



## National Protection Cluster - Yemen

### Vulnerability Criteria

#### I. WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT ABOUT?

The principle of impartiality requires that humanitarian aid and action be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination.

The number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen continues to outstrip available resources. This document provides guidance for humanitarian actors, both protection and non-protection actors, on how to target the most in need based on protection and socio-economic vulnerabilities in the context of Yemen.

This document **does not provide a generic list of who is vulnerable in the country. Each organization/partner has to assess vulnerability for each project at the planning stage before humanitarian response is initiated.** This guidance highlights key definitions, factors, risks, and groups which should be considered to ensure that they have taken measures to identify and assist those most in need, and that the full range of vulnerabilities has been considered in the formulation of response strategies and projects in Yemen.

#### **IDENTIFYING AND Targeting THE MOST IN NEED BASED ON VULNERABILITY**

There is no generic list that prioritizes and targets one population group or set of risks over another. Each humanitarian actor must analyze population groups and vulnerability risks and considerations for each project at the planning stage before the response is initiated.

#### II. CRITICAL ASPECTS

Determining “vulnerability” and “vulnerable groups” typically requires analysis of multiple dimensions based on age, gender, diversity, specific needs (which can be location specific), displacement status, and other characteristics:

- AGE: Children, adolescents and older persons are often excluded from formal decision-making structures and, consequently, the specific risks that they face are often not taken into account.
- GENDER: This refers to the socially constructed and assigned characteristics, roles and responsibilities of women and men.
- DIVERSITY: Members of some communities can face specific protection risks.
- LOCATION SPECIFIC NEEDS: People living in hard-to-reach areas.





### III. DEFINITION OF VULNERABILITY

The terms “vulnerable” and “vulnerability” are common terms in the humanitarian sector, but their use can be vague, often being seen as substitutes for “poor” and “poverty.”

People may find themselves in situations of vulnerability, which can arise from various circumstances, including those related to gender, age, physical and health condition, legal status, economic factors, displacement, among other. Vulnerability is shaped by personal (internal) factors and environmental (external) factors. As a result, they may not be able to enjoy equal access to human rights and may be more exposed to threats/risks and/or marginalized. People are, or become, more vulnerable due to a combination of physical, social, environmental, and economical factors.

Vulnerability is not a fixed category and can change over time with changing circumstances. Not everyone with the same characteristics will experience the same level of vulnerability, i.e. being a woman does not make the person vulnerable *per se* but a pregnant woman whose husband was killed and whose house has been damaged will have protection concerns. Responding to ‘specific needs’ of older persons, chronically ill, persons with disabilities, lactating or pregnant women, minority groups means safeguarding their human rights to shelter, food, health and education and this sometimes requires the humanitarian actors to have a stronger focus on certain groups or individuals for support

- 1) People are or become more vulnerable due to a combination of physical, social, environmental and political factors, and vulnerability is not a fixed category. Not everyone with the same characteristics will experience the same level of vulnerability.
- 2) Responding to specific needs of the elderly, chronically ill, persons with disabilities (including physical and mental), lactating or pregnant women, and the displaced to meet their human rights to shelter, food, health and education often requires humanitarian actors to have a stronger analysis on these groups or individuals considering the circumstances which make them more vulnerable to rights violations and protection risks.

### V. WHY A PROTECTION AND VULNERABILITY FOCUS?

- ✚ THOSE MOST IN NEED: Millions of people in Yemen have been affected by the conflict and natural disaster including displacement as a consequence. Within populations, certain individuals and groups may be more vulnerable than others being exposed to distinct protection risks due to their individual factors. It is necessary, and a priority, to identify such individuals or groups, enhance their resilience and address specific needs stemming from specific vulnerabilities, through protection services that are gender and age sensitive.
- ✚ NEED FOR a Protection lens in targeting: Funding and resource constraints mean that humanitarian assistance needs to be targeted based on certain criteria. Targeting should be done bearing in **mind protection risks, gender roles and socio-economic vulnerability concerns**.
- ✚ ENSURING THAT YOU HAVE THE FULL PICTURE Including disaggregated data [details of gender, age, marital status, household composition, disability, economic situation, serious medical conditions, priorities and capabilities, and also conduct gender analysis] in assessments and when deciding on who-where-what-when-how to support will result in a fuller picture related to needs.





## VII. CAN YOU PROVIDE A LIST OF THOSE MOST VULNERABLE THAT SHOULD BE Targeted and/or PRIORITIZED?

- ✚ There is no generic prioritization list. Each organization/partner should assess vulnerability for each project, in a participatory manner, at the planning stage before a humanitarian response project is initiated. Ensure that vulnerability assessments integrate gender analysis and that projects have a gender equality component.

## VIII. CONDUCT VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS WHEN PLANNING ASSISTANCE for PEOPLE

- ✚ CONDUCT A VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS AS PART OF PLANNING YOUR ASSISTANCE This will help to identify those persons for whom it will be harder to recover without support or who may face particular protection risks if assistance is delayed. Consider the following components in your vulnerability analysis.
  - **LOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD:** conflict-affected areas, IDP communal sites or host communities, area with no presence of humanitarian actors.
  - **PERSONAL FACTORS:** Household composition (large families with children; single-headed households), older people (especially single or with mobility difficulties), children. Specific needs of family members.
  - **SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS:** Level of poverty, loss of livelihoods, assets, seasonality, vulnerability, etc.
  - **DOCUMENTATION:** Do people have the documents they need to register as IDPs and access services?
  - **GENDER ANALYSIS** as part of needs assessments and analysis of the findings
- ✚ Consider who is most vulnerable, including areas where access is difficult and areas where the limited number of humanitarian actors are present. Consider different groups in relation to their displacement experience: non-displaced conflict-affected population, IDPs, as well as returnees.
- ✚ **EQUALITY OF RESPONSE:** avoid creating a divide between groups, by including host communities in your response. In small communities affected by the ongoing hostilities, it may be necessary to provide assistance to all residents to avoid tensions.

## VI. ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WHEN LOOKING TO ASSIST PEOPLE MOST IN NEED

- ✚ Assessments and surveys must ensure that data and details related to vulnerable groups **are at minimum gender, age, disability disaggregated, and aim to collect information from representative samples of the wide array of population groups in order to best identify their respective needs.**
- ✚ **Community participation** must be broad based (men/women/disabled/elderly/children) in all phases of the program: (i) assessment phase of who to support; (ii) in deciding what type of assistance; (iii) when and how information is shared with beneficiaries; (iv) during implementation; and (v) monitoring and evaluation.





The below highlights key factors, risks, and groups which must be considered when planning and targeting (the list is in no specific order and is not exhaustive). This will help to identify those persons amongst natural disaster & conflict-affected populations, IDPs and returnees and other vulnerable groups for whom it will be harder to recover without support or who may face particular protection risks if assistance is delayed. Ensure disaggregation by gender and age and disability disaggregated data for better analysis of issues and risks and note that vulnerabilities are not mutually exclusive.

## CHILDREN

- ✚ Who are unaccompanied and separated?
- ✚ Engaging in child labor, including worst forms of child labor, or recruited for military purposes. It does not only refer to children who are taking or have taken a direct part in hostilities.
- ✚ School dropouts (IDPs & Refugees)
- ✚ Children living with disabilities.
- ✚ Child Trafficking
- ✚ Children from minority groups including al-Muhamasheen.
- ✚ Child marriage
- ✚ Living with older or disabled caregivers
- ✚ Living in crowded spaces (IDP sites, with host families) may be at greater risk of domestic violence.
- ✚ Child begging (impacts Muhamasheen children the most. Their limited access to education contributes to a cycle of poverty and marginalization)
- ✚ Undocumented (birth certificates, asylum seeker or refugee certificate)

Due to the conflict and the changes in their lives, children are more at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. For many, access to education is occasionally disrupted and their wellbeing is affected. Children, adolescents, and young people are exposed to specific risks due to their gender, which is important to take into account.

## YOUTH

- ✚ Adolescent girls at risk of early or forced marriage.
- ✚ Pregnant girls (who may face social, protection and/or medical risks and, as a result of pregnancy, has specific assistance needs)
- ✚ Male youth who need safe and appropriate livelihood opportunities





## ELDERLY

- ✚ Specific needs in regard to security, shelter, access to services, health, NFIs, WASH facilities, inheritance rights and assistive devices
- ✚ Separation from care givers, family members and community networks
- ✚ Elderly person has dependents, especially children or adult dependents with disabilities/serious medical condition.

Please consider the following factors if prioritizing older persons: They may suffer from health problems and/or have difficulty in adjusting to their new environment and knowing where to seek assistance, in particular those who have been separated from usual caregivers or caring for dependents including children. Please consider specific vulnerabilities concerning elderly women who can experience a specific form of GBV in the form of withholding inheritance rights.

## WOMEN AND GIRLS

- ✚ May face particular risks due to their gender and situation, including harmful survival mechanisms (e.g., early marriage), trafficking.
- ✚ Survivors of violence including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
- ✚ Unaccompanied and separated girls.
- ✚ Survivors of violence require targeted and specific attention.
- ✚ Specific needs in regard to security; women can be more susceptible to violence in crowded spaces like IDP sites.
- ✚ Specific needs for access to services, health, WASH facilities including for pregnant and lactating women.
- ✚ Women and girls living with disabilities.
- ✚ Female-headed households, including widows, unmarried women, and women in need of legal support for inheritance for custody and family law related issues.
- ✚ Female detainees and/or former detainees are regarded social misfits, are denied access to services, denied opportunity for reintegration, to the families and community and experience highest levels of stigma.
- ✚ Older women, and women from minority groups (e.g. Muhamasheen), as well as female beggars who are at particular risk of sexual exploitation.

Women and girls may face protection risks particular to their gender (trafficking, GBV, negative coping mechanisms such as survival sex). In the context of Yemen, migrant women and girls are specifically vulnerable; Illiterate women and those without qualifications have fewer opportunities, are more likely to be engaged in low-paid and precarious work and are less likely to know of services they can access when in need. Some groups of women and girls are more vulnerable to GBV due to the intersection of gender with age, social status, disability, migratory status, geographic location, and tribe or ethnic affiliation.





## PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS, DISABILITIES AND INJURIES

- ✚ Specific needs in regard to security, shelter, access to services, health, NFIs, WASH facilities, etc.
- ✚ Difficulty in accessing needed medicine, healthcare, food/nutrition; and assistive devices.
- ✚ Separation from family members and community networks
- ✚ Persons living with HIV/AIDS – social stigma and risk of refoulement/deportations for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.
- ✚ Persons/children with disability – A person/child who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- ✚ Single persons with disability – persons with disability living alone and do not have a spouse, children or relatives to take care of and are dependent on the community to care for them. Some are socially excluded. Persons with mental ill health – health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

People with chronic illness and serious medical condition are under care treatment of a medical doctor. That require regular medical attention and medication. Their life can be at risk if their treatment is interrupted, and they may require targeted assistance for survival.

Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons with chronic illnesses: ▪ Are they able to have continuous access to their medication? Do they require targeted assistance for survival? Does the condition require a specific diet? ▪ Does the person have an untreated medical condition?

## DISPLACED PERSONS

- ✚ Reduced support networks.
- ✚ Short-term displaced, Long-term displaced
- ✚ Susceptibility to vulnerabilities and negative coping mechanisms, including based on where they live: sites, urban, rural or hosted by others.
- ✚ Evictions and lack of access to land tenure
- ✚ Break-down of social fabric and social cohesion
- ✚ High susceptibility to violence
- ✚ Loss and lack of access to civil documentation
- ✚ Limited livelihood opportunities
- ✚ Displaced who are exposed to possible hostilities and disputes due to potential housing, land and property issues.
- ✚ Refugees and asylum seekers, who have weakened support networks and limited access to humanitarian assistance and economic opportunities.





- ✚ Refugees and asylum seeker at risk of refoulement or of deportation
- ✚ Refugees and asylum seeker marginalized from society/community or exposed to discrimination, harassment, vilification, exclusion from participation and/or physical abuse by the society.
- ✚ Asylum seekers who were unable to register as such and those who are unable to renew their documents.
- ✚ Migrants who lack access to basic services, subject to detention, physical and psychological abuse
- ✚ Migrants who are subject to forced recruitment, trafficking, unpaid labor; and forced deportations.

## RETURNEES

- ✚ Returnees who are exposed to possible hostilities and disputes due to potential housing, land and property issues.
- ✚ Returnees who suffer from trauma
- ✚ Limited access to basic services and livelihood opportunities in return areas impacting returning Female-headed households the most and exacerbating negative coping mechanisms.
- ✚ Returnees are at particular risk of explosive hazards

## MINORITY GROUPS (Muhamasheen)

- ✚ Reduced access to public services, including formal education, leading to high illiteracy rates and contributing to the cycle of poverty.
- ✚ Social exclusion
- ✚ Exploitation & abuse
- ✚ Ostracization commonly compounded by the lack of birth certificates and civil documentation.
- ✚ High risk of evictions

Minority groups might be facing higher risks of isolation and discrimination (lack of documentation, social services, etc), and thus may require support. Examples: Muhamasheen, stateless persons, persons with undetermined nationality. Please consider the following factors if prioritizing persons from minority groups: ▪ Does the person have documents and access assistance ? ▪ Has the person been refused access to services due to her/his minority status?

## POPULATION HOSTING DISPLACED PERSONS

- ✚ Tensions with displaced communities linked to access to services.
- ✚ Reduced living space.
- ✚ Socio-economic hardships.





## PEOPLE IN ACCESS-RESTRICTED AREAS

- ✚ Denial of basic rights, including restricted freedom of movement and access to adequate food, water and health care
- ✚ Infrequent or non-existent humanitarian assistance

## PEOPLE LIVING IN AREAS CONTAMINATED WITH EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS

- ✚ People involved in rubble clearance and reconstruction work and agricultural workers.
- ✚ Children are at particular risk of explosive hazards.
- ✚ Women have been highly exposed to explosive devices when particularly going to look for fuel wood for the families.
- ✚ People on the move.

## SURVIVORS of LAND-MINE INCIDENTS

- ✚ Physical and psychological trauma.
- ✚ Limited freedom of movement.
- ✚ Limited re-integration opportunities and rehabilitation services.

## PEOPLE WITH NO LEGAL DOCUMENTATION

- ✚ Reduced access to assistance.
- ✚ Denial of basic rights, including freedom of movement and access to services and employment. Jeopardized rights to property, inheritance and child custody.
- ✚ Children born in the north out of rape/wedlock at risk of statelessness.
- ✚ Individuals unable to prove that they meet the requirements for the Yemeni nationality due to, inter alia, lack of birth registration and documentation (*This category includes IDPs at-risk of statelessness, mainly Yemeni citizens, originated from the North, displaced in the South, but not considered by local authorities in the South as "Southerners" and no longer regarded as "Northerners" by local authorities in the North. Additionally, Yemeni nationals who returned from Somalia owing to the war situation, and who have no Somali nationality face obstacles and challenges in proving their Yemeni descent. They usually engage in lengthy and costly bureaucratic processes (including obtaining documentation from traditional chiefs in Somalia to prove their origin) that may render them stateless. Individuals with links to more than one State on the basis of birth, descent, marriage or habitual residence and who are treated by the Yemeni authorities as possessing links which give rise to a claim of the nationality of another State are also at risk of statelessness particularly for Yemenis who lived in Iraq and the Gulf countries for decades but were prompted to return following the 1991 Iraq-Kuwait war.*)







## PEOPLE FACING EXTREME SOCIO-ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

- ✚ Extreme forms of deprivation (extreme poverty)
- ✚ More susceptible to exposing family members to protection risks making ends meet (e.g. child labor, sexual exploitation)

Please consider the following factors when targeting people with extreme socio-economic hardship: Main breadwinner killed, abducted, missing, injured or disabled. People who lost their jobs due to the conflict (including the disruption of economic ties) or cannot access them. People who are unable to meet basic needs and to achieve minimum standard of living, including access to food, water, clothing, sanitary items, shelter, medical assistance. Persons living in sub-standard accommodation, which could trigger secondary displacement, involuntary return and other risks.

