Housing and population censuses yield the basic information all governments need to plan and distribute services to their people.

But what happens in countries like Afghanistan, where war and civil strife have made it impossible to count the population for more than two decades? How important are impartial censuses to emerging democracies? Can the United Nations help to make each person count, and be counted?

These questions are explored with the help of Mary Chamie, Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics Branch in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.