



GUYANA NEWS

Census figure around 812,000 including thousands of Venezuelan migrants – source



Errol La Cruz

By Marcelle Thomas January 17, 2025

-Stats Bureau says report still being compiled

The Guyana Bureau of Statistics yesterday stated that it has not completed the long-delayed census report even as sources say that from preliminary



"We are still working on finalising the report and trying to get it completed soon..." Chief Statistician, Errol La Cruz told Stabroek News yesterday when asked for an update.

However, a source close to the process said that indeed the report is not completed but from "raw numbers ... that data gathered... the number is a little above eight hundred and twelve thousand."




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A census notice

The source said that data compilation is being managed by the Ministry of Finance, "with a few officers from here" and that there was indeed a delay



Asked why the delay, the Chief Statistician said that there have been a number of challenges and key among them was unresponsiveness from the public with many hiding from data collection field workers.

In what he called, “respondents’ reluctance”, La Cruz said that it was not limited to Venezuelan immigrants as what was found was that persons residing here seemed more reluctant to cooperate with census staff than in past exercises.

He said that he has taken note of the many complaints about the delays from the public, but emphasised that the Bureau wants to ensure that it is thorough in its work and “statistically confident” about the numbers that are given. “There are certain tests to ensure these numbers are sound and we can stand by them.”



‘Multi-faceted’

Questioned on the challenges, he said that it was “multi-faceted” and repeated that “a part has to do with a lack of response from the population” in the data collection process. And when asked about the 812,000 figure given by sources, he stressed that he could not give insight and that only when the official numbers are counted would the Bureau release them. “The Bureau will put out the official numbers. We will not comment on any other numbers at this time,” he emphasised.

La Cruz said that he knows that there is “anxiousness” from the public and that there has been much speculation on social media, but wants to assure everyone that the Statistics Bureau takes its job seriously and is an apolitical



from any politics because the work we do is highly technical and urgent.

For a process that has been ongoing for two years, the Chief Statistician pointed out that “if you wait two years on a report and are in the final stages, you have to ensure that you are prudent, careful and accurate.”

In October last year, the Bureau said it had noted recent erroneous claims made on social media suggesting that political interference is responsible for the delayed publication of the 2022 Population and Housing Census results and wished to provide the following response.

“The Bureau of Statistics is a semi-autonomous agency, legally mandated by the Statistics Act (1965) Chapter 19:09 to “collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the social, agricultural, mining, commercial, industrial and general activities and conditions of the inhabitants of Guyana.” In the execution of its responsibilities, the Bureau is also guided by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that were adopted by the UN General Assembly 10 years ago in 2014.



“The legal framework and official principles promote and ensure the independence of the Bureau. Our work is guided by scientific principles and sound statistical practices that adhere to the highest international standards and conventions. Accordingly, the Census is coordinated internationally and regionally, following agreed-upon principles and practices that withstand scrutiny and promote confidence in the results.

“Any delay in the publication of the 2022 Population and Housing Census results is strictly a consequence of our unwavering commitment to professional diligence in the face of considerable challenges encountered during this census round. Moreover, censuses across the Caribbean region



Paraná, Colombia, St. Lucia and others experiencing protracted census

activities extending up to and beyond two (2) years. This was due to several factors, including respondent suspicion, apathy and fatigue in a post-COVID environment”.

“The Bureau of Statistics is dedicated to ensuring appropriate statistical confidence in the accuracy of the census results and is not politically constrained, as suggested by some. Furthermore, claims that the 2022 Population & Housing Census in Guyana shows that Guyana’s population declined from 746,955 in the 2012 census due to migration are unfounded and erroneous”.

Shifts

In March of 2023, La Cruz had told this newspaper that preliminary data from Census 2022 revealed significant shifts in the population.



“We have seen important and significant changes in the population, some expected, some not expected... but the information collected is a rich source of data that will influence development planning at all levels.”

He however, could not expand on the preliminary findings of changes in the population due to the ongoing analysis. Yesterday, he disclosed that the shifts he spoke off did not have to do with demographic changes but it was as the same as in other regions where countries are finding it harder to complete their censuses.

“It does not mean me saying that because other countries are also having a hard time completing that it is an excuse for us, but it is just to show the



Second Quarter

In December of 2023, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, had promised that the preliminary results would be made available by the end of the first quarter of last year but this has not been done.

“After the preparation of that preliminary report by the end of the second quarter of 2024, the bureau will require a further four to six months for preparation and publication of all reports,” he explained.

The National Population and Housing Census 2022, where all persons in Guyana are counted, commenced in mid-September of that year, and is supposed to take a complete count of the population and buildings of the country with the aim of providing vital data for developmental plans for the nation. It also provides the private sector with information to decide on new areas of investment.



Enumerators, according to the Bureau’s Chief Statistician, have worked in “sun and rain, across all terrain: rivers, paved roads, dirt roads, jungle trails, mountain passes – to provide that accurate population count and crucial associated data.”

He had explained that the data collection aspect had not been on schedule due to a number of reasons including the weather. “The reason for the delay was largely due to inclement weather conditions in regions One and Seven. The weather made it challenging to get through the terrain during the late December to January period. In Region Four, the weather played a part but it



Chief statistician pointed out.

With most people in the cityscape and outskirts coming from professional backgrounds, he related that the enumerators could not find them at home when they visited and returning to their homes was dependent on their availability.

The 2022 Census is a historic one for Guyana, since the enumerators collected data electronically, instead of using paper, as was done in the past. This exercise occurs every ten years, in accordance with the Statistics Act of 1965. The census before this one was done in 2012 and that revealed that this country has 746,955 persons. And in 2002 when the census was completed, it recorded a population of 751,223.



TRENDING

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