



# CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION



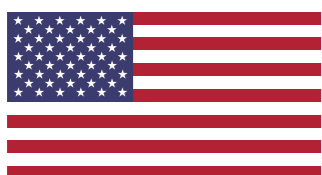
**GPC 2018 REVIEW**

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Publisehd: April 2019

Cover photo: Mozambique. Internally displaced persons disembarking a boat in Beira from BuziPeople displaced by Cyclone Idai disembark a boat at dawn on at the port of Beira. Finding their homes destroyed, and belongings gone, many people have fled to Beira to seek international assistance. ©UNHCR/A.Everett



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# OPENING



## FOREWORD BY THE ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PROTECTION

This latest review by the Global Protection Cluster shows that Humanitarian Coordinators can advance the protection of people affected by crisis with confidence, and even in the most challenging conditions.

The good practices highlighted reveal what can be achieved when Humanitarian Coordinators embrace the protection agenda; by making it a recurrent item in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT); by tasking protection clusters to provide information and analysis; and by requesting UNHCR Representatives, as cluster leads, to think of solutions to protection issues. Above all, this review demonstrates the value in ensuring that all sectors undertake protection risk assessments and that they mainstream protection throughout their activities. Moreover, a coherent protection strategy from the HCT can make a critical difference in tackling the most difficult protection issues while identifying those actors with a comparative advantage best placed to address them.

We have come a long way in placing protection at the centre of humanitarian action since the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted its Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action in 2016. This review demonstrates that through strong leadership, we can mitigate the incredible hardship of the approximately 130 million people affected by humanitarian crises worldwide.

Volker Turk,  
Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR



## INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, UNHCR

The five country case studies selected for the 2018 GPC Review (Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine, Whole of Syria and Yemen) allow for more context specific reflection and highlight particular issues around accountability, shrinking humanitarian space, localisation and the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. They also highlight the need to engage in innovative ways with higher levels and an accelerated pace of forced displacement, new partnerships, coordination and humanitarian financing. Significant shifts took place in 2018 in the humanitarian arena on these issues at the same time as changes are also happening outside the traditional system and new actors are engaging in humanitarian response.

The Review suggests both disconcerting trends and innovative practice. Disconcerting trends include the fact that despite enhanced engagement on protection and human rights in situations of armed conflict, increasing disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law by parties to conflict continued to offset these efforts and obstructed the ability to protect rights in complex and high-threat environments. This is coupled with the dwindling respect for humanitarian principles, increasingly protracted crises, and human and financial resource constraints. More progress needs to be made to ensure that the humanitarian community as a whole understands how to meaningfully work towards outcomes that protect people.

The country studies also highlight innovative practice in overcoming the challenges faced by protection clusters in leading the development and implementation of many protection activities. Of note is the inclusion of non-protection and non-humanitarian actors in the development of strategies and action plans to address protection concerns.

Some themes can be distilled from the enquiry and analysis that formed part of this Review: for protection strategies to be effective and have ‘bite’ there needs to be widespread buy-in from a range of actors, beyond the conventional humanitarian community, to ensure ownership and willingness to implement common principles. Having a broader group involved at the outset,

with senior HCT members involved, a meaningful division of roles and responsibilities, and a shared purpose can lead to more sustained participation in protection. Some strategies end up being a process in itself and a manifesto of what ought to be done. However, a strategy also needs to be operationalised and implemented. There have been instances where the list of protection concerns is so long that a strategy is designed which is too theoretical and difficult to put into practice. This Review highlights good practices in prioritisation and operationalisation of protection activities, including by the use of critical information from other sectors, such as health, nutrition or mine action.

Following demands made by the New Way of Working, there is increasing pressure to connect coordination, analysis and information-sharing and responses. While humanitarian needs persist and even increase in some areas, mainly because of insecurity, the New Way of Working is not intended to be limited to promoting a strict transition from humanitarian to development. Rather it is understood as an optimal way of ensuring the effectiveness of available humanitarian and development resources by providing continuity depending on the specific context and dynamics in each area, for example through the transfer of the provision of some basic social services by humanitarian actors to state services.

The programming aspects of protection are useful for development actors when initiating and designing activities, as is timely coordination on the criteria for identifying vulnerable people for assistance, understanding the risks faced by affected people and identifying positive coping mechanisms. The Review highlights the efforts undertaken by the Ukraine Protection Cluster to bring humanitarian and development actors together around operationalising protection.

The importance of working with security forces and civil-military coordination is often not fully accepted by humanitarian actors in complex or high threat environments;

at times this engagement is actively resisted as it is viewed as thwarting humanitarian principles. Yet, protection clusters are increasingly required to interact with a range of national, regional and international military actors, with complex security and political agendas. Demands arise for them to negotiate and advocate for protection outcomes in a pragmatic - yet principled - manner, often with little or no advance preparations. In addition, there is an increased need to recognise the two-way nature of this relationship. Demand is increasing for training of military on humanitarian principles, IHL and respect for international human rights as well as on GBV and PSEA. In a similar vein, humanitarian staff would benefit from an understanding of the different levels of military architecture and engagement.

The need to ensure the participation of affected populations and hence accountability, is a mantra repeated over many years in the design of sector programmes and protection policies. Yet it appears that practice still trails behind reality. Finding ways to involve people more substantively so that initial assumptions of vulnerability can be tested, and a better understanding of how communities are protecting themselves, remains crucial.

Critical to ensuring the sustainability of the centrality of protection is the need for a periodic risk analysis and risk management that involves each sector in protection risk assessments. To ensure the inclusion of protection as part of all plans and programmes requires each sector to have a more structured approach to assessing protection risks and identifying how these will be prevented or mitigated. As part of monitoring and evaluation, identified risks and mitigating measures can then be assessed and sectors held accountable for them.

Working with national authorities who are themselves party to a conflict is part of an increasing trend that challenges protection and other humanitarian staff. Issues related to the protection of civilians are increasingly included in HCT protection strategies. Development of a HCT Protection Strategy in various countries (as seen

in the examples from Yemen, Afghanistan and Ukraine) can provide a framework for the HCT to have a more consistent approach to advocacy on such matters. The HCT will need to decide how to take the lead (with technical support and advice from the Protection Cluster): a coordinated approach between non-humanitarian actors is necessary to ensure the right mix of private and public advocacy and a coherent narrative.

The Review highlights how UNHCR is trying to rise to the challenge of leading the protection cluster at global and field levels and promote the centrality of protection in concert with nearly 900 partners. In the context of an IDP Operations Review, more standardisation and predictability of effort at a high level is being promoted, with protection at the core of response.

**Grainne O’Hara**

Director of Division of International Protection, UNHCR



# OPERATIONS



## KEY ISSUES, INSIGHTS AND GOOD PRACTICES

From the country case studies, similar themes emerged on best practices and challenges. Many of these emphasise or build on points that came out in the GPC's 2016 and 2017 reviews of centrality of protection in humanitarian action.

➔ **Fully consultative process for developing HCT protection strategy:** each country reviewed as a case study has gone through the process of preparing an HCT protection strategy. In each case, the Protection Cluster has taken a significant role, either leading the process or supporting a Senior ProCap Advisor (such as in Afghanistan) or being part of a working group tasked with developing the strategy (such as in Ukraine). From discussions with colleagues in each country, it seems that the process of developing the HCT protection strategy, and the extent of involvement of various actors, can indicate the level of buy-in and participation of follow-up and implementation of the strategy. Having a broader group involved at the outset, with senior HCT members involved, meaningful division of roles and responsibilities, and a shared purpose can lead to more sustained participation. Otherwise, the strategy may end up being a process in itself, taking on a more declaratory nature; instead of a way to achieve collective protection outcomes which are understood and agreed by all HCT members. Having a strategy which can be operationalised should be the priority as opposed to covering all topics and designing a strategy that is too theoretical and difficult to envisage putting into practice. Including more non-protection specialised agencies in the process can be helpful to build protection into their work, as well as for them to take on more of a substantive role in implementing activities under the strategy. Having a working group which is not solely made up of Protection Cluster members can help to

keep the collective protection approach more inclusive and underline the roles of all humanitarian actors.

➔ **Developing early links between humanitarian and development actors:** centrality of protection aspects of programming are useful for development actors when initiating and designing activities. If possible, it can be helpful to connect as early as possible on practical matters, such as criteria for selecting vulnerable people for assistance; understanding risks faced by affected people; and identifying positive coping mechanisms to strengthen. Positive examples of this also include involving and advocating to development donors on protection aspects of the context which should be considered for all types of response - for instance the efforts taken by the Ukraine Protection Cluster to bring humanitarian and development actors together around protection concepts and how to operationalise these.

➔ **Protection as part of durable solutions:** understanding risks faced by affected populations; particular vulnerabilities; and coping mechanisms are all core aspects for developing durable solution strategies and responses. Connecting centrality of protection activities, including the HCT Protection Strategy, with the HCT's approach to durable solutions is valuable and can be helpful when building on shorter-term aspects of the response which feed into the longer-term activities. Each of the countries reviewed has layers of humanitarian, protracted and longer-term socio-economic crises which are interlinked and have to be considered together when trying to provide lifesaving assistance as well as build resilience and institutions to deal with crises. Each of the country's humanitarian response plans endeavour to provide a response that takes into account these different aspects of each context. However, how this happens in practice is less evident with actors overwhelmed with various strategies and frameworks that are related but not always meaningfully connected.

➔ **Operationalising centrality of protection by building on protection mainstreaming frameworks:** it remains challenging to picture what centrality of protection looks like in practice. While strengthening protection mainstreaming for protection and non-protection actors remains a key requirement in each country reviewed, having a more structured and operational approach to centrality of protection is still needed. The Protection Cluster remains the main

technical support for all actors on how to mainstream and integrate protection into response activities. Nevertheless, it would be useful to consider more how to have a more practical approach to agreeing on joint activities for putting protection at the core. At an operational level, this is likely to resonate more at the inter-cluster level, with oversight of the HCT. Without such an approach, the HCT protection strategies are in danger of not fulfilling their purpose and could become an additional process that is completed but does not serve as a conduit to real collective protection outcomes.

➔ **Involving each sector in protection risk assessments:** as part of including protection as part of all planned programming, each sector could be required to have a more structured approach to assessing protection risks and identifying how these will be prevented/mitigated in any planned activities. As used in the Whole of Syria response in 2017 and 2018, this provides a more detailed and consistent approach by each sector to, at a minimum, identify the risks and set out how these will be addressed. As part of monitoring and evaluating programming, these identified risks and mitigating measures can then be assessed, and actors held accountable for them. Also, in contexts where protection activities are considered too sensitive or cannot be carried out without interference, adopting more integrated protection programming within non-protection specialised sectors can be the primary way to continue with protection activities in line with humanitarian principles.

➔ **Involvement of affected populations:** each country reviewed has various activities to include and involve the participation of affected communities and people. Coordinating efforts on communicating with affected people (such as the Community Engagement Working Group in Yemen and Afghanistan) and finding ways to do this in a more consistent, transparent and regular way remains essential. Including affected people in the process of identifying protection risks they face; understanding vulnerabilities to those risks; and how people are coping remains difficult and sometimes impossible in areas that cannot be accessed easily by humanitarian actors. Finding ways to involve people more substantively so that initial assumptions of vulnerability can be tested and actors better understand how communities are prioritising assistance amongst themselves remain crucial. This is also an area where actors need

to find more opportunities to exchange best practice and experiences so that affected people are genuinely more part of the process and the response. As found in some of the country case studies, there is often interference from authorities in protection activities, including protection assessments which limits the effectiveness of those that can be conducted. Therefore, finding alternative ways of engaging with communities and understand protection risks, possibly through other types of programming, becomes increasingly necessary.

➔ **Dealing with sensitive protection issues:** in many of the countries reviewed, issues related to protection of civilians are increasingly priorities under respective HCT protection strategies. In most cases, the government is party to the conflict and so advocacy around protection of civilians can be particularly sensitive. Development of the HCT Protection Strategy in various countries (such as Yemen, Afghanistan and Ukraine) has provided a framework for the HCT to have a more consistent approach to advocacy on such matters. The HCT will need to decide how best to deal with these topics and how to take the lead (with technical support and advice from the Protection Cluster) as it will ultimately be responsible for this advocacy and similar activities. In some contexts, private advocacy is preferable and so it will be important to work out how this fits with more public advocacy and ensure more of a consistency with HCT actors and other stakeholders. It remains challenging to have a coordinated approach with non-humanitarian actors and the role of donors and links through the humanitarian-development nexus are necessary to have as much coherence as possible.



# COUNTRY BEST PRACTICES: YEMEN, SYRIA, SOUTH SUDAN, AFGHANISTAN, UKRAINE



## INTRODUCTION

The GPC selected five countries for its case studies for the 2018 review to gain insight into experiences, best practices and challenges faced in efforts to ensure protection is central to humanitarian action. These are: Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine, Whole of Syria and Yemen. The main objectives for each case study are to establish an overview of the:

- centrality of protection strategies and activities in each country – including as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), Protection Cluster Strategy and HCT Protection Strategy;
- experiences, best practices and challenges in achieving centrality of protection; and
- the role of the Protection Cluster and other actors (including other clusters, HCT members, authorities, donors etc.) in designing and implementing centrality of protection activities.

This approach builds on the objectives in the GPC's 2016 and 2017 reviews on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action by aiming to establish a broader overview of how, in practice, collective protection outcomes are implemented by all humanitarian actors. Recognising the essential role of each Protection Cluster in leading development and

implementation of many centrality of protection activities, the case studies also aim to explore the roles and responsibilities of all humanitarian actors, including non-protection specialised actors.

## METHODOLOGY

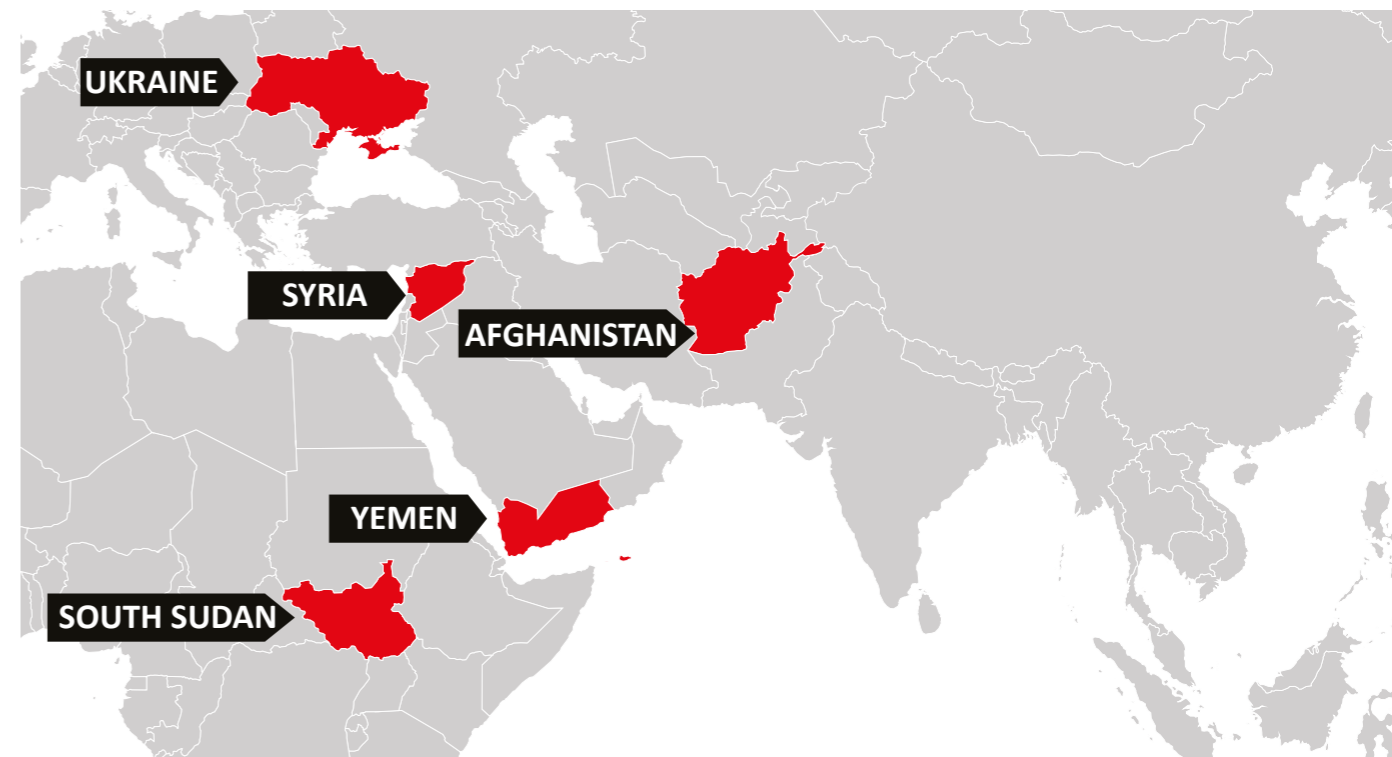
The case studies are based on a desk review of relevant documents, which are mostly available publicly or can be obtained on request from the GPC or relevant protection cluster. In addition, information was also provided from each selected Protection Cluster based on a survey completed by the relevant Protection Cluster Coordinator; Co-coordinator and Area of Responsibility Coordinators.<sup>1</sup> Each Protection Cluster was also requested to provide suggestions of two non-protection specialised actors to participate in the survey. Written input was supplemented with interviews with each Protection Cluster Coordinator/Co-Coordinator who participated in the process.

Many of the documents used, particularly each Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), have figures from late 2017/early 2018 and, unless otherwise stated, are not necessarily the most up to date at the time of the writing. This is to reflect the data available when strategies and objectives were developed for 2018.

### Survey questions shared with each selected Protection Cluster

- ➔ What are the main methods used to implement centrality of protection? Please include details of any relevant strategies, work-plans, activities, meetings etc.
- ➔ What is the role of the Protection Cluster in the centrality of protection strategy and activities? Please include details of how Protection Cluster interacts and supports other clusters and the HCT, including any technical or practical support.
- ➔ What is the role of other actors – specifically clusters, Protection sub-clusters and non-protection specialised agencies, authorities and donors - in centrality of protection and activities?

<sup>1</sup> As time for the interviews and completion of the surveys was limited, not all coordinators/co-coordinators were able to participate. In each case, at least the Protection Coordinator for the relevant country was interviewed.



- ➔ Which of the stated objectives/collective outcomes for centrality of protection in the HCT Protection Strategy were met in 2018? Please give details of progress for the stated objectives, including any HCT protection work-plan or similar response-wide actions regarding centrality of protection.
- ➔ For the objectives not met, what are the main reasons for this? Please provide details of any challenges encountered and how these were/are being addressed.
- ➔ Which centrality of protection activities do you think had the most impact in 2018?
- ➔ Please include any other information about protection initiatives or activities in 2018 which have been part of implementing centrality of protection in the humanitarian response. Please include details of any specific efforts to introduce the IASC Protection Policy; Centrality of Protection; any ProCap support; results of any protection-related missions, etc.

### Survey questions shared with each selected Area of Responsibility/Other Actor

- ➔ What are the main methods used to implement centrality of protection? Please include details of any relevant strategies, work-plans, activities, meetings etc.
- ➔ What is the role of your sub-cluster, cluster or agency in the centrality of protection strategy and activities?

- Please include details of how you interact with the Protection Cluster and the HCT regarding implementation of centrality of protection.
- ➔ Which of the stated objectives/collective outcomes for centrality of protection in the HCT Protection Strategy were met in 2018? Please give details of progress for the stated objectives, including any HCT protection work-plan or similar response-wide actions regarding centrality of protection.
- ➔ For the objectives not met, what are the main reasons for this? Please provide details of any challenges encountered and how these were/are being addressed.
- ➔ Which centrality of protection activities do you think had the most impact in 2018?
- ➔ Please include any other information about protection initiatives or activities in 2018 which have been part of implementing centrality of protection in the humanitarian response. Please include details of any specific efforts to introduce the IASC Protection Policy; Centrality of Protection; any ProCap support; results of any protection-related missions, etc.



# AFGHANISTAN



## CONTEXT

In its first multi-year plan for Afghanistan, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)<sup>2</sup> 2018 – 2021 sought to reach 4.2 million people with emergency humanitarian and emergency assistance, which includes the 1.4 million people in need of emergency assistance as they were likely to become acutely food insecure because of the 2018 drought. In addition, intensification of conflict and continued internal displacement with large returnee influxes continued to have serious consequences on the protection situation for people in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

Protection issues included violence and insecurity; violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) – including deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure (particularly schools and medical facilities) and international human rights law (IHRL); indiscriminate use of direct and/or explosive weapons and hazards; presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW); multiple internal displacement due to conflict or natural disaster; refugee return from Pakistan and Iran; gender-based violence; child labour; early marriage; family separation; limited access to basic services (particularly health and education); severe food insecurity; malnutrition; high infant mortality rates; lack of civil documentation; forced recruitment by armed groups; insecure tenure and community disputes over housing/land; and limited opportunities for livelihoods. After four decades of conflict, extreme challenges faced by affected people have led to various negative coping mechanisms, which include early and forced marriage, child labour and family separation.

<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan, 2018 – 2021, which was updated in May 2018 due to the increased needs for support to food security and agriculture, WASH and nutrition as part of the additional drought-related requirements. See [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2018, find [here](#)

## RESPONSE

The HRP strategic objectives are connected through protection as central to the response. In addition to the humanitarian country team's 2017 approach of making integrated protection activities a compulsory component of projects included under the common humanitarian fund (CHF), the HRP aims to have a joint approach to responding to protection violations. Focus on strengthening accountability to affected populations (AAP) and meaningful access to those most in need are also noted as priorities within the HRP.

In the HRP, each cluster has included references to how it intends to include protection considerations as part of the response activities. Areas of focus include how best to identify those most in need and vulnerable people; providing equitable access to services – including accessing hard to reach areas to provide needed assistance; and having a community-based approach.

### AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2018 – 2021: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Save lives in the areas of highest need
- 2 Reduce protection violations and increase respect for IHL
- 3 People struck by sudden onset crises get the help they need, on time.

Noting the layers of need from decades of conflict and limited development, the HRP highlights the importance of the role of development and government actors to take on more of the activities related to root causes of vulnerability and chronic poverty; with the HRP focusing on acute needs resulting from specific crisis.

## PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

The Protection Cluster – including the Child Protection in Emergencies (CPIE) Sub-Cluster; the GBV Sub-Cluster; the HLP Task Force; and the Mine Action Sub-Cluster – aims to address protection risks faced by 1.1 million people out of the 1.5 million identified people in need.

According to the HRP, the focus of the Protection Cluster strategy is on protection monitoring, analysis, evidence-based advocacy and community-based protection mechanisms. Other activities include multi-sector assessments and having an integrated protection approach by achieving protection outcomes through non-protection activities, especially in hard to reach areas. Child protection activities (led by the CPIE Sub-cluster) will include family tracing and reunification for unaccompanied and separated minors; case management and referrals; advocacy and response against child recruitment; support to injured children; and provision of psychosocial support for children. The GBV Sub-cluster is leading on prevention activities; provision of multi-sector support for survivors; and capacity building of health workers. The HLP Task Force will lead response activities on legal assistance for HLP and civil documentation issues. The Mine Action Sub-Cluster will lead on mine/ERW risk education, ERW removal and mine/ERW clearance.

## PROGRESS OF STRATEGY, RESPONSE AND CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN 2018

Overall, the Protection Cluster and Sub-Clusters continue to take the lead on centrality of protection activities in Afghanistan. With the development and endorsement of the HCT Protection Strategy; inclusion of protection as a key element of multi-sector needs assessments which significantly informed the HNO and HRP; and continued technical support to other clusters, there were some important steps taken in 2018.

**HCT Protection Strategy, 2018 – 2021:** finalised on 25 May 2018 and endorsed by the HCT, the HCT Protection Strategy was developed with the support of a Senior ProCap Advisor who led a consultative and thorough process in-country.

The three strategic objectives for the HCT focus on reducing protection risks for civilians; providing humanitarian protection and assistance to persons in need; and supporting the Government of Afghanistan to provide durable solutions as part of the humanitarian-development nexus approach. Actions are set out to meet these objectives, involving roles and responsibilities for all HCT members. The Protection Cluster has been appointed to provide technical support to the implementation of the HCT Protection Strategy, with the HCT having ultimate responsibility and oversight. Protection has also been included as a standing item on the HCT agenda and the Protection Cluster is frequently invited to present on various topics at the HCT, as well as at the Inter Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT).

**Advocacy:** the Protection Cluster prepared advocacy messaging on key protection issues for the HCT. A particular focus in 2018 was messages on matters related to the protection of civilians which provided the HC with messages to address parties to the conflict. These included evacuation of civilians; safe access for humanitarian workers; non-interference with humanitarian clearance explosive hazards; and not using health or education facilities for military purposes. Other topics included mass forced returns of Afghans living in Pakistan; unlawful evictions; reform of the land allocation framework; and request for more substantive coordination with development actors.

**Establishment of 'Awaz' Afghanistan call centre:** included as an action required in the HCT Protection Strategy, the inter-agency information centre was established with country-wide reach and a toll-free number. The main aims of the call centre are to allow two-way communication for strengthening accountability between humanitarian actors and communities; serve as a tool for making referrals; and provide data about needs. In addition to the call centre, the Community Engagement Working Group, led by a consortium of actors, aims to coordinate on all issues relating to community engagement and accountability.

**Protection as part of country based pooled fund projects:** the Protection Cluster supported the review of all projects to ensure that mandatory protection elements were sufficiently part of each project proposal. Mandatory requirements for each project (in each sector) included having an access strategy and elements of protection mainstreaming.





### Changes to the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance through the government's petition system:

the Protection Cluster took a lead role in providing input on how the system should be reformed based on protection considerations that should be clearly reflected in protection risks analyses and standard operating procedures. The aim of these changes is to ensure that emergency assistance is provided based on protection principles, including in an equitable, do-no harm, and non-discriminatory manner.

### Capacity development and protection mainstreaming activities:

The Protection Cluster has provided training and support on protection mainstreaming and humanitarian principles, which continue to be necessary for protection and non-protection actors. In addition, the Protection Cluster and Sub-Clusters have supported government authorities with technical support for implementation of the National IDP Policy and providing support on identifying durable solutions.

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Much of the humanitarian response in 2018 was taken over by the drought response, which meant that resources and priorities were redirected and not focused as much on centrality of protection. Some consequences of the drought included further exacerbation of existing vulnerabilities which have resulted in affected people adopting negative coping mechanisms.<sup>4</sup> Shortage of funding coupled with limited capacities, access and presence has resulted in limitations to implement critical protection initiatives.

Many of the protection issues faced by affected people require a longer-term response with viable durable solutions for people who have faced decades of conflict and protracted crisis. Despite many efforts of the Protection Cluster and the development of the HCT Protection Strategy, protection may not always have been a priority of decision-making platforms, including the HCT. There have also been weaknesses within the response and a disconnect between humanitarian, government and development actors

<sup>4</sup> These negative coping mechanisms as a result of the drought were set out in the ICCT's paper on 'Negative Coping Mechanisms, Drought-affected communities in Afghanistan', February 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Upon the invitation of the HC and the HCT in Afghanistan, Peer 2 Peer will conduct a support mission in early April to consider, amongst other things, the current humanitarian coordination structure and potential alternatives.

which has resulted in protection issues not being systematically addressed. Currently, a review of the humanitarian architecture is planned<sup>5</sup> to consider the mandates and capacities of key actors, including how to improve access hard-to-reach areas, have more resources at field level and strengthen humanitarian-development collaboration. The results of this review are due later in 2019 and may lead to changes in the response infrastructure, which could also provide opportunities for protection to be more central to the overall response.

# SOUTH SUDAN



## CONTEXT

In September 2018 parties to the conflict signed a revitalized peace agreement to end the conflict that began in 2013 with 7 million people identified as in need of humanitarian assistance, the South Sudan HRP 2018 targeted 6 million people. Intensified conflict since 2016 has been characterised by ongoing violence, widespread multiple displacement and a deteriorating economic situation which has restricted people's access to basic services.<sup>6</sup> Severe food insecurity continued to be a significant issue after localised famine was stopped in 2017. As well as 1.9 million IDPs, South Sudan was also hosting at least 280,000 refugees in 2018; and approximately 2.1 million South Sudan refugees were being hosted in other countries.

Key protection concerns include rape and other types of gender-based violence; violations of IHL and IHRL; impunity due to weak rule of law; abuse; exploitation; violence and insecurity; limited access to services and assistance; lack of shelter options; continued displacement; malnutrition; severe food insecurity; disease outbreaks; destruction of civilian infrastructure (including health facilities); child recruitment by armed actors; unaccompanied, separated or missing children; and mine contamination.

## RESPONSE

The 2018 HRP focused on saving lives, alleviating suffering with protection as central to the response, including strengthening coping capacities of affected people. It aimed to complement the UNCT Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) which takes a longer-term approach, focusing on building resilience and strengthening basic services. Identifying vulnerabilities is a priority so that humanitarian assistance is accessible to those most in

<sup>6</sup> South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2018, See [here](#)

need. Centrality of protection efforts include the role of humanitarian actors in advocating for all parties to the conflict to adhere to IHL and IHRL; while also working together to reduce the protection risks faced by vulnerable people. Other areas requiring joint advocacy and activities include consistent humanitarian access to affected people; and contributing toward an improved protection environment, through targeted and integrated programmes, as well as protection mainstreaming within each sector. The HCT committed to refresh its protection strategy and strengthen accountability to affected populations (AAP). In the HRP, each cluster has set out how it will aim to target the most vulnerable and promote quality programming through protection mainstreaming and integration.

### SOUTH SUDAN HRP 2018: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Save lives by providing timely and integrated multi-sector assistance to reduce acute needs.
- 2 Reinforce protection and promote access to basic services for the most vulnerable people.
- 3 Support at-risk communities to sustain their capacity to cope with significant threats.

The 2018 HRP also acknowledged the importance of connecting more with development actors, enhancing complementary activities, especially for ensuring that affected people are able to withstand ongoing risks and adopt positive coping mechanisms. Particular links were envisaged in the health, education and livelihoods sectors.

## PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

In the 2018 HRP, the Protection Cluster – including the Child Protection Sub-Cluster, the GBV Sub-Cluster and the Mine Action Sub-Cluster - planned to target 4 million people out of the 6.4 million people identified who have protection needs. The main objectives included providing lifesaving response activities for GBV survivors and other vulnerable people; strengthening prevention programming; enhance the protection environment for IDPs and affected popula-



tions to enable durable solutions; and enhancing protection assessment and monitoring to inform overall response. The main activities included monitoring; risk analyses; advocacy; psychosocial support; case management and referral mechanisms; family tracing and reunification; reintegration of children associated with armed groups; legal assistance; community-based protection mechanisms; mine clearance; mine risk education.

## PROGRESS OF STRATEGY, RESPONSE AND CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN 2018

The Protection Cluster committed to lead on supporting the wider humanitarian community in ensuring that protection is central to all response activities. In addition to protection mainstreaming trainings, the Protection Cluster also provided technical support to other clusters and working groups, including the Cash Working Group, the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG), peace keeping actors and development actors as relevant and Solutions Working Groups (SWGs). Solutions Working Groups inform the development of field level strategies based on assessment of the needs of specific population and absorption capacities, services, and protection concerns in areas of return and relocation. SWGs are multi-sectoral in membership and established under the lead of the Protection Cluster to ensure that solutions are protection oriented, conflict sensitive, and minimize the potential of further harm to the affected population. As such the Protection Cluster has the central role in the assessment, intentions counselling, and development of strategic and operational plans. Recognising the increasing housing, land and property (HLP) issues faced by affected people, especially in relation to durable solutions, the Protection Cluster established the HLP Technical Working Group to focus on strengthening HLP technical response and coordination. The HLP TWG has a multi-pillar approach to address I) coordination of technical response, II) development of the legal framework, III) provision of guidance on HLP issues.

**HCT Protection Strategy, 2018-2019:** the Strategy was drafted in early 2018 and endorsed by the HCT in May 2018. This replaced the previous 2015 Strategy which had not fully succeeded in its objectives. However, the new Strategy seems to have refreshed the HCT's approach to centrality

of protection. With an implementation plan, the Protection Cluster is leading on updating activities implemented and reporting back (on a quarterly basis) to the HCT on progress. The Strategy's key priorities are safe and dignified access to life-saving assistance; contributing to the prevention, mitigation or end of grave violations; and a more longer-term approach to contributing to the prevention of protracted displacement. The Strategy also highlights the HCT commitment to prioritising PSEA and strengthening the measures and systems in place for reporting, investigation and accountability. The implementation plan sets out the roles of key actors, including the HCT, the Protection Cluster, the Inter-Cluster Working Group and the NGO Forum.

**Technical protection guidance to the HCT:** as a standing item on the HCT agenda, the Protection Cluster (with the Sub-Cluster) provides regular updated on protection matters to the HCT. For some meetings, the HCT requests analysis, advice and recommendations on specific topics. Some of the issues addressed in 2018 include those related to the proposed closure of Protection of Civilian (POC) sites; durable solutions<sup>7</sup>; reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups; and the ongoing gender-based violence, particularly the situation in Bentiu, in November 2018, when approximately 160 women were reported to have been raped when travelling to town to access services. The GBV Sub-Cluster has prepared a number of briefings and guidance notes on the situation and, together with the Protection Cluster, is also reviewing the response of all actors and preparing a lessons learnt review and recommend next steps for contributing to prevention of further similar GBV incidents.

**Protection analysis and reports:** the Protection Cluster conducts assessments and prepares analysis and reports for the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) and the HCT. Including protection as a standing item agenda for ICWG meetings has meant that the main protection issues are raised, and protection risk analyses inform discussion on various sector responses. For instance, the Protection Cluster prepared an analysis on the 'Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan' which included considerations from the perspective of women, peace and security.

**Integrated Protection Mobile Teams (IPMT):** these teams comprise general protection, child protection and GBV and



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aim to access hard-to-reach areas in South Sudan with rapid deployment capacity to assess and respond to emergency displacement situations. These teams are able to assess areas where sub-national coordination partners do not have reach and locations are prioritised through the Needs Analysis Working Group so that protection trends are then part of overall needs analyses and are shared with all clusters for inclusion in response design and implementation.

**Roving capacity to support protection coordination:** in 2018, the Protection Cluster introduced a resource to strengthen linkages between the national and sub-national protection clusters. Roving coordinators are supporting sub-national inter-cluster state focal points to strengthen technical response and coordination of protection activities.

**Protection mainstreaming:** the Protection Cluster and Sub-Clusters continue to provide regular trainings, sessions and support on protection mainstreaming for all actors. Technical support has also included preparing protection mainstreaming work plans for the ICWG and including protection indicators to guide interventions of each sector.

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

In 2018, the two-year HCT Protection Strategy was completed and endorsed by the HCT. However, the implementation plan was not finalised until later in the year and, with various other urgent issues coming to the attention of the HCT, pro-

gress has been relatively limited. The Protection Cluster has taken the lead on collating progress of activities under the implementation plan and updating the HCT on a quarterly basis. The HCT and ICWG are keen to include protection as part of their discussions and the next steps will be to see how the activities under the Strategy can be operationalised and form a core part of every sector's response.

With more planning for durable solutions and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, involving key aspects of the protection context analysis will be essential to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are properly identified and prioritised; as well as durable solutions having a conflict-sensitive approach which does not lead to further conflict at community or individual levels. The protection assessments and analyses led by the Protection Cluster are indicative of what is realistic for affected people in terms of return or integration. Using this data, together with information from other sectors, is essential to provide the basis for a protective response for longer-term responses. Involving the collective protection outcomes from the HCT Protection Strategy and using the experiences of implementing related activities should be considered and included as part of the process for longer-term response planning and implementation.

<sup>7</sup> The Protection Cluster provided input and technical support for the HCT's 'Interim Operational Guidance Note for Humanitarian Support to Return, Relocations, and Local Integration in South Sudan', January 2018.

# UKRAINE



## CONTEXT

In the fourth year of crisis, of the 3.4 million people identified as in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, the 2018 Ukraine HRP aims to target 2.3 million people.<sup>8</sup> The HRP sets out key issues of the crisis as protection, shrinking humanitarian access, critical emergency assistance and loss of livelihoods. Ongoing armed conflict has meant almost daily shelling, clashes, and mine and unexploded ordnance contamination. Access between the Government Controlled Areas (GCA) and Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA) continued to be restricted with increased burden on existing services and increased poverty faced by affected people. Crossing the contact line (between the GCA and NGCA) continued to be difficult although people continued to cross, many to access services and social benefits (including pensions).

Protection issues faced include ongoing active hostilities; violations to IHL and IHRL; internal displacement; widespread contamination by land mines, UXO and ERW; people with specific needs and vulnerabilities - particularly older people and people with disabilities; gender-based violence; limited access to civil documentation; lack of basic services (education, healthcare, markets/shops); restricted access to social payments and benefits; damage and destruction to civilian houses and infrastructure; food insecurity; reduced access to humanitarian assistance (with few humanitarian actors being permitted by the de facto authorities to be present in the NGCA). People living along the contact line have been particularly affected by the conflict where daily fighting affects their ability to cope and, in addition to the insecurity and attacks, they continue to have limited access to assistance (especially healthcare and WASH) and restricted freedom of movement. As affected people

have increasingly exhausted savings and stretched limited resources, some reported negative coping mechanisms include removing children from school; debt; crime; and survival sex.<sup>9</sup>

## RESPONSE

Protection is a central aspect of the 2018 Ukraine HRP with a focus on protection of civilians, ensuring parties to the conflict adhere to IHL; protection of human rights; responding to needs of vulnerable groups; provision of life-saving assistance; and longer-term durable solutions to support affected people with ways of coping more positively and sustainably. The HRP states the importance of protection to inform humanitarian decision-making and every sector's responses, including for preparedness and advocacy activities. In order to achieve this, the HRP recognises the need to understand who is most vulnerable and most at risk and used the new IASC Gender and Age Marker (GAM) throughout the 2018 planning cycle.

Following mission recommendations from the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT)<sup>10</sup> mission in 2017, the HCT has also established frameworks on AAP and PSEA. Plans for operationalising these and involving a multi-sector approach from humanitarian actors are mentioned in the 2018 HRP.

### UKRAINE HRP 2018 – 2021: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Advocate for and respond to the protection needs of conflict-affected people with due regard to international norms and standards.
- 2 Provide emergency assistance and ensure non-discriminatory access to quality essential services for populations in need.
- 3 Improve the resilience of conflict-affected people, prevent further degradation of the humanitarian situation and promote durable solutions, early recovery and social cohesion.

As part of the New Way of Working<sup>11</sup>, the HCT committed to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) by having a closer relationship with development actors, civil society and the government to address longer-term issues more coherently. The HCT established a working group of HCT members and donors to advance recommendations on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus work.

## PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

Under the 2018 HRP, the Protection Cluster – including the Child Protection Sub-Cluster, the Mine Action Sub-Cluster, and the GBV Sub-Cluster – targeted 1.3 million people for protection support – out of 3.3 million identified in need. Reflecting the Protection Cluster Strategy (2017-2018), objectives included strengthening protection of civilians; supporting vulnerable people to access essential services equitably and without discrimination; and improving social cohesion and resilience of affected people, including in identifying durable solutions. Activities included protection monitoring (with a focus along the contact line); protection assistance to persons with specific needs; community-based protection support; provision of information about services; psychosocial support; child protection referral mechanisms; providing services and referral pathways for GBV survivors; and a range of advocacy initiatives.

## PROGRESS OF STRATEGY, RESPONSE AND CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN 2018

Centrality of protection activities are mainly led and technically supported by the Protection Cluster. The development of the HCT Protection Strategy in 2017 has also helped to have a more inclusive approach with the HCT Protection Strategy Working Group monitoring progress and implementation. The Protection Cluster provides guidance and practical support, including through its respective Child Protection, GBV and Mine Action Sub-Clusters. In addition, recognising specific needs and vulnerabilities the Age and Disability Technical Working Group (ADTWG)<sup>12</sup>; and the HLP

Technical Working Group (HLP TWG)<sup>13</sup> provide coordination and technical support for their respective areas of expertise.

**HCT Protection Strategy, 2017-2018:** this was finalised in 2017 by the HCT Protection Strategy Working Group (including HCT and non-HCT members) which continued to monitor its implementation in 2018, using the activity matrix. The HCT Protection Strategy will be updated for 2019-2020, with plans to strengthen connections with the development response. The Strategy is a reflection that more actors have taken on protection as an issue which many of them initially perceived to be a too sensitive topic to deal with so prominently. The Strategy focuses on providing a framework for addressing serious protection risks systematically as part of the humanitarian response. Priorities are protection of civilians from the armed conflict; support to the government on complying with its international obligations for people in NGCA; and provision of assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. The activity matrix, setting out roles and responsibilities for each actor has a focus on advocacy joint actions and activities under each of these.

**Protection guidance:** the Protection Cluster has prepared a range of guidance notes on how protection is central to the humanitarian response. A note for 2019-2020 HRP preparation entitled 'A Gender and Protection Lens for all Actors' (October 2018) includes issues to consider at the planning phase of any response activity; the importance of identifying particular vulnerabilities and needs; ensuring an accessible and non-discriminatory approach to providing assistance; and a short checklist of five questions for each actor. In order to support all actors (humanitarian and development) to understand how to identify and support the most vulnerable and in need people, the Protection Cluster prepare guidance on 'Protecting and Prioritising People with Specific Needs in the Ukrainian Humanitarian and Development Response' (July 2018). In the guidance, various possible vulnerable groups are identified including displaced people in GCA, persons living close to the contact line, people living in NGCA, older persons and persons with disabilities. Guidance is given to understanding these

<sup>8</sup> Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan 2018, find [here](#)  
<sup>9</sup> Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview 2018, find [here](#)  
<sup>10</sup> Now known as Peer 2 Peer.

<sup>11</sup> See [here](#)  
<sup>12</sup> Led by Help Age International  
<sup>13</sup> Led by Norwegian Refugee Council and under the umbrella of the Protection and Shelter Clusters



different vulnerabilities; how they might affect people's ability to cope; and points to consider regarding activities and services provided.

**Humanitarian-development nexus:** the Protection Cluster is part of the HDN working group and has provided support on protection to development actors and those involved in development work, including donors and the authorities. In its note on 'Protection for Development Actors in Ukraine' (August 2017), the Protection Cluster highlighted the importance of the nexus; using comparative advantages to achieve collective outcomes for affected people; and how to include protection mainstreaming principles practically as part of this collective response. In addition, the Protection Cluster conducted a number of sessions and workshops on protection mainstreaming which has brought humanitarian and development actors together to interact and identify how best to achieve these protection principles together. One example of a joint activity is the Free Legal Aid Directory for internally displaced and conflict affected people in Ukraine. It is available in Ukrainian, Russian and English and is available online and in hard copy, including contact details for all actors providing free legal information and assistance.

**Advocacy messaging:** as recognised in the HCT Protection Strategy and the Protection Cluster Strategy, advocacy is an integral aspect of protection activities. The Protection Cluster includes a range of messages in its regular updates and fact-sheets, which focus on a variety of topics such as mine action; experiences of older people; HLP rights; collective centres; access to social benefits and pensions; and the situation for people living on the contact line. In addition, the Protection Cluster has prepared messages for specific issues and events, such as 'Ukraine Protection Cluster Statement on Occasion of the EU-Ukraine Human Rights Dialogue' (May 2018). This highlighted issues related to the protection of civilians, civil documentation, pensions, HLP rights, freedom of movement and voting rights for displaced persons.

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Although the situation in Ukraine remains an armed conflict, as noted in the HRP, it has not remained a high-profile crisis and, if anything, it may seem somewhat forgotten globally. Funding has been a struggle and, consequently, a number of actors could not plan for programmes in 2018. As well as a recognised protection crisis, the situation is very political in nature, with the government being a party to the conflict. Access constraints to NGCA mean that it is still difficult for humanitarian actors to provide much-needed assistance to those in need that have restricted movement and few options for coping. Despite this backdrop, the role of protection in the response has been recognised as central and this was highlighted in the HCT Protection Strategy and the continued efforts to include protection and mainstreaming approaches into the humanitarian-development nexus strategy and the government's plan for durable solutions.

As the crises continues into the fifth year, the most vulnerable people continue to bear the greatest impact which is leading to greater socio-economic challenges; institutional weaknesses; and has exacerbated existing problems and tensions between communities. Consequently, continuing to use protection principles as a basis for the longer-term responses and as a way of identifying those most vulnerable and in need will be important in order to ensure that affected people are able to cope more, chronic poverty is mitigated, and government institutions are able to provide essential services to those most in need.



# WHOLE OF SYRIA



## CONTEXT

With 13.1 million people identified as in need of humanitarian assistance, the 2018 Syria HRP targeted 10.5 million people for direct assistance. These include 418,000 Palestine refugees (out of 438,000 remaining in Syria) and 2.98 million people in hard-to-reach areas. Seven years of crisis and conflict have left approximately 5.5 million refugees outside of Syria and 6.1 million people internally displaced. Ongoing hostilities in many areas have meant sustained violence, insecurity with some affected populations trapped in UN-declared besieged areas. With a third of all people food insecure, coping mechanisms are at straining point with many people struggling to meet their basic needs.

Protection issues faced by affected people include the impact of ongoing hostilities; violations of IHL and IHRL; attacks on civilian infrastructure; multiple displacement; limited shelter options; restricted freedom of movement<sup>14</sup>; violence; presence of mine, UXO and ERW contamination; restricted access to basic services and humanitarian assistance due to a variety of factors including IHL violations; disruption of rule of law institutions; lack of civil documentation; housing, land and property challenges; gender-based violence; recruitment and use of children by parties to the conflict. Due to the protracted nature of the crisis, harmful coping mechanisms have continued to emerge, notably child labor, child recruitment, different forms of exploitation and child/early marriage. This environment triggers various forms of violence against women and girls, while straining the capacities of families and communities to protect children. Spontaneous returns have been reported in 2017, with approximately 721,000 spontaneous returns, including 66,000 refugees. However, conditions of return are often sub-standard and the challenges of the returnees are not dissimilar to those of the affected communities and of the displaced population.

<sup>14</sup> Freedom of movement is manifested in various modalities and situations, from security screening processes, to encampment policies, to security clearances requested for the return of IDPs

<sup>15</sup> The Whole of Syria response has three main operational centres – Amman, Damascus and Gaziantep. For more details about coordination, see [here](#)

## RESPONSE

All humanitarian activities continue to be coordinated in the framework of the Whole of Syria approach, with an overall coordination structure that supports “hub” level coordination at Damascus level, Gaziantep, North east Syria and - until July 2018 - in Amman for South-Syria.<sup>15</sup> The 2018 HRP focused on taking a holistic approach by providing life-saving assistance while enhancing protection and building resilience for vulnerable people. It planned to do this using a prioritisation approach based on (i) protection and vulnerability criteria of groups at risk; and (ii) geographical severity of needs, using severity scoring based on several multi-sectoral indicators which have an impact on people living in certain areas using severity scores based on sector indicators (Sector Severity scale) and cross-sector indicators (inter-sector severity scale) having impact on the humanitarian situation in the various areas..

As for the 2017 HRP process, the 2018 HRP includes each sector conducting a protection risk analysis as part of planning the sector response and identifying mitigating measures for risks identified. Related to this, other efforts to ensure centrality of protection in the response include advocacy for addressing access constraints; PSEA; AAP (with feedback and participation of affected populations); a gendered approach; and considering more the specific issues faced by persons with disabilities and older persons. The HRP also includes elements to strengthen resilience of affected people to increase positive coping mechanisms and reduce dependency on aid. In addition, working with national organisations to increase their ability to support affected people is another way envisaged to support their work and ensure that international humanitarian standards are firmly part of their work.

### WHOLE OF SYRIA HRP 2018: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people.
- 2 Enhance the prevention and mitigation of protection risks and respond to protection needs by supporting the protective environment in Syria, by promoting international law, IHL, IHRL and through quality principled assistance.
- 3 Increase resilience and livelihood opportunities and affected people's access to basic services.

## PROTECTION SECTOR STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

The Protection Sector<sup>16</sup> – including the Child Protection Sub-Sector, GBV Sub-Sector and Mine Action Sub-Sector – targeted 9.7 million people out of the 13.3 million people identified as in need of protection assistance. The main objectives are to provide community-based and individual targeted protection interventions; strengthen the protection capacity of humanitarian actors, duty bearers and community networks; provide GBV survivors with specialised services and promote measures to prevent GBV; reduce the impact of explosive hazards; and ensure more equitable access to child protection interventions.

The Protection sector maintained a community-based approach in its interventions and tailored its response to the evolving situation. The sector maintained a capacity to respond to the numerous humanitarian emergencies that characterised the year 2018. This was largely carried out through rapid deployment of mobile resources to address urgent protection needs arising from renewed hostilities or sudden displacement. In parallel, the sector maintained a coverage to areas of severe needs. This part of the response strategy continued to rely on the provision of integrated protection services through community-based facilities

<sup>16</sup> The Whole of Syria Protection Cluster has response hubs with Protection Sectors/Clusters and respective Child Protection, GBV, Mine Action Sub-Sectors/Clusters in Amman active until July 2018 (the Protection Working Group); Damascus (the Protection and Community Services Sector); and Gaziantep (the Protection Cluster, Turkey).

<sup>17</sup> Within the Whole of Syria response, the SSG is similar to an overall HCT for the response and is led by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator based in Amman.

<sup>18</sup> This is made up of the SSG – co chaired by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator based in Amman and the Humanitarian Coordinator based in Damascus; the Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG) chaired by the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator based in Gaziantep; and the HCT Humanitarian Coordinator based in Damascus.

(Community Centers, safe spaces for women and for children), to respond to protection needs, promote inclusion and community participation, offer a safe space for community interaction and provide specialized services (case management for children and GBV survivors, legal assistance, psychosocial support, parental skills, empowerment initiatives for women, girls and adolescents).

## PROGRESS OF STRATEGY, RESPONSE AND CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN 2018

The Protection Sector is providing a technical lead on centrality of protection throughout the WoS protection coordination structure. With its protection monitoring and assessments, the Protection Sector has contributed to identifying needs and vulnerabilities and informing programming for all sectors. In 2018, however, protection assessments have become increasingly challenging due to the high level of scrutiny exercised by national authorities. While engagement with the authorities was pursued to be able to embark in systematic assessments, the sector increasingly advocated with the humanitarian leadership for support in preserving the integrity of the processes. On the other hand, progress has been made with sectors taking on a more active role towards understanding protection and how to mainstream and, as relevant, integrate, it into their activities.

**Whole of Syria Strategic Steering Group Protection Strategy 2017-2018:** developed and endorsed by the Strategic Steering Group (SSG)<sup>17</sup> in 2017, this updated the previous 2015 Strategy. Since it was finalised, operationalisation of the 2017-2018 Strategy has proved to be challenging. While the priorities remain relevant, the Protection Sector has been requested several times during the year to further prioritise protection issues for the humanitarian leadership<sup>18</sup> to take forward. Meanwhile, the Protection Sector continues to lead on providing advice, guidance and recommendations on key protection issues to all members of the WoS humanitarian leadership. This technical support is provided in policy notes, advocacy messaging and



presentations and highlight the key protection principles for many of the immediate and difficult situations in 2018, including evacuations of civilians; civil status documentation and HLP; civilian character of IDP sites; freedom of movement reaching besieged areas; spontaneous returns of IDPs; and children associated with armed groups.

**Civil-military co-ordination:** In 2018, the protection Sector continued a systematic dialogue and approach with certain parties to the conflict – notably in North East Syria – through a strategic use of OCHA-led civil-military coordination channels. Advocacy on issues such as freedom of movement, protection of civilians, child recruitment has been part of a regular pattern of communication, including through the WOS humanitarian leadership. Results were mixed, but with notable progress in the agenda of children associated with armed groups.

**Advocacy messaging:** based on its monitoring and understanding of the protection context, the Protection Sector prepared messaging on key issues for the RHC, the HC, and the humanitarian leadership. Advocacy on GBV and children associated with armed groups were areas of focus in 2018.

**Protection guidance and mainstreaming:** the Protection Sector has continued to provide support to other sectors and humanitarian actors through operational guidance and analysis on protection-related matters, including beneficiary selection criteria and community-based participation. The sector has cooperated with the shelter and CCCM sectors in designing guidelines; several training were offered to all sectors on protection and GBV mainstreaming, including during emergencies; the GBV AoR has provided advice to all sector and guided the inclusion of GBV indicators to measure GBV mainstreaming. As part of the Humanitarian Needs Overview preparation, the Protection Sector provided input and support on how to keep protection central to identifying needs, vulnerabilities and how people are managing to cope. As the crisis has become increasingly protracted, identifying negative coping strategies and working cross-sector to address these has become more relevant.

**Protection Risk Assessments:** further to the approach initiated in 2017, as part of the HRP process, each sector was required to prepare a protection risk assessment for its proposed responses and identify how the risks would be mitigated as part of programming. Each sector set out its approach in the HRP with a focus on how to ensure ‘do no harm’; be accountable to affected people, have a community-based approach; and ensure access to assistance based on need. The PRA continues to be a requirement for projects submitted to be part of the HRP 2019.

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

The challenging situation in Syria was intense and sustained with several emergencies in 2018 requiring immediate assistance and coordination including in the formulation of several area-specific preparedness and response plans. Along with other sectors, the Protection Sector has been part of these emergency responses; identifying protection risks faced by affected people and providing guidance and technical support on how to address these risks and try to mitigate the negative effects of them. Having consistent access to areas in Syria and being able to work independently and in line with humanitarian principles has been a challenge, especially for protection that is often deemed sensitive and a possible obstacle to operational aspects of the response.

While the humanitarian leadership has firmly recognised the relevance of operationalising the SSG Protection Strategy, deciding on priorities and operationalising them has been difficult. The frequently politicised environment, the multiplicity of actors involved, the presence of State and non-State entities involved, the unique operational dynamics, has created a very challenging environment, where humanitarian principles have been often difficult to be maintained and humanitarian access has often been subject to restrictions and scrutiny. The evolving situation on the ground may not contribute to ease those challenges. In this complex context, a cohesive approach to the centrality of protection needs to be maintained by the leadership at all levels and the Sector needs to be supported in maintaining unhindered access to population in need. In addition, a more thoughtful and strategic approach to advocacy may be pursued, with a mix of private and public messages based on the evidence base of sectors targeting a range of stakeholders, including donors, government and development actors.

As the context reached a phase that will need to consider a more longer-term response, and as dynamics changes on the ground, it will be critical to maintain protection and right-based approaches as central to analyze the context, the risks affected by the population, the specific vulnerabilities and coping strategies. At the same time, as the crisis becomes increasingly protracted, return trends increase, and harmful coping mechanisms continue to take a toll on the safety and dignity of the population, a stronger inter-sector dialogue should be promoted, beyond mainstreaming, to reinforce synergies across sectors for protection outcomes.

# YEMEN



## CONTEXT

With an estimated 22.2 million people in Yemen in need of some form of humanitarian assistance and 11.3 million of these in acute need, the 2018 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan aimed to assist 13.1 million.<sup>19</sup> As set out in the HRP, key issues of the ongoing conflict include protection of civilians; food insecurity; economic decline; collapse of basic services and institutions; basic survival needs; and loss of livelihoods. In addition to displacement (with more than two million people displaced) and people starting to return to their areas of origin, the risk of famine and disease outbreaks (specifically cholera and diphtheria) were significant concerns. There are also approximately 280,000 refugees in Yemen and an estimated 155,000 migrants; with refugees continuing to arrive to Yemen.

Characterised as a protection crisis<sup>20</sup> with violations of IHL and IHRL, ongoing conflict has led to high numbers of civilian casualties, with regular airstrikes, armed clashes and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Import restrictions closure of key ports in Yemen and damaged port infrastructure limited the availability of food (90% of which was imported prior to the conflict), fuel and medical supplies and significantly increased their prices. With food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, increased vulnerability and the collapse of basic facilities all consequences of the situation, also prevalent are negative coping mechanisms such as selling assets, reducing food consumption and clean water purchases, and going into debt. Other protection concerns include family separation; child recruitment; unaccompanied and separated children; limited access to essential services or assistance; multiple displacement; destruction and damage to property; limited shelter options; gender-based violence; loss of livelihoods; lack of civil documentation; and discrimination faced by minorities.

<sup>19</sup> Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan 2018, find [here](#)

<sup>20</sup> Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview 2018, find [here](#)

## RESPONSE

The 2018 HRP prioritised life-saving and protection response to address the most acute needs identified in Yemen using a severity scoring system. Recognising the role of centrality of protection, the HRP also included a focus on incorporating protection and gender analysis across all of the sectors, as set out in the HCT Protection and Gender action plans. The HCT committed to ensuring that vulnerabilities are always considered and taken into account as part of the response. AAP and community engagement were also priorities with regular community perception surveys being conducted.

Targeted support to key public services and minimum assistance packages (provided through an integrated programming approach) aimed to assist the continuity of basic services and prevent their further collapse. Furthermore, there was a multi-sector approach to key thematic issues, such as famine prevention, cholera and the needs of displaced people, returnees and host communities. To address the increased vulnerability and exhausted coping mechanisms amongst affected people, the HRP includes a range of activities to enhance support to resilient livelihoods, including more systematic support to lifesaving public services and livelihood activities; and plans for increased coordination with development actors through the New Way of Working.



## YEMEN HRP 2018: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people in Yemen through an effective, targeted response.
- 2 Ensure that all assistance promotes the protection, safety and dignity of affected people, and is provided equitably to men, women, boys and girls.
- 3 Support and preserve services and institutions essential to immediate humanitarian action and promote access to resilient livelihood opportunities.
- 4 Deliver a principled, multi-sectorial, coordinated and inclusive humanitarian response that is accountable to and advocates effectively for the most vulnerable people in Yemen with enhanced engagement of national partners.

Activities include protection and IHRL/IHL monitoring; direct protection assistance and services; psychosocial support; legal assistance; and community-based response activities. Child protection activities include monitoring grave violations of children's rights under the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism; referrals for services; mine-risk education; family tracing and reunification services; victim assistance and case management. GBV activities include awareness-raising; prevention activities; case management; referrals; psychosocial support; and livelihoods and skills building for survivors.

## PROGRESS OF STRATEGY, RESPONSE AND CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN 2018

As part of including protection firmly within their response, each sector was required to provide input to the 2018 HRP regarding how they would include protection, age, gender and accountability considerations as part of their respective responses. The Protection Cluster continued to provide the overall response with technical and practical protection support. This included protection mainstreaming activities, protection integration; the child protection minimum

standards, and the IASC Guidelines on GBV Prevention and Response in Emergencies. As part of supporting the HRP aim to understand better needs and vulnerabilities of all affected people and ensure that assistance is provided equitably to all, the Inclusion Taskforce was established and is jointly chaired by the Protection Cluster and HI.

**HCT Protection Strategy 2018 – 2019:** this Strategy replaced the HCT Protection Strategy 2016–2017 and was developed by the HCT Centrality of Protection Taskforce and endorsed by the HCT in September 2018. It recognises the collective responsibility of protection, including through joint responses and advocacy by the HCT. Key roles and responsibilities for implementation are included in an action plan. The main objectives are to address protection of civilians; access to protection and services for the most vulnerable; and mainstreaming and integrating protection at all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. Updates on the HCT Protection Strategy are provided on a regular basis to the HCT, where protection is also a standing item on the agenda.

**Advocacy messaging:** the Protection Cluster prepared advocacy messaging on key protection issues for the HCT and other sectors to use. For instance, key messages were prepared on a range of issues related to the protection of civilians, including the consequences faced by civilians as a result of the attack on the Al Hudaydah port in December 2018. Other advocacy messaging were prepared on child protection, GBV and humanitarian principles.

**Protection guidance:** the Protection Cluster has prepared guidance on protection matters and aspects of various events for use by the HCT, the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and other relevant stakeholders. Examples of such guidance include 'Protection Guidance For Cholera Response in Yemen' (August 2017); and 'Guidance on Community Centres' (July 2018), which are envisaged as a place where people in need can access a range of assistance and services.

**Civilian Impact Monitoring:** the Protection Cluster established a mechanism and methodology to monitor, more systematically, the impact of the conflict on civilians. This supports protection programming by understanding needs, risks faced by civilians, and providing an evidence base for advocacy. Incidents – from open source data and other



reports - are collated and catalogued into main categories. The indicative data is then used to prepare daily/weekly reports and alerts with the purpose of having a real time sense of incidents and the impact on civilians. A six-monthly report was also prepared which set out key trends, protection implications and geographic distribution of incidents.

**Humanitarian Fund (YHF):** efforts to strengthen protection mainstreaming in YHF projects included capacity building of NGOs on humanitarian principles, monitoring, protection mainstreaming, and AAP. Each project proposal was required to include a section on protection mainstreaming and how this would be done practically in the relevant project.

**Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG):** further to its initial piloting of a community perception survey in 2016, the CEWG has continued to conduct rounds of assessment. Information from these surveys is useful for understanding priority needs; as well as how affected people understand and interact with the humanitarian response. The survey in September 2017 also indicated that only 40% of community members surveyed knew how to provide feedback<sup>21</sup> which gave the basis for strengthening AAP activities across the response.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

## CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

With the updated HCT Protection Strategy and renewed priorities for collective protection outcomes, a number of centrality of protection priorities were established in 2018. Although there were several emergency situations faced, requiring life-saving assistance and immediate response, protection continues to be recognised by the HCT as a crucial part of the response. Putting this into practice has at times been challenging given the limited humanitarian space within which actors may operate; obstacles to accessing people in need; and maintaining humanitarian principles in the sustained climate.

Considering more opportunities for integrating protection into activities, as well as continuing to strengthen protection mainstreaming will continue to advance the centrality of protection. Focusing more on collecting data consistently on the ongoing hostilities and understanding the consequences for civilians has also been a valuable step in understanding needs and risks faced. Identifying how to address these risks and try to prevent and mitigate their harmful effects on affected populations will be important aspects of having an overall protective response and finding ways to involve all relevant actors and stakeholders will be essential.

# THE STATE OF PROTECTION IN 2018

## AN NRC PERSPECTIVE



In 2013, the IASC issued the Centrality of Protection Statement – a refreshingly succinct document committing its membership to be driven by protection objectives in both their decision-making and operational objectives. This was a significant moment for protection, particularly in an environment where strong leadership on protection was often lacking. Over the subsequent 5 years, IASC agencies have collectively struggled to ensure that comprehensive strategic planning to address protection concerns guide the humanitarian response system.

While a valid and worthwhile pursuit, it is equally important that we not get lost in system tweaking. The ultimate goal of the Centrality of Protection statement is not system reform, but instead is to “ensure more effective protection of people in humanitarian crises.” Put simply, we are tasked to do better in keeping people safe.

Are we changing behavior, attitudes, policies, knowledge, and practices in a way that leads to reduction of risk arising from humanitarian crises (e.g. trafficking of children, slave labor by armed groups, acts of genocide, rise of intimate partner violence as a result of humanitarian crisis, deliberate exclusion of certain people from entitlements and resources by parties to conflict)? NRC would argue that while the humanitarian community is doing increasingly well on providing assistance, we are still struggling to make a difference when it comes to keeping people safe from violence and abuse. Providing safety and security for people is the duty of states, parties to conflict and other actors in control of territory. However, we operate in a world where we know that these actors often fail or are the perpetrators of violence and other violations against the civilian population they should be protecting. We, humanitarians,

must ask ourselves: can we do more? NRC joins many NGOs in believing we can.

As a community invested in protection outcomes, we still face several uphill battles. The language of ‘containment’ and ‘deterrence’ dominates State discussions of humanitarian crises. Asylum space is shrinking, and governments’ responsibility to protect people within their borders is increasingly sidestepped. State practice and policies are often aimed at controlling the mobility of people affected by conflict and disaster rather than improving access to exercise their rights. The humanitarian community writ large is increasingly focusing on discussions of displacement ‘solutions,’ the ‘humanitarian-development-peace nexus’ and the larger role that development actors could and should play in emergencies and protracted crises. At worst, this focus often comes at the expense of reaching our protection objectives but even in the best of cases, these discussions are protection-blind.

That said, we cannot discount the strides we have made over the last 5 years. As a community, we are recognizing the need to ‘simplify’ protection. Specifically, we see a trend in moving protection back towards its core – supporting people affected by conflict and disaster to be safer and more secure. Increasingly, we are doing this by building on what communities are already doing to protect themselves, reflecting an improved understanding that the communities are, in fact, the experts we need to be drawing from. One could say we have finally begun to see community-led protection as the key to unlocking the Centrality of Protection. We are improving our appreciation of what data & analysis is necessary to enable successful protection outcomes, and how we can work better together with communities to achieve outcomes based on that analysis. We are scaling up investments in innovative tools, and we are open to shared learning on successful initiatives. Finally, we are engaging governments and other local decision-makers in new and exciting ways to improve their adherence to their own protection obligations.

NGOs will continue to fight for the space to ensure protection is central to principled humanitarian action. We will learn from the communities we serve, and from each other, as we strive to address the most critical issues facing people affected by conflict and disaster across the globe.

# STOCK-TAKING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IASC PROTECTION POLICY



A **stock-taking exercise** was convened on 14-15 October 2018 by a Global Protection Cluster Task Team, led by InterAction and OCHA. The purpose was to reflect on progress and impact of the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016) and the IASC Principals Statement on the Centrality of Protection (2013) and to identify areas of improvement. As a precursor to the meeting, a wide ranging IASC protection policy survey took place as well as two peer exchanges that concentrated on protection information sharing and analysis and on HCT protection strategies. The stock-taking exercise highlighted important achievements and areas for improvement. It also underlined how humanitarian action and the centrality of protection were challenged over the two years since the adoption of the protection policy.

**Information gathering, sharing, and analysis** remains a challenge in conflict settings. Protection data is hard to come by, especially in a number of African contexts, whereas there is sufficient data in other contexts, but a lack of analysis. Some critical steps need to be taken prior to setting up an information management system to assist practitioners in understanding existing information and any gaps - such as clear identification of purpose and research to better understand the context in which information is gathered.

**To facilitate better dissemination of data and analyses information** management experts, sectoral experts, decision makers and context experts from across the sector

need to be brought together clearly delineate roles and responsibilities at each step of the process.

**Practitioners need to accept imperfection in information** collection and not shy away from acknowledging weak data. This should not inhibit analysis and decision-making and is especially pertinent where trends, pre-crisis contextual information on human rights and protection issues, and globally understood scenarios (such as the marked increase in GBV in crises situations) should be sufficient for decision-makers to take action on protection issues.

**HCT Protection Strategies** should be short and concise. They require a strong joint analysis, a concrete work and monitoring plan and include a broad array of partners in the process within and beyond the humanitarian field. In effect, strong HCT Protection Strategies tend to have a wide buy-in from all HCT members, beyond protection actors.

UN entities and NGOs need to demonstrate **greater leadership** on protection mainstreaming and priorities. **Ownership** of protection strategies varies by context; for example, there was less traction in Syria, but greater collaboration in Ukraine. Contributing factors are that there is often inconsistent pressure on leadership, resources evolve as the process develops and are not in place at the start. There is no common baseline analysis of protection threats and risks. Monitoring and reporting is weak, though some positive examples were noted, such as Palestine.

**Strong partners and access to information** are important. The establishment of **working groups** to address specific crises can be an asset as is the **presence of a human rights advisor** and a **protection monitoring task force** to assist in identifying relevant issues. A critical necessity is for those working ‘on the ground’ to contribute their first-hand experience and knowledge to HCT strategies. Increased attention needs to be given to the kind of data and information collected in humanitarian crises in order to **strengthen work on human rights** and to facilitate links to longer term development and human rights aims.

**Examples of good practice** include Colombia where the inter-cluster group contributed to the HCT protection strategy through data analysis and thus ensured alignment between the HRP and the HCT Protection Strategy by identifying key protection risks.







The peer exchange on information and analysis highlighted that a **comprehensive risk analysis** was essential and needed to integrate the rich material from other sectors into an overall framework.

Senior level capacity to support the HC/RC can improve their engagement on protection (and that of the HCT) at a strategic level, such as through the OHCHR human rights advisor function, a senior protection advisor, such as ProCap or specific capacity on Housing Land and Property issues. However, their assistance is necessary over a longer period of time than is currently the case. OHCHR's human rights advisors have provided support on protection issues outside the remit of the Protection Cluster: in Syria they played a critical role for HCs as their work on arbitrary detention highlighted the challenges of raising human rights in humanitarian crisis and the UN's role in terms of Human Rights Up Front.

A further example of good practice is that protection is included as a regular or standing agenda item in HCT and ICCG meetings, inter alia in Iraq, Yemen, and Colombia.

Protection priorities need to feed into the New Way of Working (NWoW). Linkages need to be strengthened with development, peacekeeping, and human rights actors. Positive lessons were identified from experiences in Colombia, Ukraine and Syria. An additional opportunity exists to address protection priorities with the reform of the UN development system and potentially newly empowered Resident Coordinators.

Of critical importance are the links between national and field level in order to monitor protection situations and to ensure that ground-level and first-hand experiences shape and inform the implementation of the strategy. For example, a number of responses underlined that while continuous protection analysis has improved, little progress has been made on meaningful involvement of affected populations, especially in regard to protracted displacement.

# THEMATIC ISSUES



## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPS)

### The 20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20)

The year 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20). This presented a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to step up their work with and for IDPs and to galvanise others. While significant progress has been made since the 1990s in response to internal displacement, durable solutions remain elusive for the vast majority of IDPs, with a persistent annual trend of substantial new displacements.

Building on the conclusions of a critical workshop convened by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs in 2017, the three-year multi-stakeholder Plan of Action to Advance Prevention, Protection and Solutions for IDPs from 2018 – 2020 was launched in April 2018 in Geneva and endorsed by the IASC Principals in May 2018. The Plan of Action focuses on the operational aspects towards achieving the common goal of reducing and resolving internal displacement, in line with the Guiding Principles.

The vision of this effort is two-fold: first, the prevention of the conditions that cause displacement and improve the lives of those already internally displaced; and two, to elicit more inclusive, coherent and strategic action among stakeholders engaged on and affected by internal displacement, whatever the cause. The Plan of Action goes beyond international humanitarian organisations to include development actors, local civil society and the governments of countries affected by all types of internal displacement. It also involves IDPs in decision-making.

Since the launch of the Plan of Action, GP20 focal points have been appointed in Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator Offices, as well as in UNHCR, OCHA, IOM, UNDP and OHCHR country offices. During 2018, these focal points galvanised multi-stakeholder action on internal displacement in line with the four thematic priorities in the Plan of Action: IDP participation, data and analysis on internal displacement, laws and policies on internal displacement and addressing protracted displacement while fostering durable solutions.

The framework of the GP20 Plan of Action prompted progress in a number of countries, such as: support to developing national legislation on internal displacement in Niger and South Sudan, acknowledgement of ongoing and intensified internal displacement in Colombia, promoting the implementation of an IDP strategy in Ukraine, and the development of a roadmap on protracted displacement and associated data collection on internal displacement in the Central African Republic. The convincing engagement and advocacy efforts by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs ensured ongoing attention on internal displacement, by highlighting the GP20 Plan of Action at numerous global and regional events and country visits.

A global GP20 Steering Group was established that convenes member states, UN agencies, NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the World Bank. The aim is to learn how respective governments have managed to prevent, address and resolve internal displacement. The focus of its first meeting in December 2018 was on country-specific policies and legislation governing internal displacement. The government of Afghanistan and Fiji presented their experiences of developing and implementing their frameworks on internal displacement and planned relocations. GP20 Steering Group meetings will continue until 2020 to be a forum for exchange of state practices on internal displacement, some of which will be compiled into a GP20 publication show-casing good practices on internal displacement.



## LAW AND POLICY ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

In order to support states' efforts and the need for technical support and expertise, the GPC Task Team on Law and Policy (TTLP) was established in 2015. Co-chaired by UNHCR and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, it brings together traditional and new GPC partners with specific expertise on law and policy-making processes. Task team members accomplished a number of activities in 2018. Advice was provided on laws and policies on internal displacement, including the Fiji Relocation Policy and Somalia's National IDP Policy, as well as on draft laws on internal displacement in Mali, Honduras, Liberia, and Mexico.

Support was provided to training courses in San Remo on IDP law and policy, designed for government officials and civil society representatives with a remit for internal displacement and to the Norwegian Refugee Council who conducted training for civil society organisations on the 2009 Kampala Convention that makes it mandatory for member states to develop national legal frameworks.

The TTLP works closely with academics and their respective institutions whose involvement in developing legal and policy frameworks is critical. Their engagement has led to two significant publications, namely: Gabriel Fox 'Exile within borders: a study of compliance with the international regime to protect Internally Displaced Persons'; and Phil Orchard on 'Improving the implementation of national Internally Displaced Persons Laws and Policies.'

The TTLP supported a number of important government briefings, including by the authorities of Vanuatu, Niger, and the Benadir Regional Administration in Somalia. The team also facilitated briefings by international organisations to share pertinent field experiences on addressing IDP issues. This included a briefing by UNHCR El Salvador on the ground-breaking decision by the El Salvador Constitutional Court that national authorities should acknowledge internal displacement perpetrated by criminal groups and take concrete measure to prevent further displacement and protect those already displaced.

The International Development Law Organisation (IDLO) described the support provided to the Somali government's draft National Policy for Refugees, IDPs, and Returnees, which is now being revised based on feedback from an international advisory team. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Ukraine briefed on challenges related to the lack of implementation of national IDP legislation and problems in linking pension payments to IDP registration. ICRC provided a briefing on a sub-regional event convened with government representatives of southern Africa to discuss the implementation of the 2009 Kampala Convention and challenges faced by respective countries in regard to internal displacement.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting national level action through the GP20 Law and Policy Workstream in 2018. In **CAR**, the draft Law on the Protection and Assistance to IDPs was endorsed at a workshop led by the Minister for Humanitarian Action and National Reconciliation and attended by representatives of various ministries, CAR regional authorities affected by displacement, humanitarian agencies, NGOs, civil society and IDP representatives. On 3 December 2018, **Niger** became the first country in Africa to adopt a National Law on the Protection and Assistance to IDPs, following a two-year consultative process with IDPs and other stakeholders led by an Inter-Ministerial Committee. In **South Sudan**, a number of activities focused on providing support to the formulation of a draft law on internal displacement, following a desk review and gap analysis of national legislation and policies relevant to internal displacement. Government officials and UN staff were trained on IDP law and policy development with the aim of encouraging the ratification of the Kampala Convention. A number of consultations took place with IDP representatives and government officials on the form and substance of a potential national IDP law.

Finally, the global database is an accessible and up-to-date online central repository of specific laws and policies on internal displacement and also provides analysis of these instruments. In 2018, the database was updated and migrated to the GPC website and now contains a catalogue of instruments related to internal displacement from over 80 countries. In addition, over 80 laws and policies on internal displacement have been collated from 40 countries. This is available [here](#)

## PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

Protection mainstreaming remains high on the global humanitarian agenda. The 2016 IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action emphasises mainstreaming as one of three approaches, along with protection integration and stand-alone protection, to ensure a comprehensive and effective humanitarian response with protection at its core. Recognising the crucial role and responsibility of coordination groups such as clusters and inter-cluster groups, the GPC Task Team on Protection Mainstreaming (TTPM) has concentrated its efforts this year on strengthening the commitment, knowledge and skill-set of Cluster Coordinators and Inter-Cluster Coordinators to effectively operationalise protection mainstreaming throughout the humanitarian programme cycle. As emphasised in the IASC's Protection Policy, all sectors have a responsibility to contribute to placing protection at the centre of humanitarian action. All Clusters and Inter-Cluster groups need to ensure that protection is incorporated into their sector-specific strategic response plans and feed into protection analysis that informs decision-making and development of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HRP). The aim is that this will contribute to operational changes in humanitarian programming and in particular have a positive impact on people's safety, dignity, and access to services, their participation, empowerment and accountability.

The methodology outlined in the [GPC Protection Mainstreaming Tool-kit](#) has been paramount in strengthening the way protection was reflected in the 2018/2019 HPC. The GPC Operations Cell and the TTPM, with the help of Protection Clusters in respective countries, provided support to a number of operations ahead of the 2019 HNO and HRP processes to ensure protection principles were integrated in coordinated assessments and joint analysis and planning. Dedicated support missions conducted in Mali (March 2018), Somalia (July 2018 and November 2018) and Libya (July 2018), resulted in the adoption of a series of concrete steps to ensure roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders (Protection Clusters and Inter-Cluster, Donors and Pooled Funds, HC/HCT) were explicit and resulted in a coherent, strategic and robust approach to protection mainstreaming. Key successes include:

- ➔ Clusters committed to conduct a protection risks analysis to identify risks that may arise in their sector of intervention and include concrete commitments and mitigation measures in their relevant cluster strategies (HRP response chapters).
- ➔ Inter-Cluster Action Plans were developed ensuring that a collective approach to mainstreaming protection was endorsed throughout the different phases of the HPC (analysis, joint planning, resources mobilization, monitoring and evaluation).
- ➔ Indicators and other monitoring processes were included in cluster response strategies and strengthened to evaluate the impact of the response on the protection of people at risk.
- ➔ Knowledge, attitudes and skill-sets of humanitarian staff from both protection and non-protection sectors were strengthened during two Protection Mainstreaming Training of Trainers in Mali and Somalia.

In addition, the OCHA's new online system in support of the HPC at country level, HPC Tools has been rolled out for the 2019 HPC. The project module component (which replaces the OPS), where partners register their projects under the HRP, now allows each country to customise their project sheet. This new function provides an opportunity for the Inter-Cluster group to agree on the inclusion of protection mainstreaming questions as standard practice. A number of countries (Libya, Syria, oPt, South Sudan and Somalia) have included questions on the protection risk analysis undertaken in project design, the mitigating measures planned to address such risks and how the affected community is engaged in the project, ensuring adherence to protection mainstreaming principles.

Over the years, the GPC has built a consensus on the importance and relevance of the protection mainstreaming approach and has developed important tools and guidance for both operational agencies and coordination groups.<sup>22</sup> In 2018, to adapt to changing humanitarian contexts and requests from the field, the GPC translated the Protection Mainstreaming Training Package into [Burmese](#), [Bengali](#) and [Urdu](#) and the Protection Mainstreaming Tool-kit into French, Spanish, and Arabic. The TTPM also organized a webinar on the methodology and resources developed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to conduct Protection Mainstreaming Trainings in Remote Management Contexts, given difficulties of access in Yemen, Syria, Libya and Somalia.

<sup>22</sup> Tools and resources developed by the GPC are available [here](#)





The TPPM also supported the dissemination of the [Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities](#), designed to address the gap in understanding the needs, capacities and rights of older people and persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion in humanitarian action. Linkages and coordination between protection mainstreaming and other cross-cutting issues (age, gender, disability, GBV, CP, MA, HLP, mental health and psychosocial support, HIV, environment) have been strengthened through the development of an [Info-graphic and Mapping of Global Tools and Guidance](#). The document highlights how this guidance on cross-cutting issues contributes to reducing physical and psychological threats, vulnerability, barriers to access, and enhances capacities, participation and empowerment.

Going forward, key opportunities to effectively implement protection mainstreaming include: (1) increasing efforts to contribute to ongoing and updated protection risk analysis, based on a comprehensive understanding of threats, vulnerability and capacity rather than on pre-conceived and standardised categories of vulnerability; (2) ensuring

that protection analysis is shared with key stakeholders (Cluster Coordinators, Cluster members organizations, HC/HCT, donors, and non-humanitarian actors) and is used to inform decisions, programming and advocacy effort at the operational and strategic level; (3) continuously monitoring progress towards protection mainstreaming and evaluating its impact on the quality of the humanitarian response and the protection of people at risk; (4) maintaining as a priority the development of knowledge, attitudes and skill-sets that are conducive to making protection central to humanitarian action through the promotion of the GPC training material, tools and guidance on protection mainstreaming.

## SHELTER/HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP)

To have a safe place to live, access to land for livelihood, security of tenure and being free from fear of forced eviction – these are all matters that affect people at all phases of displacement or crisis. Common HLP issues include limited access to land for shelter or livelihoods, limited access to natural resources, forced eviction, secondary occupation, lack or loss of documentation, land grabbing, forced relocation, or disinheritance. Separately or compounded, these factors are often the basis of conflict, or are caused or exacerbated by crisis. It is therefore critical to understand the context of HLP for people affected. Identifying appropriate responses requires an understanding of how people are accessing housing and land and what risks exist in relation to forced eviction. These considerations are reflected by integrating HLP aspects into any protection, shelter, camp management or food security/livelihoods programme. Stand-alone HLP interventions can also support people to establish and maintain their HLP rights throughout a crisis and in the transitional and development stages of any response.

Led by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Global HLP Area of Responsibility (AoR) endeavours to support tackling HLP issues in a coherent and timely manner in order to contribute directly to saving lives and preserving dignity; mitigating crises and escalating conflicts; enabling comprehensive humanitarian action; and the centrality of protection. In 2018, the Global HLP AoR strategic objectives were:

- 1 Improved global support to HLP coordination and response in humanitarian emergencies; and
- 2 Enhanced global attention to HLP through donor engagement, advocacy and awareness-raising across clusters.

The focus in the 2018 Work-plan included:

- Identifying how best to include HLP in assessments at field level to ensure that HLP concerns are part of an overall contextual analysis as the basis for developing response activities.
- Supporting the integration of HLP into all stages of any response, including as a fundamental feature of the humanitarian-development nexus; durable solutions

and any transitional, peace and development aspects of a response.

- Understanding women's HLP rights and recognising the barriers in accessing these. In many situations, women can only access these rights through male members of the family; they may face challenges inheriting their rights in housing or land; and/or they do not have equal access to dispute resolution mechanisms. Recognising the effects on women's ability to access housing free from the fear of forced eviction, is crucial in developing an appropriate response, given the different roles that women often have to take in crises, including being the primary provider for their family; or having to take on new types of responsibility,
- Security of tenure: Rights in housing or land go beyond ownership rights. This has been highlighted in the new Sphere standard on Security of Tenure. It is vital to determine what is secure enough in each context in order to develop interventions that do not put affected people at risk of forced eviction and to enable them to improve their living conditions. Obtaining security of tenure over housing or land may be incremental and so conducting due diligence to understand how to obtain certainty of tenure is part of the approach to prevent harm and minimise risks of forced eviction and related disputes. This involves working closely in coordination with colleagues from other clusters – including Shelter, CCCM, FSL and the Mine Action AoR – to gain an in-depth understanding of security of tenure for all forms of tenure and facilitate support at national level to determine each context carefully.

**Country level HLP coordination mechanisms** have been established in Afghanistan, Cameroon, CAR, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, oPt, Whole of Syria and Ukraine. In 2018, South Sudan and DRC created HLP coordination groups. The Global HLP AoR continued to provide support on HLP response and coordination to HLP coordination groups and succeeded in providing remote support through webinars and by connecting different countries for an exchange of best practice, brainstorm on HLP issue and share experiences.

In 2018, the **Global Shelter Cluster** had a designated roving Shelter-HLP Advisor to support HLP and **security of tenure work** at global and country levels. The HLP AoR and Shelter-HLP Advisor coordinated actively and supported joint initiatives to strengthen security of tenure at country level.



## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Today's armed conflicts present a multitude of operational challenges for the provision of assistance and protection to affected populations, including those who are displaced by the hostilities. These challenges include the frequent collapse or weakening of state authority, the proliferation of armed non-state actors (including actors involved in terrorist activities), and the proliferation of different military actors present on the ground, with different degrees of control, command structures, and ability to offer protection to the civilian population. Moreover, a number of military operations are often conducted with blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, putting the lives and safety of millions of civilians at risk - sometimes deliberately, as a tactic of war.

Civilian populations increasingly find themselves caught up in such hostilities, unable to move freely and to seek safety, or stranded in locations which are remote, besieged or difficult to reach. They continue to bear the brunt of international and internal armed conflicts across the globe, in particular in Afghanistan, CAR, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali,

Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. Protection staff on the ground are progressively faced with more complex dilemmas, such as humanitarian evacuations, cross-border relief operations, so called 'safe zones', and military attacks against sites and settlements hosting IDPs, as well as schools and medical facilities. The recruitment of children is a critical protection concern in at least six ongoing conflicts, with displaced children being at particular risk due to lack of documentation, recreational and educational opportunities, as well as the separation of families during and after flight (see below summary of the activities of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility).

Protection staff are increasingly required to interact with a range of national, regional and international military actors, and to negotiate and advocate for protection outcomes in a pragmatic – yet principled - manner, often with little or no advance preparations.

As the Global Protection Co-lead, UNHCR is trying to build capacity of staff and partners to operate effectively in armed conflict settings, including through the strategic and systematic application of international humanitarian law to

conflict and protection analysis, advocacy with parties to the conflict, and in the design of protection interventions and strategies. In 2018, two pilot trainings on protection in armed conflict were conducted, in cooperation with the International Committee with the Red Cross (ICRC). Feedback from these pilot trainings demonstrated the need for further comprehensive capacity development, including to reach a larger number of protection staff in field operations. Furthermore, a Tool Kit on Protection in Armed Conflict is under development to support field staff, and to share best practices across field operations.

Building on a consultative process launched in 2016, UNHCR and the ICRC also collected operational practices from CAR, DRC, Iraq, Nigeria and South Sudan on sites and settlements hosting displaced populations and conducted a roundtable under the auspices of the GPC in April 2017. A result of this process was that in July 2018, a joint UNHCR/ICRC Aide Memoire was issued with operational guidance on the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Sites and Settlements.<sup>23</sup>

## MINE ACTION

The contribution of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility to protection in 2018 represents the hard edge of protection. **The human cost** of Explosive Ordnances was on the increase. On average, one person fell victim to explosive ordnance almost every hour of every day in 2018. The true number is likely to be higher as many casualties went unreported. Globally, the urbanisation of warfare and the increased use of improvised explosive devices have led to a marked rise in civilian casualties in recent years, most tragically amongst children, who account for nearly half of the total number of new casualties. Displaced persons, refugees, and first returnees are especially at risk when they move through unfamiliar areas and are caught unaware of the potential dangers. The situation is particularly worrisome in Afghanistan, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. Widespread contamination due to the legacy of war continues to pose a threat in numerous other countries. Globally, tens of millions of people live in contaminated areas.

<sup>23</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Aide Memoire- Operational Guidance on Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Sites and Settlements, July 2018, available [here](#)

In 2018, **humanitarian mine action coordination mechanisms** were active within the protection cluster in fifteen countries (12 were led by UNMAS, 2 by UNDP and 1 by UNICEF). Mine Action featured in 16 Humanitarian Response Plans and was prioritised in Afghanistan, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. In other countries, it was integrated into the Education, Health or Child Protection areas of responsibility. At the global level, the Mine Action AoR co-led by UNMAS and Humanity and Inclusion (HI) supported the 16 field coordinators with guidance and provided a forum where some 15 mine action actors (UN and NGOs) could share best practices and agree on advocacy priorities.

**Victim Assistance** was identified as a 'forgotten' protection issue by the group in late 2017. UNMAS worked closely with HI to advocate for the identification of people injured, survivors and indirect victims by conducting needs assessments and the integration of victim assistance in humanitarian response plans. Furthermore, the new 2019-2023 UN Strategy on Mine Action adopted in December 2018 foresees a stronger UN advocacy and coordinating role for sustainable support to injured, survivors, affected family members and communities, which is consistent with the UN global commitment to "leave no one behind".

**Preventing and Addressing Child Casualties** - At the Protection Conference held in Bangkok in May 2018, the Global Coordinators of the Child Protection and Mine Action Areas of Responsibility organised a joint session with their field coordinators to increase understanding of their respective roles of risk education and victim assistance and share collaborative practices. The session stimulated stronger collaboration between the two Areas of Responsibility and other Clusters in [Iraq](#), [Mali](#), [Myanmar](#) and [Syria](#). In [Syria](#), efforts were coordinated to integrate and promote risk education within the school curriculum and through mobile education centres, targeting out-of-school children and internally displaced persons.

Going forward, more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that strategies are actually effective in protecting children; of note is that boys represent 80% of child



casualties. Greater efforts need to be made to enable all casualties and indirect victims to access the necessary services to survive incidents and have equal opportunities.

**Building Safe and Peaceful Communities** - In 2018, hundreds of schools were thought to have been contaminated following attacks or occupation by armed groups. In [Iraq](#), [South Sudan](#), [Ukraine](#), [Yemen](#), coordinated clearance operations allowed thousands of children to return to schools. In [Somalia](#), the clearance of sporting facilities and stadiums through training and employing young people and female de-miners opened up safe spaces for children to play while also empowering local populations. In [Colombia](#), mine action benefited from improved access to previously inaccessible contaminated areas and contributed to building peace by employing ex-combatants in mine action activities. Whilst the mine action sector is often considered to play but a small part in the humanitarian community, it is also critical for the success of humanitarian work and represents a convincing illustration of the life-saving nature of protection work.



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### The UN Strategy

In its new strategy launched at the Annual Mine Action Stakeholder Conference (NDMUN22) in February 2019, the UN has identified five strategic outcomes and areas for change:

- 1 Reducing risks posed by mines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices;
- 2 Assisting victims, survivors and communities;
- 3 Strengthening national ownership;
- 4 Maintaining the profile and momentum of mine action across global and normative frameworks;
- 5 Mainstreaming gender, age and diversity across all mine action activities.

## CHILD PROTECTION

In 2018, the Child Protection AoR advanced integrated approaches to child protection-in-emergencies by working with partners to better understand how protection risks are tied to a child’s food security, health and education. For example, with WFP and the Food Security Cluster, the AoR conducted an integrated analysis of how food insecurity can give rise to child labour and marriage in settings such as Mali, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. This work builds synergies and avoids duplication of data collection among different agencies, helping Child Protection actors and partners carry out more effective and protective humanitarian action. Seven countries are now using this approach in their humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response processes, with additional countries planned for 2019.

The Child Protection AoR also continued to take action on its commitment to localisation by establishing four local Help Desks in French, Arabic, Spanish and English. These Help Desks are based with local NGOs on four continents and

improve access to local NGOs who represent the majority of coordination group membership and deliver most of the groups’ services. In 2018, the local Help Desks responded to over 90 requests and six countries were supported to self-assess local partner engagement and develop plans to increase localisation.

In 2018, the Rapid Response Teams (RRT) provided 886 days of deployment support, including to Bangladesh, Cameroon, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, laying the groundwork for adequate coverage, scale-up and quality of child protection programming. Ensuring accountability via coordinated services for child survivors of Gender-Based Violence, field support was provided to coordination groups in Iraq, Myanmar, the Niger and the Sudan to improve service quality and access to services for child survivors of GBV. This work will be expanded in coordination with the Gender-Based Violence AoR and the Health Cluster in 2019.

In recognition of government accountability and its role in ensuring the continuum of the humanitarian and

development spectrum of services, seven governments were supported to develop Whole of Government Action Plans, in partnership with the African Union and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. This included the drafting of guidance on how to best coordinate with governments when they are party to conflicts; a complex but critical piece of work to be completed in 2019.

**The key challenges** faced by the CP AoR include the lack of longer term and flexible funding to enable country offices to make a real shift in local engagement and system strengthening, as well as the absence of full-time coordinators in-country at an appropriate level, and adequate information management capacity in all humanitarian contexts. A critical **lesson learned** is that despite enhanced engagement on protection and human rights in situations of armed conflict, increasing disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law by parties to conflict continued to offset these efforts, and obstructed the ability to protect children’s rights in complex and high-threat environments.

## ANTI-TRAFFICKING

A growing body of research has shown that humanitarian crises may exacerbate pre-existing trafficking in persons (TIP) trends and give rise to new ones. Some forms of trafficking are a direct result of crises, such as exploitative sexual services demanded by armed groups or the forced recruitment of child soldiers. Other forms are less evident, with traffickers thriving on the widespread human, material, social and economic losses caused by crises. Conflict and displacement have a stronger impact on trafficking risks due to the general erosion of the rule of law and the breakdown of social safety nets or the lack of other protection systems.

Displaced persons may have limited access to education, financial resources or opportunities for income generation. This provides a fertile environment for traffickers to promise safe migration routes, employment and education or skills training, and deceive them into exploitative situations. Children who are displaced or separated from their families without support networks are particularly vulnerable to becoming targets for traffickers.<sup>24</sup>

There is a need to include a response to TIP in humanitarian emergencies throughout the humanitarian system. In recognition of this, the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) established the Anti-trafficking Task Team to discuss how to integrate TIP concerns into existing efforts towards improved response and outreach. The Anti-Trafficking Task Team aims to develop guidance and tools to strengthen anti-trafficking interventions in humanitarian responses and to provide recommendations on how to best mainstream them in the existing cluster activities.

In 2018 the Task Team completed a stock-taking exercise with the protection cluster, child protection and gender-based violence coordinators. The findings indicated that the two main barriers to addressing TIP in humanitarian settings are a limited understanding of TIP and an absence of tools adapted to crisis contexts. The results were presented at the GPC Conference in Bangkok in May 2018 to facilitate a shared understanding of key trends and issues, general lessons, and workable approaches. As a result, a collaboration was established with some AORs and the Task Team on Learning.

In late 2018, the Task Team on Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Action developed the “Anti-Trafficking Module” for the GPC’s Protection in Practice Training package. In November, the Task Team delivered a webinar to participants of a Training on Trainers, which also included an assignment to analyse TIP trends in their contexts and identify how to integrate anti-trafficking into their programmes.

In addition, two webinars were organised in partnership with the GPC Child Protection AOR. The first, held in October, targeted Help-desk Operators managed by the AOR. These Help-desks, located in Latin America, West Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, receive calls from child protection coordinators about possible cases and requests for technical expertise. The second webinar, held in November, targeted 15 Child Protection AOR field coordinators. Each webinar was customized to the target audience, and covered child trafficking trends in humanitarian settings and the role of child protection stakeholders.

In early 2019, the Task Team undertook a series of field consultations with humanitarian actors (both UN and NGO) working in health, livelihoods, shelter, humanitarian coordination, and information management to understand better how to support anti-trafficking efforts in crisis areas.

Additionally, the TT held a two-day practitioner working group in Geneva on March 14-15, 2019: “Extending Protection: Integrating anti-trafficking programming into existing mechanisms and strengthening systematic responses to support victims”, solutions-oriented working group focused on how anti-trafficking initiatives can be incorporated into existing mechanisms and how to strengthen systematic responses to support trafficking victims in crisis.



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<sup>24</sup> UNODC, “Trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict”, 2018



# COORDINATION



During my tenure as the Global Protection Cluster coordinator the Inter-Agency Standing Committee adopted a Policy on Protection in humanitarian action, 70% of Humanitarian Country Teams adopted a protection strategy and all Humanitarian Response Plans include protection as a strategic objective. These achievements do not belong to the GPC or the field clusters alone but I am proud of the work we have done to support those efforts through deployments, missions, practical advice, money and advice.

Our strategic approach is firmly faced towards the field. This is why the GPC does not have a membership structure or engage in processes at headquarters that do not bring obvious benefits to field colleagues. This approach has attracted both UNHCR investments in the cluster and additional donor funding, which have both enabled further field support in turn. Our field-facing approach requires a closer collaboration with the Areas of Responsibility, which has become much stronger through sharing of work, joint deployments, common fund-raising and collective retreats.

Technically, the GPC has produced an easily usable tool-kit on protection mainstreaming, tip-sheets on cash for protection, guidance on costing methodologies, an IHL tool-kit for field colleagues, and a nascent framework for results through these annual reviews.

Going forward, the major challenge is to identify the champions of the centrality of protection in a reformed UN development system, in which human rights does not figure large. I would add to that the reforms of the IASC structure have not clearly picked out protection as a key issue for the IASC, a missed opportunity to place protection on the agenda of the IASC in the same way that we demand of Humanitarian Country Teams. Our donors, the World Food Programme and P2P (formerly STAIT) emerged as strong champions on the centrality of protection during my tenure, whereas the traditional standard-bearers could have done more.

The GPC and field clusters require much greater partner investments in coordination than has been apparent during my tenure. That anything has moved forward is a miracle in a voluntary coordination system but at current 26 of the 28 protection clusters in the field are led by UNHCR, with only 10 having a co-coordinator arrangement. At the GPC Operations Cell, only one team member is seconded (by the Swiss Development Cooperation) with all other team members paid by UNHCR. Partners have made significant investments in the Task Teams, notably in information management, anti-trafficking, law and policy and mainstreaming but in the areas of learning and development there are significant gaps. The administration of the GPC, subject to UNHCR rules and procedures, is not suited to a collective platform of agencies working in a principled and equal way and acts as a significant drag on performance.

The direction of the GPC as a field-facing operations cell has been set largely by UNHCR as lead agency, with the support of donors. The challenges identified above can only be overcome by defining more clearly what the expectations of partners are and by widening participation in implementing the centrality of protection, with new ideas and greater funding.

That said, the 2018-19 GPC work-plan is being delivered, and based on evidence collated, it boasts an implementation rate of 97% for 2018. In 2019, the GPC will develop a new Strategic Framework 2020-2024.

The Global Protection Cluster has taken a lead role in 2018 in operationalising the centrality of protection, through improved coordination and the development of policies, guidelines and tools, as well as strengthening the role of our 27 field protection clusters and working groups. In 2018 we concentrated on building the coherence of efforts across the GPC and AORs, collating and communicating good practices and providing practical field support. We accomplished this through the following activities:



- ➔ Holding the first protection conference (28 May to 1 June 2018 in Bangkok), with all field protection clusters and AORs. Appropriately, the overarching theme was the 20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998-2018);
- ➔ Convening a stock-taking exercise (14-15 October 2018 in Amman) on the implementation of the 2016 IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action. The emphasis was on sharing emerging good practice and identifying both challenges and means of addressing them;
- ➔ Providing field support through the GPC Help Desk function, the on-line Community of Practice, the GPC website and GPC Alerts as well as conducting training, providing technical advice and guidance on the HPC. In addition, 23 field missions in support of 14 countries were undertaken in 2018, including to L2 and L3 emergency operations;
- ➔ Delivering monthly training on protection information management and analysis, coordination skills, protection in practice, cash and protection and mainstreaming of protection. We also increased the breadth and depth of the GPC trainings on protection by developing a GPC E-Learning on Humanitarian Protection and

collaborating with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Genocide on training field clusters in how to identify Atrocity Crimes. In addition, the GPC Coordinator stimulated links with academia through training engagements at Aix-en-Provence and Olomouc and by joining the Child Protection Learning Network.

- ➔ Supporting Humanitarian Country Teams to develop and adopt protection strategies; the result was that by the end of 2018, some 70% of HCTs had adopted protection strategies;
- ➔ Communicating protection issues through webinars, Alerts, social media, the GPC data portal and the website.



# GPC OVERVIEW



The Global Protection Cluster has taken a lead role in 2018 in operationalising the centrality of protection, through improved coordination and the development of policies, guidelines and tools, as well as strengthening the role of field protection clusters.

Key points on the roll out of the IASC protection policy and the GPC's commitment to the centrality of protection in 2018 include the following:

**Stock-Taking exercise:** to ensure that progress is made in adopting ways of working outlined in the IASC Protection Policy, the GPC convened a stock-taking exercise on 14-15 October 2018 with a view to sharing emerging good practice as well as identifying challenges and means of addressing them;

**Law and Policy, Cash and PIM:** Throughout 2018, the GPC worked to reinforce the areas of law and policy, cash assistance, and protection information management (PIM) in line with the grand bargain;

**Field Support:** GPC field support to strengthen protection capacity continued in 2018 through the Help Desk function, the on-line Community of Practice, the GPC website, GPC Alerts, trainings, webinars, guidance on the HPC, as well as field missions;

**GPC Operations Cell and Task Teams Field Support Missions:** In 2018, 24 field missions in support of 25 operations were undertaken by the global protection cluster operations cell and its task teams including to L3 and L2 operations (mission locations and details are included in the annex below);

**GPC Roving Procap Support Missions:** A considerable number of protection clusters, mostly led by UNHCR, developed HCT protection strategies: by the end of 2018, a total of 16 operations had HCT protection strategies. Through the deployment of the GPC Roving Procap in 2018, a total of

three operations commenced work on developing HCT protection strategies or updated their protection strategies;

**GPC Alerts/Advocacy:** GPC support to field protection clusters in conveying their advocacy efforts continued in 2018;

**Learning:** In 2018, the GPC Operations Cell and the Task Team on Learning increased the breadth and depth of the GPC trainings on protection by developing a GPC E-Learning on Humanitarian Protection;

**Help Desk:** throughout 2018, the GPC Operations Cell addressed 500 Help Desk requests;

**Technical advice:** the GPC commissioned a study in 2018 on unit-based costing methodologies for HRPs and Protection Clusters to enhance technical understanding of unit-based costing of HRPs for protection, as well as the implications for coordination and protection action in humanitarian crises. Cash tip sheets were also developed by the GPC Cash Expert for the GPC's four Areas of Responsibility (GBV, Mine Action, Child Protection, and HLP) ;

**Webinars:** In 2018, the GPC commenced monthly protection conversations through the medium of webinars, engaging a wide of variety of partners and others on thematic issues;

**GPC Conference:** To maintain a coherent and integrated protection response, the GPC and its Areas of Responsibility (AoR) joined together in a Protection Conference under the broad theme of the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Protection Conference 2018 took place from 28 May to 1 June 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. The three-day conference covered substantial ground through formal presentations, panels and interactive group sessions. Updates were provided on important initiatives such as improving the humanitarian program cycle (HPC), localisation, the Centrality of Protection in the New Way of Working and the GP20 Action Plan.

## EVENTS

- ➔ **Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of IDPs**  
*Geneva, Switzerland* 20 February
- ➔ **Global Protection Cluster Thematic Round Table discussion on IDP participation in peace processes and agreements**  
*Kiev, Ukraine* 22 May
- ➔ **GPC Protection Conference**  
*Bangkok, Thailand* 28 May - 01 June
- ➔ **Panel discussion on the human rights of internally displaced persons in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** during the 38th session of the Human Rights Council  
*Geneva, Switzerland* 26 June
- ➔ **Photo exhibition and virtual reality experience: 'Through the Lens of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement'**  
*Geneva, Switzerland* 24 - 28 September
- ➔ **Side event 'Internally Displaced Persons: Participation to Secure Solutions' during the 39th session of the Human Rights Council**  
*Geneva, Switzerland* 26 September
- ➔ **Lunch of revamped GPC website, Data portal and Database** 8 October
- ➔ **GPC Stock Take on the IASC Protection Policy and the Centrality of Protection,**  
*Amman, Jordan* 14 - 15 October
- ➔ **GPC Thematic Round Table discussion on 'Political Participation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs),**  
*Amman, Jordan* 18 October

## WEBINARS

- ➔ **Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Data Portal Webinar.** find [here](#). 31 October.
- ➔ **Protection within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Webinar – A common approach.** find [here](#). 15 November.
- ➔ **Webinar On The Professional Standards For Protection Work 2018.** find [here](#). 18 December

## TRAININGS

### Task Team on Learning

- ➔ **Protection Cluster Coordination Training (Somalia Operation)**  
Nairobi, Kenya 9 - 13 April
- ➔ **ToT on Protection in Practice**  
Amman, Jordan (for MENA region) 21 - 25 October  
Panama city, Panama (for the Americas) 19 -23 November

### Task Team on Protection Mainstreaming

- ➔ **Protection Mainstreaming Training**  
Tripoli, Libya 20 - 27 July

### Task Team on Protection Information Management Analysis

- ➔ **ToT on Protection Information Management**  
Copenhagen, Denmark 19 - 23 February  
Copenhagen, Denmark 19 – 23 November
- ➔ **Training on Protection Information Management**  
Nairobi, Kenya 12 - 16 March  
Amman, Jordan 30 April - 04 May  
Senegal, Dakar 23 - 27 July  
Delhi, India 27 - 31 August  
(for afghanistan's protection cluster)

### GBV Coordination Workshops

- ➔ **Capacity Building on Coordinating GBV Prevention and Response in Emergencies**  
Niger 2-12 May
- ➔ **Training Workshop on GBV Coordination in Emergencies**  
Cameroon 18-26 November
- ➔ **GBV coordination workshop**  
Burundi 8-13 July  
Tunis for Libya operation 2nd August  
Somalia November-December

### Other

- ➔ **Training on Identification of Atrocity and Crimes**  
Bangkok, Thailand - May  
Two sessions were delivered by the GPC Partner, the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect.
- ➔ **Protection Information Management Training**  
Bangkok, Thailand - May  
Two sessions were delivered by the GPC Partner, the Danish Refugee Council





## GPC OPERATIONS CELL FIELD SUPPORT MISSIONS

**Venezuela** \_\_\_\_\_ 10 – 21 January  
Develop capacity in inter-agency coordination

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** \_\_\_\_\_ 23 – 27 April  
Support planning processes for Cash based interventions

**Ethiopia** \_\_\_\_\_ 18-24 March  
Information Management (IM) Support Mission

**Niger** \_\_\_\_\_ 17-27 June  
Information Management (IM) Support Mission

**Mogadishu, Somalia** \_\_\_\_\_ 12-21 July  
Development of a Protection Mainstreaming Action Plan for the ICCG and clusters in support of the centrality of protection

**Nairobi, Kenya** \_\_\_\_\_ 12 – 21 July  
Protection mainstreaming in cash-based interventions workshop for the Somalia Operation

**Beirut, Lebanon** \_\_\_\_\_ 16- 19 September  
Humanitarian Program Cycle support mission to the WoS/Syria Operation

**Amman, Jordan** \_\_\_\_\_ 21 – 25 October  
Training of Trainers on Protection in Practice for the MENA region

**Nairobi, Kenya** \_\_\_\_\_ 18 – 24 November  
Training of Trainers on Protection Mainstreaming for the Somalia Operation

**Hargeisa, Somaliland** \_\_\_\_\_ 25 – 27 November  
Protection Mainstreaming training for all sectors

**Panama city, Panama** \_\_\_\_\_ 19 – 23 November  
ToT Protection in Practice Training for the Americas

**Tunis** \_\_\_\_\_ 17 – 19 December  
Protection Mainstreaming Training for local partners of the Protection Cluster

**Ethiopia** \_\_\_\_\_ 5 – 17 December  
Joint GPC-IDP Section support mission to review the operational context in Gedeo and Guji zones

## GPC ROVING PROCAP MISSIONS

GPC roving procap missions in 2018 focused on providing support in developing HCT protection strategies

- Myanmar July
- Burundi October
- Iraq November

## GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER

**26** \_\_\_\_\_  
FIELD PROTECTION CLUSTERS

## HELP DESK REQUESTS

**500** \_\_\_\_\_

### THEMES:

- NGO co-facilitation of the Protection Cluster (ToRs and MoUs)
- Model terms of reference for co-coordinators/ co-facilitators/co-leads
- Rotation of the cluster co-coordinator
- Protection Mainstreaming Resources/Material/Training
- Protection Strategy (good examples, technical feedback)
- Durable Solutions (Return guidance/Relocation and good examples/ IDP Return Verification exercise/Voluntariness assessment/ return benchmarks)
- HCT Protection Strategy guidance (guidance and good examples)
- Presentations (GPC/Centrality of Protection/Cluster approach and functions of the protection clusters/ examples of protection mainstreaming and protection integration)
- Role of the HC/HCT in the consolidated appeal process (Syria, Yemen, Iraq)
- Advocacy in conflict settings
- HRP process Protection Mainstreaming vs. Protection integration
- Humanitarian-development nexus in practice
- HRP Process

## GPC COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

**271** \_\_\_\_\_  
VISITORS

**38** \_\_\_\_\_  
ACTIVE USERS

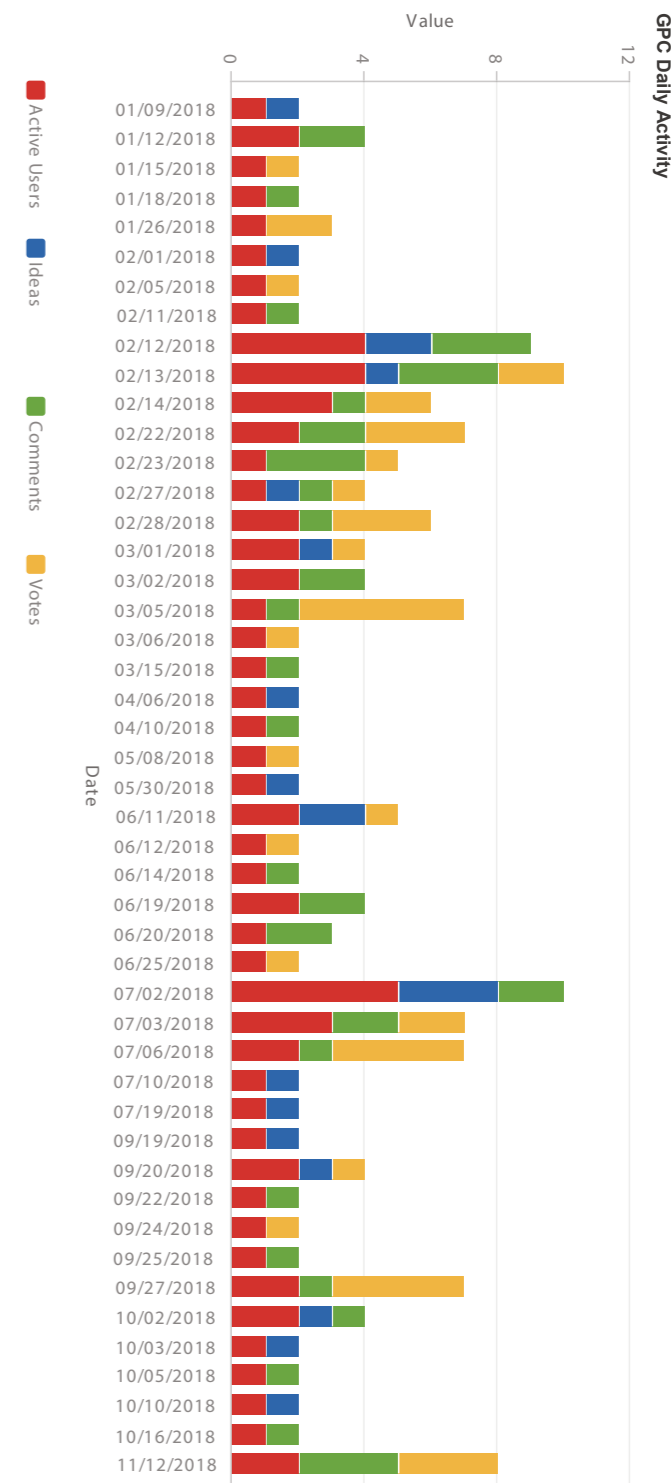
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IDEAS

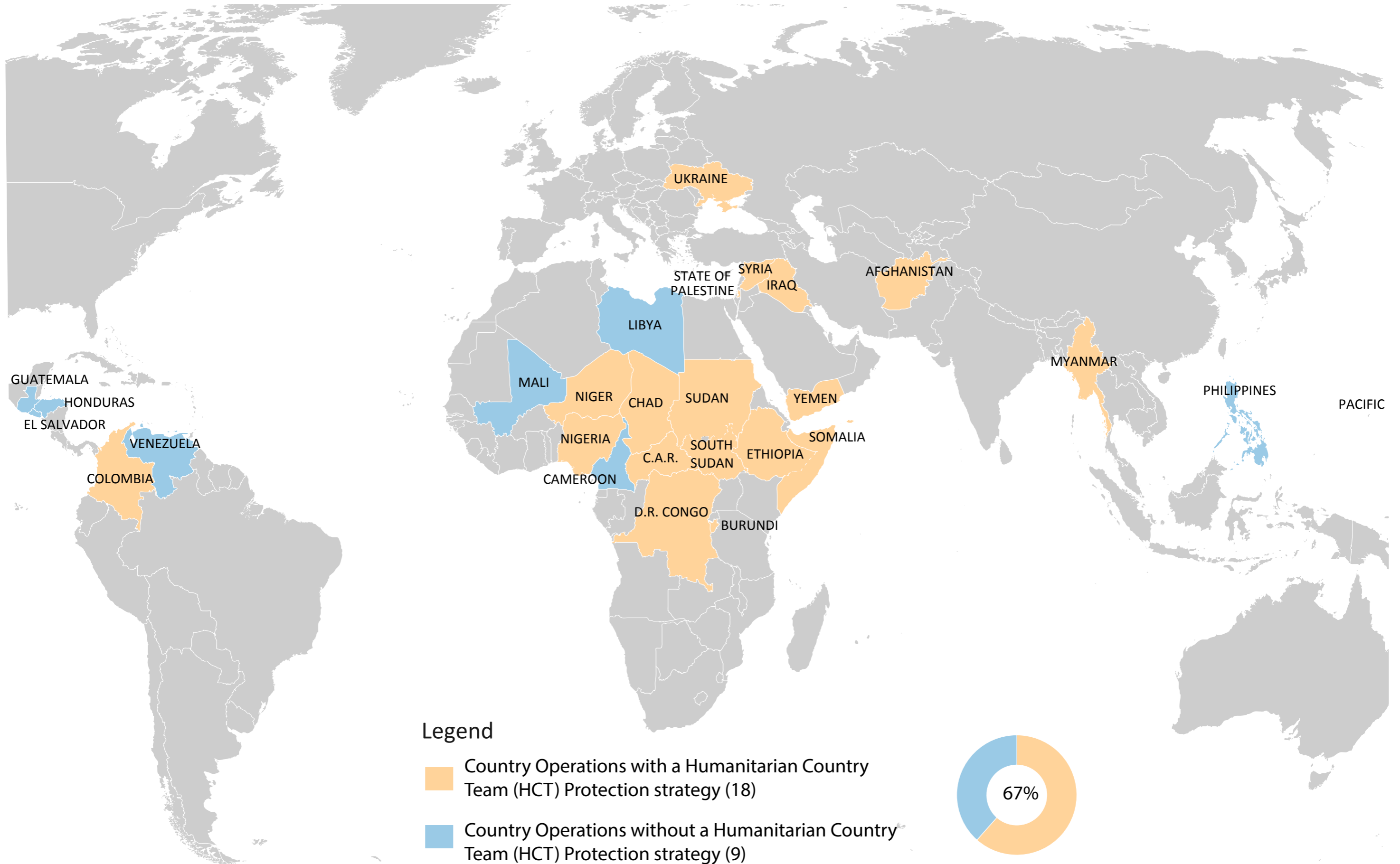
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VOTES

**42** \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS

## MOST POPULAR DISCUSSIONS

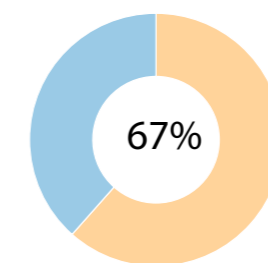
- Examples of national and legal frameworks on IDPs
- Protection mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation tools
- Armed conflict in towns and cities: practical steps to mitigate the impact of conflict on the ground
- Protection Information Management Webinars





### Legend

- Country Operations with a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Protection strategy (18)
- Country Operations without a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Protection strategy (9)



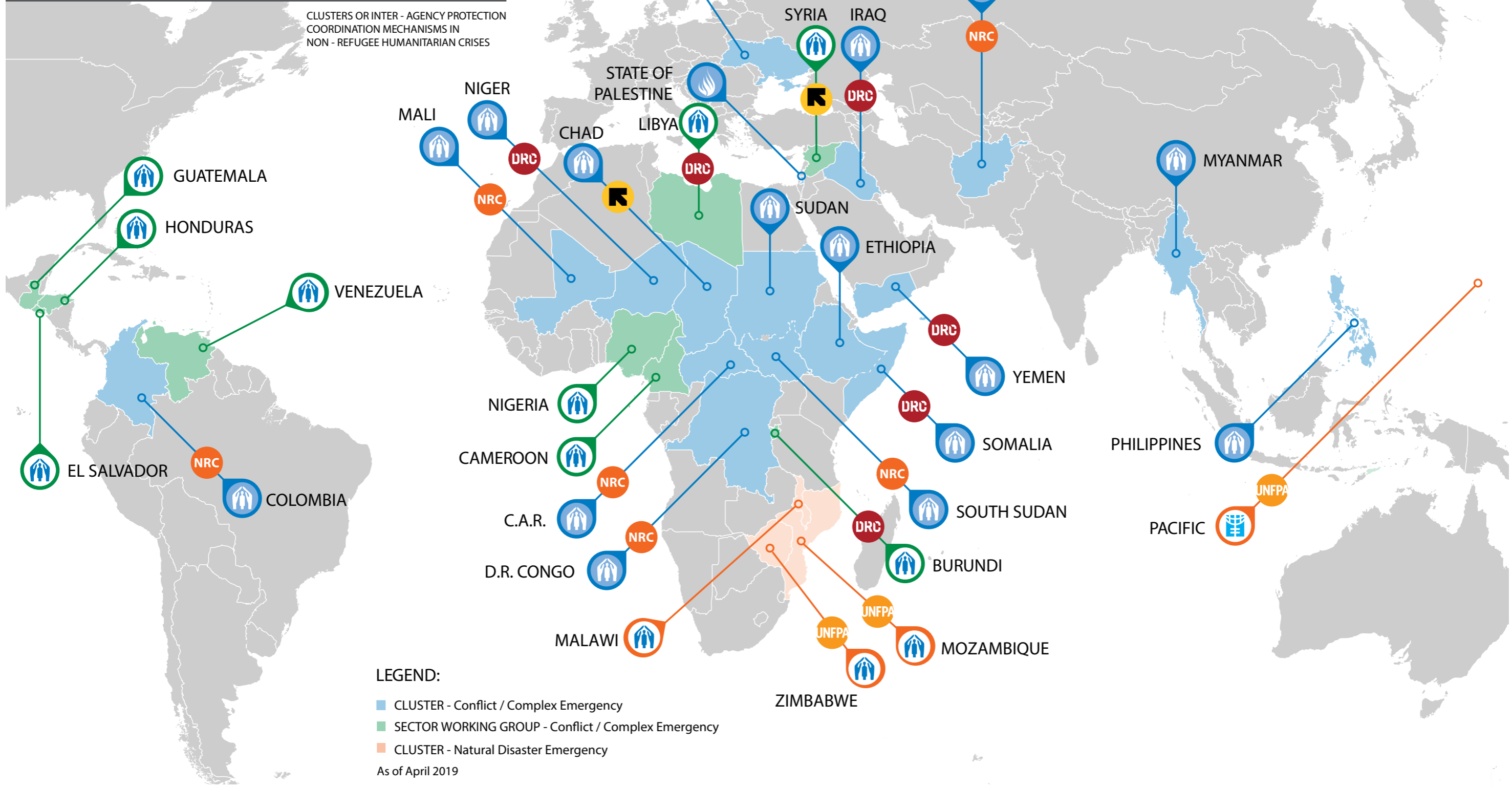
The Map Excludes Natural Disaster Emergencies



Global Protection Cluster

# PROTECTION CLUSTERS

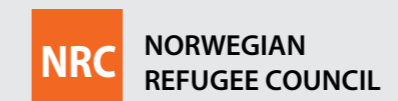
CLUSTERS OR INTER-AGENCY PROTECTION COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN NON-REFUGEE HUMANITARIAN CRISES



### LEAD AGENCIES



### CO-LEAD AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS



# PUBLICATIONS



Global Protection Cluster Protection Conference 2018 Report. Find [here](#)

ANNUAL GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER (GPC) CONFERENCE  
GPC CONFERENCE REPORT  
Brussels, 28 May – 1 June 2018



Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action GPC 2017 Review  
Find [here](#)

CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION  
GPC 2017 REVIEW



Peace Agreements And the Road to Resolve Internal Displacement: Report of a Global Protection Cluster Roundtable. Find [here](#)

PEACE AGREEMENTS AND THE ROAD TO RESOLVE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT  
REPORT OF A GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER ROUND-TABLE - #17V

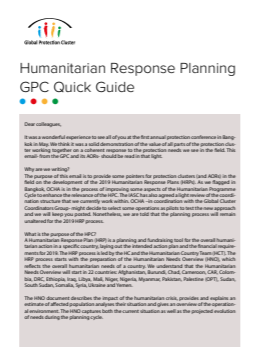


Unit-Based Costing Methodologies for HRPs and Protection Clusters  
Find [here](#)

UNIT-BASED COSTING METHODOLOGIES FOR HRP AND PROTECTION CLUSTERS



Outcome Report on the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Stock Take on the IASC Protection Policy and the Centrality of Protection. Find [here](#)



Humanitarian Response Planning – GPC Quick Guide. Find [here](#)  
HNO-HRP Child Protection AoR Check-list. Find [here](#)

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANNING GPC QUICK GUIDE

## GPC ALERTS

- GPC Whole of Syria Protection Sector message on East Ghouta - March. find [here](#)
- Video Message by the South Sudan Protection Cluster Coordinator on Protection & Hunger - April. find [here](#)

## VIDEO MESSAGES

- [ERC message for Amman Stock Taking event](#)
- [Global Protection Cluster Coordinator's Message for Amman Stock-Taking event](#)

## TIP SHEETS

- Gender-Based Violence And Cash-Based Interventions Tip-Sheet. Find [here](#)
- Housing, Land And Property And Cash-Based Interventions Tip Sheet. Find [here](#)
- Mine Action And Cash-Based Interventions Tip-Sheet. Find [here](#)
- Child Protection and Cash-Based Interventions & Protection Tip-Sheet. Find [here](#)



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