

# The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS) at the 54th Session of the UN Statistical Commission, 2023



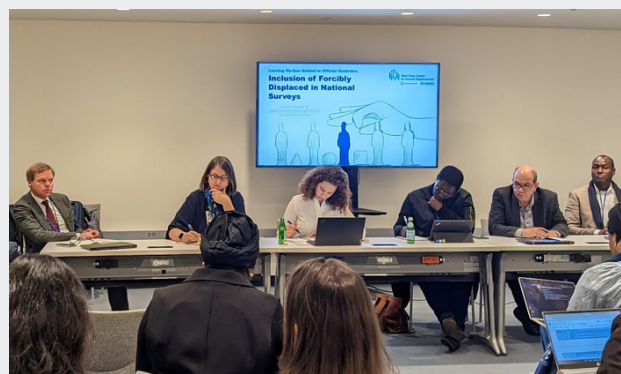
# Introduction

The 54th session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), held in-person at the UN Headquarters in New York from 28th February to 3rd March 2023, was a highly significant event for the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS). Several important items were on the agenda for EGRISS during the Commission, including the decision on the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS), and various relevant side-events were also held. This report seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the key outcomes of the Statistical Commission for EGRISS partners. It has been organised by the following themes:

- Statelessness statistics
- Statistical inclusion of Refugees and IDPs in national surveys
- Broadening the scope of migration statistics
- EGRISS membership and engagement



*Image taken from the side event "Making the invisible visible: developing international recommendations on statelessness statistics"*



*Image taken from the side event "Inclusion of the forcibly displaced in national surveys"*

# Statelessness Statistics<sup>1</sup>

Following an extensively collaborative process that was initiated in 2019, the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) were unanimously endorsed at the 54th session of the UNSC (see Annex 1).<sup>2</sup> The endorsement of the recommendations represents the international community's clear commitment to improve official statistics on stateless populations to inform better national policies and include affected populations in development plans. This is fully in line with the sustainable development goals and the commitment to ensure that even the most marginalised individuals and groups are not left behind.

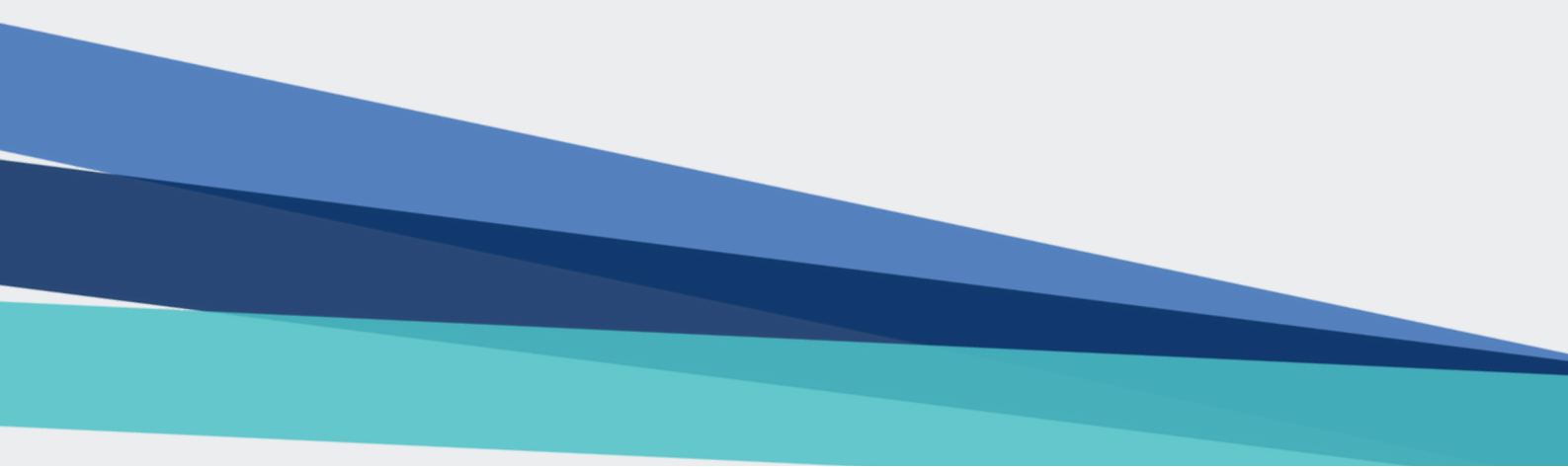
During the UNSC, strong support for the recommendations was demonstrated. 16 written and oral statements of support from countries and international organisations were shared, including two from groups of countries in Western Asia and Africa representing 74 countries combined. Statements of support from Member States represented a wide geographical spread, further demonstrating the relevance of the IROSS globally. Statements attested to the value and importance of the IROSS, particularly as it relates to facilitating the statistical inclusion of stateless persons in national statistical systems and its ability to support the greater harmonisation of statelessness data at the regional and international levels. In addition, the growing interest of countries to join EGRIS and support the implementation of the IROSS and the international recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics (IRRS and IRIS) was evident from the interventions.

“The African Group supports the IROSS recommendations and the extension of EGRIS’ mandate beyond 2024 and encourages the group to focus on different regions and support capacity development work.”

*-Libyan delegate on behalf of the African Group at the UNSC’s 54th session*

“The ESCWA group also agrees on the recommendations ... and supports their implementation in accordance with national needs.”

*-Egypt on behalf of the Western Asia Group in a written statement to the UNSC’s 54th session*



To generate momentum around the endorsement of the IROSS, the EGRISS Secretariat organised a side event to highlight the potential impact their implementation could have. The event, entitled “Making the Invisible Visible: Developing International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics”, aimed to raise awareness of the recommendations and cement support for their adoption amongst Member States.<sup>3</sup> The panel was moderated by **Björn Gillsäter**, Head of the World Bank – UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC), included an opening statement from **Tarek Abou Chabake**, Chief Statistician, UNHCR, and presentations from **Dr Claire Dennis Mapa**, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippine Statistics Authority; **Natalia Krynsky Baal**, Head of the EGRISS Secretariat; and **Dr William Muhwava**, Chief of African Centre for Statistics - Demographic & Social Statistics Section, Africa Centre for Statistics, UN Economic Commission for Africa.

The event successfully brought together experts and international stakeholders to discuss the importance of the IROSS as a means to improve the quality and availability of data on stateless populations. Introductory statements highlighted the complexity of statelessness as a major human rights issue that affects millions of people globally, and the importance of reliable data to develop effective policies and interventions to help secure durable solutions for this group. In addition, presentations drew attention to the current practices in different regions and identified strategies to strengthen these efforts. Panellists emphasised the need for a standardised approach to collect and report on statelessness data and recognised the potential that the IROSS can play to support these efforts.

"The Philippine Statistics Authority plan to integrate in [upcoming] census and surveys data stateless persons guided by the International Recommendation on Statelessness Statistics or IROSS's comprehensive statistical framework."

*-Dr Claire Dennis Mapa, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippine Statistics Authority*



# Statistical Inclusion of Refugees and IDPs in National Surveys<sup>4</sup>

Beyond statelessness, forced displacement statistics remained on the agenda of the 54th session of the UNSC through a discussion on the benefits of including refugees and IDPs in national household surveys, and a related announcement at the launch of the seventh round of UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

The JDC, in collaboration with the EGRISS Secretariat, organised a side event, entitled "Inclusion of Forcibly Displaced in National Surveys".<sup>5</sup> The event drew attention to the challenges and opportunities associated with this effort and showcased experiences from countries working on it in practice. It opened with a call to action from **Björn Gillsäter**, Head of the JDC,<sup>6</sup> which was followed by an expert panel discussion, moderated by **Natalia Krynsky Baal**, Head of the EGRISS Secretariat. The panel brought together a range of perspectives, including **Ahmat Abderahim Abbo** Director of Demographic and Social Statistics, National Institute for Statistics, Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED), Chad; **Attila Hancioglu**, Chief of the Data Collection Unit and Global MICS Coordinator, UNICEF; **Helen Laetitia Nviiri**, Director of Social and Demographic Statistics, Uganda Bureau of Statistics; and **Livia Montana**, Deputy Director of the DHS Programme.

Panellists reflected on potential strategies that can be implemented to improve statistical inclusion. Technical and operational issues such as the length of questionnaires, as well as financing difficulties due to the varying funding modalities, were highlighted as major challenges by panellists. Despite these difficulties, the discussion identified several strategies that have proven effective or are needed to mitigate them including an ambitious call to align global strategies to ensure appropriate financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons national surveys.

"It is important to localise global recommendations to support their use in a national context."

*-Helen Laetitia Nviiri, Director of Social and Demographic Statistics, Uganda Bureau of Statistics*

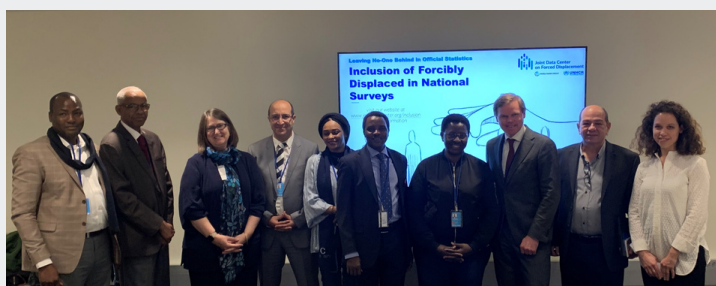


Image taken from the side event "Inclusion of the forcibly displaced in national surveys"



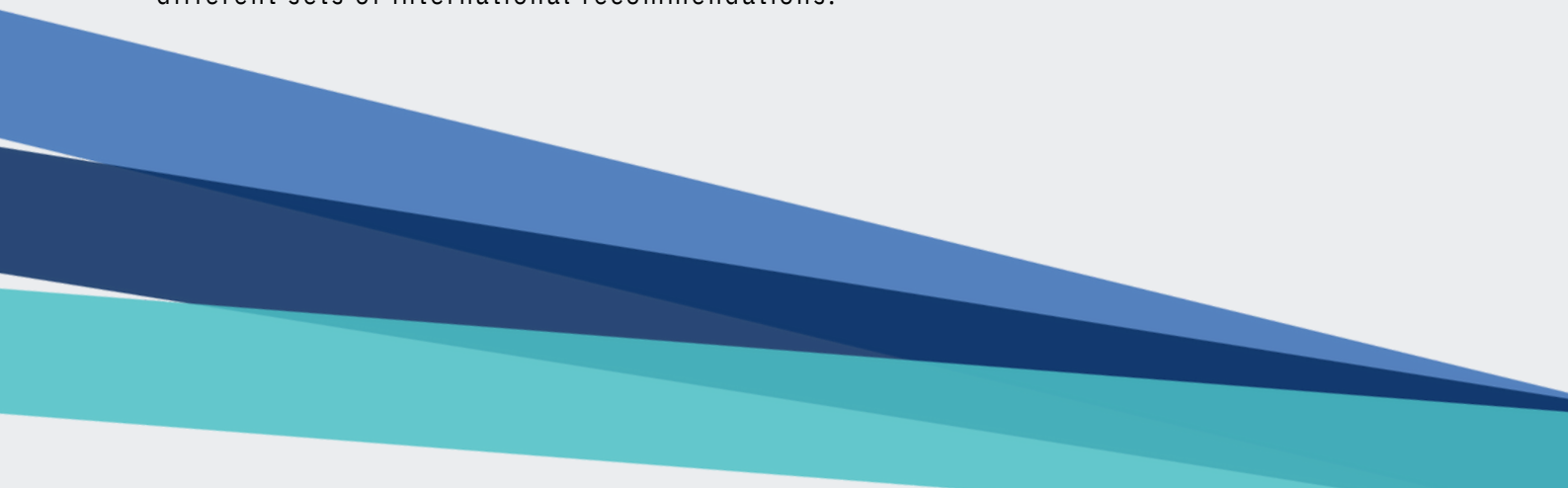
Beyond the panel, participants in the audience highlighted examples of implementing the international recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics, further demonstrating the growing interest and momentum of countries to take on this agenda. This commitment was mirrored at the international level at the MICS-7<sup>7</sup> launch where UNICEF announced the latest methodological advancements for this critical survey programme.<sup>8</sup> In this latest round, MICS-7 has expanded to cover up to 40 sustainable development goal indicators, up from the 33 indicators covered in the previous iteration.<sup>9</sup> Amongst several innovations, MICS-7 will include new elements specifically focused on identifying refugees and IDPs, a vital addition that demonstrates a strong commitment towards achieving statistical inclusion of these populations. An optional but standardised new module, being developed with input from EGRISS' Technical Subgroup on Methodology and Guidance,<sup>10</sup> is a significant and promising step forward to enhance the quality and accuracy of the data collected, enabling the international community to better understand and respond to the needs of refugees and IDPs.

## Progressing the Scope of Migration Statistics

A third significant outcome of the 54th UNSC resulted from the decision on the common Classifications of Statistical Activities (CSA). The revised classifications included several changes one of which is particularly pertinent for the EGRISS community: the inclusion of internally displaced persons within the scope of migration statistics that itself remains under Domain 1: demographic and social statistics of the framework.

Whilst refugees – who have crossed an internationally recognised border – have previously been included here, the Commission's decision to include internally displaced persons – who have not crossed an internationally recognised border – is significant.<sup>11</sup> This change will have implications for how national statistical systems organise their data collection efforts and will potentially increase the visibility of IDP statistics at the national level. Moreover, building on EGRISS' key takeaways from 2023's International Forum of Migration Statistics, this decision marks a significant milestone on the shifting perspectives on forced displacement statistics globally.

Progress on the development of the *International Recommendations on Migration Statistics* was also made at the UNSC, when Commission members “endorsed the set of core and additional indicators on international migration and temporary mobility as an integral part of the upcoming revision of the *Recommendations on Statistics for International Migration...* and requested the finalization of the *Recommendations* and their submission to the Commission in 2025”.<sup>12</sup> Thanks to UNHCR's advocacy and participation in the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, the revised indicators have been informed by the IRRS and IRIS to ensure consistency and coherence across the different sets of international recommendations.



## EGRISS Membership and Engagement

Beyond the specific agenda items and side events, the UNSC was a great opportunity for EGRISS members to connect. In written statements of support, countries, for example Malaysia, expressed an interest to join and/or re-engage with EGRISS, acknowledging the need to improve data on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in different national contexts. In addition, in response to EGRISS' Report,<sup>13</sup> where the Statistical Commission was invited to "support the implementation of the recommendations, including, if necessary, an update of the Group's current terms of reference" various statements, including from the African Group, Western Asia Group, Austria, Indonesia, Lithuania, Portugal, Malaysia, Morocco, Norway and Qatar, were made in support of an extension to EGRISS' mandate building on the positive discussion already held at the 2022 All EGRISS Members meeting.

In addition, the UNSC gathering and momentum built around the IROSS, presented an opportunity to welcome the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to become a member of the EGRISS Steering Committee in recognition of their vital contribution to the development of the IROSS and in order to strengthen the regional representation of the group.

On thematic topics, a joint statement from Statistics Poland and the UK's Office of National Statistics called for work to be conducted on measuring the health of refugees and migrants, and encouraged the WHO to further develop this work in coordination with the EGRISS and the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics to ensure alignment with existing statistical frameworks on refugees and international migrants.

## Conclusion

Overall, the 54th session of the UNSC<sup>14</sup> was a resounding success for EGRISS. The main objective - the endorsement of the IROSS - was achieved with unanimous support from Member States. As outlined, the Commission also demonstrated continued support from countries and international partners to EGRISS and its agenda, and reiterated the value of the IRRS, IRIS and IROSS as important tools to effectively support the production of national statistics on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons alike.

For more information on these activities, please reach out to the EGRISS Secretariat at [egrisstats@unhcr.org](mailto:egrisstats@unhcr.org) or visit our [website](#).

# References

- 1) See: [Statelessness at the 54th UNSC - EGRISS](#)
- 2) See: [Decision 54/121](#)
- 3) Side event concept note available here: [Making the Invisible Visible: UNSC concept note](#)
- 4) See: [Statistical Inclusion at the 54th UNSC - EGRISS](#)
- 5) Side event concept note available here: [Inclusion of forcibly displaced in national surveys: UNSC concept note](#)
- 6) More information on the JDC work to support inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in national surveys is available here: [National Survey Inclusion - Joint Data Center](#)
- 7) More information on the MICS-7 is available here: [Home - UNICEF MICS](#)
- 8) More information on the MICS-7 Launch is available here: [Launch of MICS7 - UNICEF MICS](#)
- 9) A recording of a subsequent MICS-7 Launch is available here: [MICS7 Launch - Live Recording](#)
- 10) More information on EGRISS' technical subgroup is available here: [Subgroup 3: Methodology and guidance - EGRISS](#)
- 11) See: [Decision 54/112](#)
- 12) See: [Decision 54/104](#)
- 13) See: [Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics Report](#)
- 14) See: [Report-on-the-54th-session-draft-E.pdf](#)



# Annex 1

## **Extract from the Statistical Commission Report on the fifty-fourth session (28 February – 3 March 2023)**

54/121

*Refugee, internally-displaced persons and statelessness statistics*

*The Statistical Commission:*

*(a) Welcomed the report of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS), commended the work undertaken by the Group to develop the recommendations, and endorsed the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS);*

*(b) Reiterated that IROSS are a valuable tool that will support national production of statelessness statistics, taking note that their implementation will require Member States to review and adjust current practices. Noted that the recommendations will facilitate greater harmonisation of statelessness data regionally and globally; and highlighted the need for the recommendations to be translated into other UN languages;*

*(c) Supported the Expert Group's current programme of work, specifically priorities to assist countries to implement the International Recommendations on Refugee and IDP Statistics, and the continuation of the Group's mandate, beyond 2024;*

*(d) Requested that the Expert Group continues to work with countries and international organisations to build statistical capacity where needed to improve data on forcibly displaced and stateless persons, recognising the need for a clear and coordinated allocation of resources in this regard;*

*(e) Took note of the initial work undertaken on measuring health of refugees and called on WHO and partners to further develop this work ensuring alignment with existing definitions and statistical frameworks on refugees and international migrants, and in coordination with EGRISS and the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics.*

