

# Protection Cluster Somalia

## Advocacy and Communications Strategy

2024 – 2025

*Protection is a humanitarian priority, not an option*

*Protection waa Mudnaanta Gargarka Bini'aadnimo ee Maahan Ikhtiyaar*

## INTRODUCTION

The Somalia Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) aim to increase the visibility of protection risks and engagement of stakeholders in the response through communication and advocacy. This will be achieved by identifying key messages and advocacy priorities linked to the [2024 Cluster Strategy](#), developing advocacy plans, and identifying communication outputs. The goal is to promote Protection Cluster activities, impacts, and outcomes in humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery. The Strategy also outlines entry points for Protection Cluster engagement on exclusion & denial of assistance, forced displacement and Protection of Civilians. An overall approach to clearer, predictable and impactful communication is included, to ensure that key Cluster messages are put on the table with relevant internal and external stakeholders, reinforcing engagement on and commitment to the Centrality of Protection.

The Strategy defines **primary communication and advocacy goals**, outlines the **priority protection risks to be addressed**, identifies **target audiences**, and **validation procedures** for activity implementation, and a **detailed action plan** outlining specific activities, indicators, timeframes and roles and responsibilities. The Strategy is adaptable to the emerging protection trends and priorities, the evolving protection landscape and key strategic decision making from humanitarian leadership. As the current HCT Strategy expires during the implementation cycle of this Advocacy and Communications Strategy, a review in 2025 will allow for any tailoring of the key messages and action plan.

Key stakeholders consulted during the development of this Strategy NNGOs, UN Agencies, INGOs, Minority Rights Organizations (MROs), ProCap, Inter Cluster Coordination, Representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia, donors, CMCOORD members, National and Sub-National Protection Cluster teams including the included the Areas of Responsibility, advocacy, disability and inclusion focal points.

### OVERARCHING GOAL:

To strengthen the impact and sustainability of protection efforts by strategically identifying and promoting key advocacy messages and priorities, enhancing the visibility of protection risks in Somalia, and related engagement of the Protection Cluster and Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) with key stakeholders, while emphasizing the urgent need for increased funding to address protection gaps within crisis affected communities.

### TARGET AUDIENCES:

There are two categories of target audiences for the advocacy and communications activities:

- Primary Audience: affected populations, Federal and State authorities, including line ministries and commissions, HC and HCT, ICCG, donors, CMCOORD, all Parties to the conflict.
- Wider Network: humanitarian practitioners, civil society, the private sector, researchers, development actors, academia, media.

## CONTEXT AND PRIORITY PROTECTION ISSUES

Intensification of armed conflict, as well as climate shocks, continues to have a cumulative devastating impact on the civilian population, driving the displacement of more than 319,000 people between January and 31 July 2024<sup>1</sup>. The main drivers of the displacements are conflicts, related to the presence of Al-Shabaab, inter- and intra- clan conflict, and climate shocks, such as flooding and drought. With limited to no humanitarian access for protection service provision, the capacities of affected

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<sup>1</sup> PRMN <https://prmn-somalia.unhcr.org>

populations to anticipate, cope, resist and recover from the effects of these shocks have been diminished, exposing them to negative coping mechanisms, threats to their lives, safety and integrity.

The Protection Cluster and its AoRs conduct regular protection analysis, providing a snapshot of the protection environment across Somalia and identifying priority protection risks. Pre-existing and emerging risks are analyzed in conjunction with the rapidly changing protection environment and security situation, identifying key drivers of increased vulnerabilities amongst IDPs and conflict-affected communities. In line with the [HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy](#) and Protection Cluster Strategy, **three priority protection risks/threats** requiring collective advocacy efforts have been identified as follows:

1. **Exclusion and Denial of Access to Assistance**
2. **Risks Associated with Displacement**
3. **Attacks on Civilians and Civilian Objects**

#### PROTECTION CLUSTER ENTRY POINTS TO SUPPORT HCT PROTECTION PRIORITIES

The Protection Cluster will respond to the above priority risks by focusing its advocacy and communications on the following areas:

Evidence-Based Advocacy:

- **Support collection of evidence and information through protection analysis**, monitoring and assessments that will ensure a common understanding on protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities, as well as to flag priority areas or issues in conflict contexts. This includes use of the Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN)<sup>2</sup> to feed into evidence-based advocacy initiatives as well as humanitarian programming.

**Risk 1 - Exclusion and Denial of Assistance:** *Identifying and addressing differential forms of exclusion that is based on age, gender, ability, ethnicity, or clan affiliation through principled, equitable and quality humanitarian assistance.*

Minimizing Exclusion:

- In ensuring diversity, equality and inclusion, the Protection Cluster will **promote the participation** of the minority and marginalized communities in protection related programming, including identification of people to be assisted such as the most vulnerable i.e. children, women, the older persons and persons with disabilities.
- Recognize the role of the Minority Rights Organizations (MROs) as powerful influencers in accessible, newly accessible and hard to reach areas, **empowering them as interlocutors in enhancing dialogues and amplifying the voices** of the vulnerable and marginalized communities.
- Support the Disability Inclusion Working Group through **advancing visibility efforts** on relevant communication products that would **highlight the impacts** of the protection risks on persons with disabilities, and best practices on their inclusion in humanitarian programming. This involves contextualizing the global key messages to the Somalia context.
- **Promote the meaningful participation** of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in advocacy and communication efforts, as expert guidance in messaging and programming, and as agents of their own protection.
- **Tap into human rights-focused mechanisms** that provide critical partnerships and pathways to advance protection advocacy actions and support humanitarian leadership in country, such as

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<sup>2</sup> Formally named Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)

the Independent Expert on Somalia, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, and other relevant Special Procedure Mandate Holders.

Housing, Land and Property (HLP):

- **Promote the visibility of efforts** in strengthening land tenure security in order to mitigate HLP violations, particularly forced evictions.

Protection Mainstreaming:

- **Champion the integration of protection mainstreaming** into other clusters' programming and advocacy approaches, to ensure prioritization of safety, dignity and rights of vulnerable populations, fostering inclusivity and resilience.

**Risk 2 – Reducing the Risks Associated with Displacement:** *Addressing critical protection concerns that persist due to protracted displacement in sites and the lack of appropriate solutions (local integration, return, or settlement elsewhere) for the displaced.*

Frontline Response:

- **Develop systemized and targeted advocacy messaging** on frontline protection response in newly accessible areas. This includes **guiding appropriate visibility products** that considers sensitivities in these areas.

Community Self-Protection

- **Highlight best practices and lessons learned, reinforcing the importance of community self-protection through available advocacy platforms.** In addition, advocate that self-protection strategies are integrated into the broader protection efforts.

**Risk 3 – Reducing Indiscriminate Attacks on Civilians and Civilian Assets:** *Engaging with conflict affected communities and parties (national and international) to the conflict in order to minimize the targeting of civilians and civilian assets. Community-based protection mechanisms are strengthened, assistance is provided, and the risks for children and youth being associated with armed actors or injured due to conflict or explosive hazards is reduced.*

Protection of Civilians

- **Develop targeted advocacy messaging** and capacity building to all Parties to the conflict on protection principles, ensuring the upholding of protection of civilians including children against all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect, and protection of civilian objects.
- **Leverage Conflict Sensitivity Analysis** as a means to support strategic discussions and operational decision-making.

Access:

- **Advocate for improved and sustained access** in conflict affected areas and to/for affected populations, to enhance provision of humanitarian assistance and protection services to the most vulnerable population including women, children, older persons and persons with specific needs.

Humanitarian Response:

- **Advocate for prioritization of conflict-affected and newly accessible areas** for humanitarian and protection interventions.

Forced Recruitment and Association of Children in Armed Forces and Groups:

- **Strengthen awareness creation** and capacity building on children’s rights including prevention of child recruitment and respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL).

Explosive Hazards:

- **Strengthen and create awareness of protection key messaging** around risks associated with explosive hazards, including the **disseminate on the findings** of Explosive Hazards Non-Technical Surveys through available advocacy platforms, that would provide information and evidence on explosive ordnance contamination to support decision-making processes.

## ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The Somalia Protection Cluster has set three objectives for its communication and advocacy efforts:

**Objective 1: Continue to align Protection Cluster and AoR key messages and advocacy priorities** with the 2024 Cluster Strategy and HCT Priority Protection Issues, as well as to emerging protection trends beyond 2024.

**Objective 2: Enhance the visibility of protection risks/issues and related protection response in Somalia by reaching key stakeholders** through regular, structured communication outputs. Resources such as templates, guidelines, and other necessary tools will be shared and regularly updated.

**Objective 3: Raise the profile of Protection in Somalia as a core sectoral element of the humanitarian response**, highlighting the urgent need as well for increased funding for protection, through evidence based and targeted advocacy campaigns aimed at raising awareness among international donors and local stakeholders.

## METHODS AND APPROACHES

- **Coalitions, synergies and collaboration:** Recognizing the benefit of working in collaboration to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of advocacy actions, the Protection Cluster will conduct any advocacy efforts with partners’ diverse range of evidence, analysis, outreach capacity, and access to decision-makers; utilize existing synergies and build momentum for better collaboration.
- **Public versus private advocacy:** Due to risks, limited resources or other factors, the Protection Cluster will always assess the best approach to achieve the targeted advocacy goal, using public campaigns and products to attract the attention of relevant stakeholders but conducting advocacy actions privately when required.
- **Communities’ participation:** The Protection Cluster will engage and empower affected communities in any advocacy related process/action, as it is possible, appropriate, and safe for them to do so.

## VALIDATION AND CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

To avoid reputational risks, security issues, and to ensure **do no harm** principles are adhered to, it is crucial to implement validation and clearance procedures for Protection Cluster-branded communications:

- Multiple checks with relevant stakeholders should be conducted prior to publication, as deemed appropriate to the product, its contributors, and the intended audience.

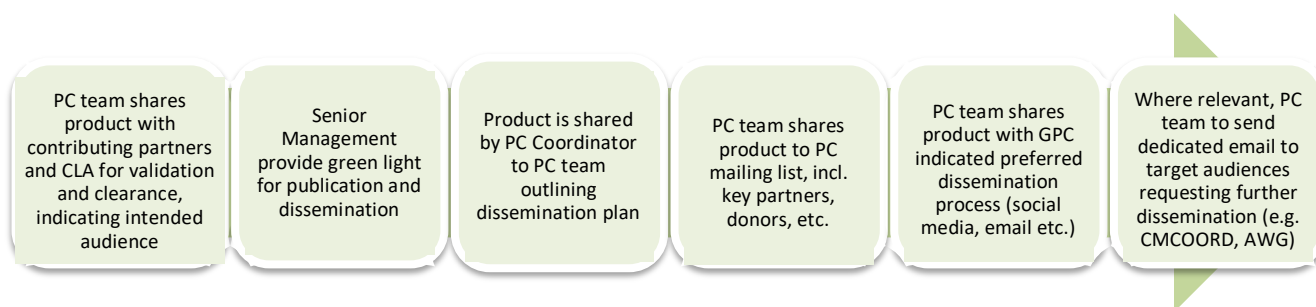
- There should also be consensus and consistency on the use of logos, including those of the AoRs.
- Where products are intended for public, global audiences, the relevant Global Protection Cluster guidance should be consulted (e.g. SoP for production of Protection Analysis Updates).

## MONITORING AND TRACKING IMPACT

The Protection Cluster will ensure monitoring of the effectiveness of the Strategy throughout the course of its implementation to know if it has been successful in achieving its intended objectives and outcomes, but also to change course and adjust tactics throughout the lifespan of the action plan to a changing operational and protection landscape.

## COMMUNICATIONS DISSEMINATION PLAN

The following procedure ensures Protection Cluster products and communications reach key stakeholders for their information, action and further dissemination:



## ACTION PLAN

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	Activities	Output	Lead (Initiator)	Contributors	Timeframe	Audience	
Strengthen the impact and sustainability of protection efforts by strategically identifying and promoting key advocacy messages and priorities, enhancing the visibility and engagement of the Protection Cluster and Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) with key stakeholders, while emphasizing the urgent need for increased funding to address protection gaps within crisis affected communities.	Continue to align Protection Cluster and AoR key messages and advocacy priorities	Protection monitoring	<b>Report: overview of the state of protection in Somalia</b>	National PC, PROCAP, GPC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners, affected communities	Annual (By October)	All humanitarian actors (HCT, ICCG) & stakeholders	
			<b>Presentations</b>					
				Monitoring reports	National PC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners, affected communities	Monthly & ad hoc / incident base	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders
		Protection analysis	<b>Protection Analysis Updates</b>	National PC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners, affected communities	Quarterly	All humanitarian actors (HCT, ICCG) & stakeholders	
		Develop guiding visibility products covering frontline protection responses	<b>Guidance</b>	National PC, GPC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners, affected communities	Annually	Protection stakeholders	
		Protection mainstreaming	<b>Protection activities incorporated into other Clusters' interventions</b>	HCT, ICCG, PC	AoRs, Clusters, humanitarian actors	Ongoing	All humanitarian actors (HCT, ICCG)	
		Strengthen self-protection mechanisms, community engagement and participation	<b>Community self-protection Initiatives, including trainings</b>	National PC Coordinator & Co-Coordinator	Protection partners, affected communities, Donors	Monthly	Affected communities	
			<b>Community dialogue on self-protection</b>	Affected population, Sub-national coordination, Protection partners	Donors, National PC, AoRs, HCT, ICCG	Ongoing	Affected communities	
		Include members of vulnerable population groups in planning & implementation of protection response & programming	<b>Vulnerable population groups inclusion in humanitarian programing.</b>	HCT, ICCG, National PC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners	Ongoing	Vulnerable Population groups <sup>3</sup>	
		Protection of civilians	<b>Thematic advocacy notes (improved access, prioritization of frontline response, protection principles etc.)</b>	National PC	HCT, ICCG, Access WG, CMCOORD, PoC Working Group, PROCAP, AoRs, Protection partners & affected populations	ad hoc	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders	
	<b>Conflict sensitivity analyses</b>							
	Capacity building	<b>Training modules on protection principles</b>	National PC & AoRs	Protection partners	Bi-monthly	Protection partners, CMCOORD, authorities		
	Enhance the visibility of the Protection Cluster and AoRs with key stakeholders	Develop and disseminate regular Protection Cluster updates	<b>Newsletter</b>	National PC	OXFAM, GPC, AoR, DIWG, Sub-National Coordination, Durable Solutions Unit of RCO's Office, Minority Inclusion portfolio	Monthly	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders	
			<b>Dashboard</b>					
		Advance narrative on frontline response	<b>Systemized advocacy notes on frontline response</b>	National PC	Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners	Bi-monthly	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders	
		<b>Videos</b>						
		<b>Slogan</b>						
Develop repository of best practices (production and updating)	<b>Database of best practices and success stories</b>	National PC, DIWG, Minority & Inclusion Portfolio	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners	By end 2024, and ongoing	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders, Affected communities			

		Awareness raising on protection partners and respective services	<b>Radio and bulk SMS broadcasts on available services</b>	National PC	AoRs, Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners, Telecommunication service providers	Ongoing (with scale up capacity)	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders, Affected communities
		Produce and disseminate thematic advocacy products (HLP, EH, Gender, Disability, Minority inclusion etc.)	<b>Thematic visibility products</b>	National PC, AoRs & Thematic working groups	Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners	Monthly	All humanitarian actors & stakeholders, Affected communities
	<b>Raise the profile of Protection in Somalia incl. urgent need for increased funding for protection</b>	Conduct field missions incl. donor or ICCG participation.	<b>Donor / ICCG field mission reports</b>	HCT, ICCG	Donors	Quarterly	Donors
		Organise regular bilateral briefings to donors by NPC on key protection trends / priorities and activities.	<b>Donor briefing notes and commitments</b>	HCT, ICCG, National PC	Donors	Monthly	Donors
		Form strategic partnerships with human rights-focused mechanisms	<b>Confidential/private briefing with the Independent Expert on Somalia, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, or other relevant Special Procedure Mandate Holders.</b>	National PC & AoRs, GPC	Sub-national coordination, Protection Partners,	By end 2024	Donors, SRs

<sup>3</sup> Vulnerable population groups include: children, woman, older persons, people with specific needs including disabilities and minority and marginalized communities.