2%

Notes

1 Type of procedure: U=UNHCR; G=Government; J=Joint procedure
2 Level in the procedure: FI=First instance; FA=First instance and appeal; AR=Appeal
3 See Chapter IV for a discussion on calculating recognition rates.

Sweden, and Switzerland.[73] The number of refugees in these countries ranged from some 1,700 to 11,000. In 2009, European countries received close to 24,000 Somali applications. With the exception of Italy and Switzerland, which have experienced a drastic reduction[74] in the number of Somali asylum applications from 2008 to 2009 and Finland which has remained at the same level, most countries saw major increases, ranging from 30 to 100 per cent.

As shown in Table VI.1, it is encouraging to see that the overall recognition rates in some countries are above 90 per cent, reflecting their international protection needs. The Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland had lower recognition rates than other countries. This confirms two inter-related trends: (1) despite the European harmonization process, and notwithstanding UNHCR's calls for the use of complementary forms of protection in the case of persons fleeing situations of armed conflict and generalized violence, recognition practices still varied among European Union Member States; (2) an increased number of applicants appears to lead to stricter asylum practices.

73 UNHCR estimates for Denmark, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.

74 Reduction attributed to border control agreement reached by Italy and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 2009 and entry into operational force of the Schengen/Dublin agreement, 12 December 2008.
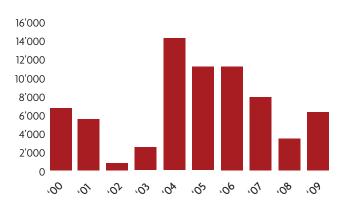
While there were fewer Somali asylum applications registered in the United States of America and Canada, 340 and 510 respectively, most Somalis arrived in these two countries through resettlement schemes. Between 2004 and 2009, some 52,000 Somalis were resettled to these two countries.

Secondary movement drivers

The Working Group Report showed that the strongest driver for Somalis to move on from the immediate region was the search for better protection and durable solutions. The following protection issues were highlighted in the context of onward movements: the need for fairer asylum procedures ensuring, for instance, the availability of an appeal procedure; detention merely on the basis of their irregular entry into the country; a lack of legal aid and above all, the risk of *refoulement*. Regarding livelihoods, lack of access to work and the non-availability or inadequacy of enabling measures such as vocational training options, were stressed. The desire to join a family member was often a strong driver. Finally, human rights issues including abuse by authorities and xenophobia, also appeared to be significant push factors. The Working Group Report concluded that strategies and programmes needed to be adapted to better respond to these concerns.

Reduction of asylum space

As compared to previous years, there was an increase in the number of reports of push-back, *refoulement*, arrest, arbitrary detention, extortion, and the verbal and physical harassment of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers by various authorities and local populations. These incidents had a negative effect on the traditionally positive relations between host communities and Somali refugees, many of whom have spent decades in exile. Somalis in Europe have also suffered discrimination and different forms of abuse. Following a declaration by Al-Shabab in December 2009 that it was aligning itself with Al-Qaeda's global campaign, a hardening of the position of the Yemeni Government towards Somali nationals was observed. So far, however, Somali nationals continue to be received and protected in Yemen on a *prima facie* basis.

Solutions

Return is at present not a viable option for those originating from the south- central part of the country, including Mogadishu, Somali refugees have benefited from resettlement and in fact represented 63 per cent of all resettlement submissions from sub-Saharan Africa. While from 2004 to 2008 the annual number of resettled Somali refugees has gone down, levels have picked up again in 2009. Local integration, including naturalization, is generally not available for Somali refugees in the main hosting countries. The exception is South Africa where refugees are given the opportunity to integrate locally. Resettled refugees as well as those recognized as refugees through individual asylum procedures, especially in industrialized countries, have the opportunity to integrate and apply for naturalization in due course.

Fig. VI.3 Resettlement of Somali refugees in industrialized countries, 2000-2009

Conclusion

The situation in Somalia, particularly in the south-central part of the country, including Mogadishu, is dire and will continue to generate large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees in the foreseeable future. While protection and assistance continue to be provided mostly in countries neighbouring Somalia, movements towards the south, the north and the east continue with individuals often taking unacceptable risks, including being taken advantage of by smugglers and traffickers. Efforts are being made to better capture data on Somali refugee movements beyond the East and Horn of Africa, adopting a regional approach rather than a country-specific one. Evidence has shown that such movements could be reduced if improvements were made in the delivery of protection and if livelihood activities were creating opportunities for self-reliance. Programmes are being revised to take this into consideration. In close cooperation with transit and destination countries, efforts are being made to strengthen asylum systems in countries in the region. Finally, more will be done to inform the public about the plight of Somali refugees.

B. Use of registration and profiling surveys to inform IDP protection activities in Yemen

Background

Due to continuous and escalating clashes between Yemeni Government forces and the Al Houthis tribe in Sa'ada Governorate in Northern Yemen, a large number of people were displaced during 2009. The clashes have been taking place for more than five years and escalated in the last part of 2009. By the end of the year, the total number of IDPs in Yemen was estimated to be around 250,000 people.

The IDPs were mostly located within the Sa'ada Governorate itself and in the neighbouring Governorates of Hajjah, Amran and Al Jawf, as well as in the capital Sana'a. Within these governorates, some IDPs were residing in camps while others were staying in individual accommodations or with host families. Access to the IDPs in the Sa'ada Governorate was difficult due to concerns about staff security.

As part of the humanitarian response to the conflict, UNHCR assisted with the building of IDP camps. The Office also assisted IDPs inside and outside the camps with the distribution of non-food items (e.g. tents, blankets, mattresses, etc.). Other organizations and partners, such as the World Food Programme, provided other types of assistance including food aid.

In order to plan and monitor the humanitarian response, UNHCR worked closely with the Government and its partners to set up data collection systems which would be able to provide relevant information used to make evidence-based decisions and to seek funding. With this in mind, UNHCR developed a tool for the registration of assisted IDPs (see Box 11) and planned an IDP profiling exercise. This section provides an insight into both.

In Yemen, there was a need for both tracking assistance at the household level as well as collecting information about the population at the aggregate level. Although registration is not the most suitable data collection method in most IDP contexts, based on the operational needs in Yemen, it was decided to register the IDPs receiving assistance in camps or urban areas. The registration exercise, however, could not cover all the needs for data to inform the operational response. In particular, the scope of the registration was limited to camp and urban areas whereas a significant number of IDPs resided with host communities in rural areas. Moreover, information on protection gaps and return intention could not be captured during the registration exercise. It was therefore decided to conduct an IDP Profiling exercise to close an evident information gap. Within this context, the use of surveys within the context of IDP profiling was considered as the most suitable approach due to its flexibility and inter-agency perspective thereby creating a sense of collective ownership within the cluster system. The profiling would be cross-cutting and could be adapted to differences in geography and settlement types. The findings would be used to identify protection gaps and needs, and to inform return planning.

Objectives and methodology

Following discussion with involved parties and based on the needs of the operation, the objectives of the exercise were defined to provide baseline information about the number and locations of IDPs disaggregated by sex and age (including unregistered IDPs); to gather information on the intentions and return movements of IDPs; to assess the dynamics of the return movement; and to determine the needs of those unwilling or unable to return. It would serve as a more credible basis for planning, for implementing solutions, and for managing this protracted displacement situation.

The methodology involved a combination of quantitative (household surveys) and qualitative methods (focus group discussions). The survey was based on a stratified cluster sampling approach targeting 1,900 households in the five governorates of Sana'a, Amran, Hajjah, Al Jawf and Saada. The questionnaire was answered by the head of household, with a specific part directed to the wife, or oldest daughter (above 15 years old) in case of the absence of a female head of the household. Such differentiation allowed for a gender-based analysis at the end of the exercise. The community-based focus group discussion targeted one male group and one female group in each of the selected survey sample districts. Within each focus group, the different age categories were represented. The combination of the two methods allowed for an adequate representation of the findings including an in-depth discussion for better analysis and understanding of the intentions and dynamics of return.
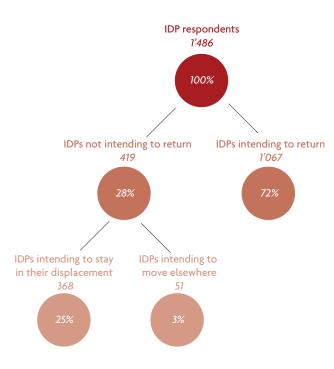
Challenges during profiling

The main challenge in planning the IDP profiling exercise was the volatile security situation in the areas of operation, with the resumption of hostilities three days after the beginning of the exercise. Another challenge was ensuring coordination among a large number of actors with different agendas.

Some governorate leaders were less receptive of the central Government authority. Thus, it was difficult to reach the same agreements in all the governorates, which affected the operational planning of the exercise and in some cases slowed it down or postponed the work. In addition, finding international professional staff for the exercise was difficult due in part to the limited number of people with the required skills available. The lack of female enumerators in some governorates constituted an additional obstacle.

Preliminary findings and uses of data collected through profiling

While IDP profiling provides initial numbers disaggregated by sex, age and locations, preliminary findings include information on movement patterns, needs, protection risks, specific sectors and intentions. For instance, out of the almost 1,500 IDP respondents, it is estimated that 72 per cent of IDPs had the intention to return under certain conditions, 25 per cent wanted to remain at their current place of displacement, while 3 per cent had the intention to move onwards. The main advantage of combining profiling with the collection of complementary information lies in its design since it provides a scientific basis for the extrapolation of findings for specific subgroups and simultaneously attributes qualitative findings to numbers. Such information is crucial in enabling targeted responses and advocacy.

IDP respondents
1'486

100%

IDPs not intending to return
419

IDPs intending to return
1'067

28%

72%

IDPs intending to stay in their displacement
368

IDPs intending to move elsewhere
51

25%

3%

Profiling information can be used to:

- Identify protection risks and vulnerabilities,
- Inform targeted programming,
- Inform advocacy strategies,
- Inform fund raising and resources mobilization,
- Inform strategic directions of the operation,
- Provide a commonly agreed dataset,
- Inform global monitoring of figures and trends, and
- Adjust already available datasets

Recent milestones

Over the past few years, there have been a number of processes to promote and develop IDP profiling as a data collection and analysis approach in IDP situations. A remarkable milestone was reached in 2008 with the publishing of the *Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons*, which was the result of an inter-agency process led by the IASC.[75]

Another milestone was the establishment of the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) in late 2009. JIPS promotes inter-agency collaboration in IDP data management and provides technical support to states and humanitarian actors for planning and carrying out IDP profiling exercises. JIPS is founded and steered by UNHCR, UNFPA, the Danish Refugee Council and the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Organization for Migration also participate. Since its creation, JIPS was able to support more than 10 operations.

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75 See http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?docid=47b5ad3a2

Box 11. Registration of IDPs in Yemen

Registration started spontaneously in various locations in both camps and urban areas. However, the need to harmonize both the type of data collected and data collection tools became clear in order to facilitate aggregation of data to the governorate and national level. Due to the specific requirements for the registration system UNHCR's registration software *proGres* could not be deployed. First, *proGres* is not available in Arabic; second, it does not cater for household level registration; and third, it is not easy to manage the software without skilled database administrators.

Since *proGres* was not an option, a database was developed locally to accommodate the specific requirements involved. The new tool needed to be available in English and Arabic; usable by UNHCR and Government offices alike; and able to be operated in remote locations without internet or access to the UNHCR network. Additional requirements were that data from the multiple existing tools be migrated into the new database. Lastly, given the prevailing humanitarian situation, the database was needed within a couple of weeks and had to be easy to implement and to maintain.

Development, migration of existing data, testing and deployment by UNHCR took three weeks. By mid-December 2009 the database was operational. The main features of the new harmonized tool were that it could record household level registration data including, among other elements, origin and current location of the households, ration card numbers, demographic composition (sex and age of each individual), specific needs, and links to other households. In addition, it was possible to record data for each individual, such as name and ID card number, when and if this information was available. The system could also record the type of assistance each household received, including the quantities, item types, delivery date, status and location. From the new registration database it became possible to create distribution lists of beneficiaries and print distribution tokens with the amount of goods to which each household is entitled. The system automatically calculates the quantities needed at the distribution events based on the distribution modality (e.g. 1 mattress per person, 1 kitchen set per 7 people in the household, and 1 tent per household).

The registration and assistance database helped the operation in several ways. First, the data could be recorded in a systematic and harmonized way, and data entry and management became easier as compared to the former systems. It also made it possible to generate statistics by the click of a button. Before the implementation of the database, it was cumbersome and labour intensive to retrieve statistics.

The tool helped planning and managing the operation, allowing UNHCR and donors to know how many people were residing in each locations, and what assistance they had received and when. Finally, the requirements and the experience from the development of the registration and assistance database in Yemen provided useful inputs for developing the requirements of the next version of *proGres*.