



GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2022

Thematic Segment – Access for Protection

Concept Note

Engaging with Access Working Groups:

Good Practices and Opportunities

Friday 28th October, 13:30 – 15:00 CEST

As mentioned in the Humanitarian access in situations of armed conflict's manual, ***'access is essential to effective humanitarian action but is not an end goal'***. It is ***'rather a means to fulfil the broader goal of improving the humanitarian conditions of people in need of assistance and protection'***.

In light of the alarming large-scale instances of forced displacements recently recorded by the Global protection Cluster, compounded with the severe constraints limiting the access to around 50 to 75% of people in need of protection¹, there is a vital need for a stronger role of protection actors to play in terms of access analysis. In addition, it is critical for them to ensure the Do No Harm approach and protection lenses are applied while access to and from people in need is advocated for and negotiated.

In order to achieve these objectives, joint and coordinated efforts between protection clusters and access working groups is imperative to mitigate access constraints while successful negotiations remain to be a pre-requisite. This collaboration should go beyond technical and operational information-sharing related to humanitarian access arrangements (inc. information about humanitarian pauses, corridors, days of tranquillity, frontlines, ceasefires, etc.) aiming at mitigating/reducing protection risks and achieving protection outcomes.

While the risks that people face will differ from one conflict to another, people with certain characteristics may be exposed to heightened risk during armed conflict and regularly face specific access limitations that need to be particularly taken into consideration when negotiating access.

This requires understanding and analysing in depth how conflict affects different individuals or groups in different ways, depending on their sex, gender, age and other factors such as ethnicity or specific needs, in order to provide an effective humanitarian and protection response. Since risks are not static and may change during the course of a conflict, updated and timely conflict and protection analysis must inform any action in conflict settings and access and protection strategy.

The virtual event aims to better familiarize the audience with the role of the Humanitarian Access Working Groups. Jointly with OCHA, UNHCR and two Senior protection cluster coordinators, it further explores opportunities and good practices on how an enhanced collaboration would enable the very

¹ The number of persons in need have globally reached 150 million in 2022

tackling challenges to full and unimpeded humanitarian access which is a fundamental prerequisite to effective protection of people affected by conflict.

OCHA and UNHCR panellists will be joined by Dr Ashley Jackson, the co-founder and co-director of the Centre on Armed Groups whose presentation would aim at providing examples of some developments since her contribution to the 2017 study '[Presence & Proximity to stay and deliver, five years on](#)'. A particular focus will be devoted to her research finding according to which a direct link exists between the lack of proximity and the lack of attention to protection concerns. Dr Ashley will highlight innovative and effective approaches on how to enhance the protective benefits of proximity and the protection risks and concerns when presence is poorly understood and/or generally precluded by the dominance of remote approaches.

In addition to the above, the panellists will reflect upon the following questions:

How can we better negotiate access using protection risks analysis and leveraging protection outcomes?

How can we measure the impact of access negotiation on the protection of affected civilians?

Who should engage with armed actors on protection issues caused by access restrictions when an access working group is established and in the absence of an access working group?

Speakers, Moderation and Guests

- **Moderation:** Houda Chalchoul, Snr. Legal Officer (IHL), UNHCR Geneva
- Sophie Solomon, Global Access Advisor, OCHA
- David Hattar, Roving Protection Officer, South Sudan
- Ramsey Bryant, Snr Protection Cluster Coordinator officer, Nigeria-Maiduguri
- Dr Ashley Jackson, researcher and author. Co-founder and Co-director of the Centre on Armed Groups