



Guidance Note on Protection Considerations for the Flood Response

Protection and Areas of Responsibility

(Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, and Mine Action)

Overarching Principles

- Core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence should be observed at all times.
- Ensure preparedness measures are based on careful analysis of the context.
- Consistently and regularly involve and consult the affected population including all relevant groups with consideration to the context-specific vulnerabilities.
- Ensure protection issues related to age, gender and diversity are properly addressed.
- Ensure mechanisms for Accountability to Affected Populations are in place.
- Work closely with the authorities and other relevant actors (RRM, DRR, other clusters including Shelter and CCCM).

I. Background

During the rainy season, heavy rains and floods have worsened the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Yemenis have lost their shelters, crops, livestock, and personal belongings due to the floods. Torrential rains and flooding impacted over 517,000 people in 2022 and caused over 160,000 new and secondary displacements between July and September 2022 alone. Out of the 447,132 individuals displaced individuals in Yemen in 2022, more than 170,450 (38 percent of overall) new and secondary displacements occurred due to floods from July onwards, with **Hajjah and Al Hodeidah governorates** receiving almost 60 percent of the total number of people displaced. Other affected areas include Marib and Al-Jawf.

The effects of the rainy season have also resulted in displacement. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in IDP hosting sites are severely affected. Many IDPs were already living in abject poverty, often in overcrowded, makeshift shelters made from plastic sheets or mud. As a result of the flooding, their shelters have been washed away or sustained significant damage. Flooding has also caused fatalities and injuries among the civilian population, including women and children, leaving many in distress and in pressing need of protection assistance, including psychosocial support and cash. It is expected that thousands will be impacted as the rainy season continues. IDPs may be forced to shelter in schools, abandoned buildings, with relatives, live out in the open, or in whatever is left of their damaged shelters. This will expose them to homelessness and associated protection risks, including lack of privacy and potential exploitation and abuse. Vulnerable persons including female heads of households, lactating mothers, unaccompanied minors, elderly persons, chronically ill individuals, and persons living with disabilities are disproportionately affected by flooding and flood-induced displacement.

Women situation

In Yemen, women's roles have changed drastically during the current crisis, with many of them becoming the breadwinners of their families. According to the Rapid Response Mechanism enrolment dataset, 5,885 Female headed households were reached in the last two years of 28,812 HHs corresponding to 20% of flood-affected people. Given the current factors contributing to the aggravation of women's vulnerability, *inter alia*, very severe

food insecurity, absence of legal documents, gender inequality, and psychological distress, women and girls encounter increased risks of GBV incidents.

This is coupled with the lack of accessible multi-sectoral GBV/WP services in most of the flood-affected areas. Protection Cluster and AoR partners are assessing the impact in the flood-affected governorates and are providing support through the Protection facilities closer to the affected areas and through strengthening engagement and collaboration with other clusters using a multi-sectoral approach to delivering services. Other humanitarian actors are similarly encouraged to monitor and report on protection-related risks in the flood-affected areas and to jointly take steps to ensure the most vulnerable and affected groups have meaningful access to humanitarian assistance and to protection services.

II. Purpose

This guidance note targets all protection actors in Yemen and aims to:

- Advise protection and other key actors to take adequate measures to prepare and respond to the ongoing flood situation.
- Provide information on recommended protection services/activities for the most vulnerable affected groups.
- Ensure safe referrals for affected persons in need of follow-up services.
- Encourage effective collaboration and coordination with other clusters and communities in the development of an action plan to strengthen preparedness and response efforts in response to floods and related sudden-onset disasters.
- Ensure provision of lifesaving protection (including GBV/WP) interventions to the most affected at the onset of the floods as well as prevention- of incidents (including GBV/WP) in the communities at risk of floods.

III. Key protection concerns and vulnerabilities.

The floods will likely exacerbate the vulnerability of many communities and individuals already significantly impacted by the conflict. Lack of access to basic services, loss of shelter and other basic necessities, as well as displacement prompted by the floods, expose and exacerbate existing protection risks experienced by the displaced and the affected population. Many shelters such as makeshifts, tents, or mud structures have been reportedly destroyed forcing persons to seek shelter in schools, abandoned buildings, live out in the open, or in whatever is left of their damaged shelters. The situation has resulted in increased cases of homelessness, leaving people vulnerable to potential exploitation and abuse. Some of the most vulnerable persons may be unable to move due to physical or mental disability, and a lack of resources.¹

Key vulnerable groups include female-headed households, child-headed households, older persons, pregnant/lactating women, persons with disabilities, mentally or chronically ill individuals, members of minority groups, and other individuals and groups at risk.

Key protection risks include, but are not limited to, psychosocial distress as a consequence of the shock and disruption in daily routines; breakdown of social fabric and cohesion; separation of children from families or caregivers; increased risk of violence against vulnerable groups including women and children; loss of dignity due to loss of key clothing items; violence among or between community members relating to the availability of resources and other issues; loss of or damage to civil documentation; unfamiliarity with the terrain creating risks for physical safety and security including from explosive hazards; and flooding creating the potential for exposure of explosive hazards. In addition, loss or continued lack of livelihoods as a consequence of the flooding can lead

¹ GPC Guidance for the Field Protection Clusters and AoR on Preparedness for Protection in the Context of Climate Change and Disasters https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/GPC_Guidance-on-Preparedness-for-Protection_Climate-Change_Final-1.pdf

to negative coping strategies such as child labor; begging, and discrimination in food allocation within the family, among others. Housing, land, and property-related issues also have the potential to arise in any situation of displacement, including as a consequence of a natural disaster, even if the displacement does not occur over a great distance.

Key protection interventions likely to be needed include increased family tracing and reunification; psychosocial support; protective NFIs including dignity kits; comprehensive case management and referrals with specialized services including for women and children; and mine action interventions when waters recede, and physical access is restored to affected areas. Identification and targeting of persons with specific needs, protection monitoring, and civil documentation support where relevant will all be considered as part of the protection response.

IV. PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

Preparedness measures are based on careful analysis of the context.

- Protection including AoRs (CP, MA, and GBV/WP) actors to collaborate closely with the community, local authorities, relevant clusters including CCCM and Shelter, as well as RRM to employ multisectoral teams, assess potential emergency shelter sites and provide support to communities to self-identify safe locations and safe zones based on local understanding.
- Ensure a participatory approach and ongoing consultations on grounds of safety, proximity to potentially affected areas, and access to livelihoods.
- Establish multisectoral coordination and response systems (for WP/GBV) in cooperation with the authorities. Ensure the timely establishment of referral pathways and systems, and safe and timely information sharing between the RRM and protection including all AoR specialists (guided by protection and AoRs coordinators at the national and hub level). Utilize the protection and AoR facilities mapping to support the referral and response among Protection Cluster and the AoR partners that accommodate people with specific needs.
- Advocate with and support service providers to identify groups who may face difficulties in accessing services (e.g., women, girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, and persons belonging to marginalized groups) and work with community leaders, religious leaders, and service providers to support equal and safe access to services without discrimination.
- Identify and prioritize groups at disproportionate risk and at risk of exclusion based on contextual risk analysis
- Promote engagement and leadership of women and girls in disaster preparedness and response (in all assessments, policy discussions, the establishment of early warning systems, and responsive design) and identify women's groups and support their leadership in local risk reduction.
- Engage Executive Unit (ExeU), diverse groups, and communities to map challenges and barriers to access to services/information and train them on Safe Identification and referral mechanism.
- Ensure awareness-raising materials/sessions on floods are delivered before the floods/heavy rains and are also accessible to all (e.g., people with hearing or a visual impairment, illiterate individuals, people with reduced mobility, etc.). The material should as practicable as possible include general information on taking care of vulnerable groups in the context of flooding.
- Include Mine Risk awareness messages and materials within the awareness-raising package, especially where Floods could wash away mines and UXOs to IDP sites or close to them.
- Coordinate between Mine Action AoR and YEMAC ahead of, during, and after any flooding to enhance the capacity and preparedness to respond to cases of mines, UXO, ERW, etcetera as an aftermath of flooding.
- Provide information about available services in both verbal and written form through community networks and existing partners to support outreach to affected persons in hard-to-reach, remote, and

rural areas.

- Communicate information through various means to ensure it reaches the broader community and consider different communication tools (e.g., radio, social media, use of posters, community networks/leaders).
- Ensure the awareness-raising material and modalities are accessible for women and girls, while culturally sensitive to avoid causing harm.
- Conduct training for social workers on different aspects including PSEA, PSS/PFA, case management, safe referrals, and protection (GBV basic concepts). Explore training on case management for a pool of case managers in rural districts and flood-affected districts for emergencies to be deployed aftermath of flood on a daily or monthly wage for 3-4 months). Explore if they are incorporated into RRM first responders registration team.
- Conduct awareness raising on GBV/WP issues and available services, hotlines, and referral pathways.
- Conducting GBV/WP mainstreaming training for other sectors and coordinating with other sectors/clusters leads to ensuring readiness in protection and gender-sensitive and responsive interventions.
- Adapt existing reporting tools to include mobile/outreach teams.

V. RESPONSE

- **Identify persons with specific needs and particular vulnerabilities who** may approach the protection 4Ws or may be identified by protection staff. Among the main profiles for identification are:
 - Unaccompanied/separated children.
 - Unaccompanied Elderly.
 - Pregnant/lactating women.
 - Female and Child Head of Household.
 - Mentally or chronically ill individuals.
 - Persons and particularly children and women living with disabilities.
 - Members of marginalized groups (Al-Muhamshen).
 - Other individuals/groups at risk.
 - Households with older women and/or young children
- **Encourage monitoring and reporting** on protection-related risks in the flood-affected areas and take steps to ensure the most vulnerable and affected groups have meaningful access to humanitarian assistance and protection services, in line with protection mainstreaming principles
- **Ensure safe referral/phone-based referral** is established for persons in need of protection and other sectoral assistance using the Interagency Referral Form ([Interagency Referral Form](#)) to refer affected persons to appropriate services including but not limited to:
 - Persons with Disabilities
 - Psychosocial Support and Mental Health
 - Legal Assistance
 - Physical Safety & Security, e.g., Safe Shelter
- **Maintain a minimum of protection monitoring activities** (For example through direct observation, individual monitoring, and group discussion) and monitor regular obstacles in accessing humanitarian and protection services.
- **Ensure critical specialized protection services** are available and/or not discontinued to support groups at risk, please check the protection minimum package [Link](#)

- Provide multi-sectoral integrated services through the establishment of outreach GBV teams to respond to the needs in IDP settings and in communities affected by flood – ensure functional, comprehensive, and complete referral pathways through trained social workers/case managers trained in rural areas.
- Provide MHPSS services through the establishment of mobile MHPSS teams at the hub level to respond to the needs of flood-affected IDPs.
- Providing cash assistance for facilitating the referral and response.

VI. Protection Mainstreaming principles

While developing and implementing a humanitarian response to the floods, protection and humanitarian actors should endeavor to (1) avoid causing harm through assistance activities and prioritize the safety and dignity of the affected populations, (2) ensure meaningful access to assistance for persons in need through making separate arrangements for vulnerable individuals and groups where so required, (3) be aware of the accountability to affected populations, placing them at the center of humanitarian action, and (4) to promote participation and empowerment of these communities.

Protection Mainstreaming checklist – overarching considerations/Checklist for Protection Actors

- Ensure targeting of humanitarian assistance is done in line with the humanitarian principles, identifying the most vulnerable and potentially invisible individuals and communities, irrespective of status or membership in a minority group.
- Communicate the reasons for any differences in distribution or services across community lines clearly with the flood-affected population, authorities, and all other stakeholders.
- Take measures to identify the potential humanitarian needs of individuals not living in IDP sites.
- Identify and map potential risks related to interventions, related to community dynamics, individual vulnerabilities, and risks for humanitarian partners.
- Involve appropriately trained (including Psychological First Aid) and female staff with skills and experience throughout the whole assessment and assistance delivery process.
- Ensure staff is aware of available protection services (GBV, CP, etc.) and how to safely and appropriately provide a referral if a survivor needs support (see [Interagency Referral Form](#)).
- Engage directly with communities, through committees representational of gender, age, and diversity
- Ensure that important information (e.g., about cash transfer explanations or distribution timings and locations) reaches and is understood by the people who need it, including the most vulnerable – communicate clearly.
- Adjust the timing and location of food distributions according to consultations with both genders and people with disability, ensuring safety and meaningful access.
- Choose distribution locations that are easily reachable for all those affected, away from security hazards as well as accessible for different social groups.
- Design registration or distribution locations so that all individuals can access them with safety and dignity, with specific arrangements for women and children, in line with cultural sensitivity
- Schedule registration and distribution during the day (and not at night).
- Ensure measures are in place to distribute supplies to vulnerable individuals (prioritize) and those who are unable to travel to distribution points, such as older people or persons with disabilities.
- Identify existing coping mechanisms and community-based protection mechanisms and ensure any intervention is built on and/or reinforces these.
- Train staff involved in assessments, assistance, distributions, and reconstruction activities on a Code of Conduct (fraud, Child Safeguarding, Feedback, and reporting Mechanism, etc.) agreement and make sure all staff sign the agreement prior to implementing activities.

KEY RESOURCES

- ✚ GPC Guidance for the Field Protection Clusters and AoRs on Preparedness for Protection in the Context of Climate and Disasters https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/GPC_Guidance-on-Preparedness-for-Protection_Climate-Change_Final-1.pdf
- ✚ Global Protection Cluster Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/gpc-pm_toolkit-2017.en.pdf
- ✚ Global Protection Cluster – General Protection Mainstreaming Sector Checklists https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/Protection_Mainstreaming_Training_Package_SECTORGUIDANCE_November_2014.pdf
- ✚ Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action (including mainstreaming sections) <https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/CPMS-2019-EN.pdf>
- ✚ IASC Guidelines on Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action <https://gbvguidelines.org/en/>
- ✚ Words into Action [https://www.undrr.org/publication/words-action-guidelines-developing-national-disaster-risk-reduction-strategies#:~:text=The%20Words%20into%20Action%20\(WiA,aligned%20with%20the%20Sendai%20Framework](https://www.undrr.org/publication/words-action-guidelines-developing-national-disaster-risk-reduction-strategies#:~:text=The%20Words%20into%20Action%20(WiA,aligned%20with%20the%20Sendai%20Framework)
- ✚ IASC guidance on emergency preparedness https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc_emergency_response_preparedness_guidelines_july_2015_draft_for_field_testing.pdf
- ✚ _Document - CCCM Cluster Yemen - Flooding Risk Analysis - Feb 2023 (unhcr.org)