



GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY 2025-2030

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE COORDINATION
AND QUALITY PROTECTION RESPONSES



The Global Protection Cluster, with UNHCR as cluster lead agency, is a network of partners engaged in protection work within the response to humanitarian crises.

As part of the global humanitarian cluster system, our vision is that all people affected by crisis have protection, through inclusive and collective action to uphold their rights. To contribute to this vision, our mission is to provide accountable leadership, predictability, flexibility and foster a sense of community for effective coordination of quality protection response activities which contribute to achieving protection outcomes.

Role of the GPC for Protection in Humanitarian Action – *[from the IASC Protection Policy](#)*

Providing a platform for partners with expertise, resources and capacity relevant to protection, the Global Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, coordinates and contributes to global-level inter-agency policy advice; provides guidance to Protection Clusters in the field on cluster responsibilities (including strategy development, information management, assessment and analysis and operational delivery); supports protection responses in humanitarian action (i.e., non-refugee situations); and leads standard and policy setting in relation to protection in complex emergencies (i.e., conflict and disaster-induced).

Given the broad definition of protection, Areas of Responsibility (AoR) have been established within the GPC: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Mine Action (MA), and Housing, Land and Property (HLP). These AoRs provide technical advice and support in their specialized areas. AoRs may be replicated at the field level with sub-clusters, and other technical working groups may be formed to address specific context-specific protection issues. Organizations that lead AoRs and field-level sub-clusters have the same responsibilities as cluster leads.

Protection is “... ***all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, International Refugee Law).***”

[Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action \(IASC Protection Policy\)](#)

Protection activities: As set out in the [IASC Protection Policy](#), protection responses can be identified within the three categories below.

- 1. Standalone/specific protection activities:** Implemented by actors with protection expertise with the aim of meeting targeted protection objectives. These are often further categorised into responsive actions; remedial actions; and environment building. From the ICRC-introduced ‘egg model’ of protection response, the five main modes of protection action are persuasion; mobilisation; denunciation; support; and substitution.
- 2. Protection integration:** Incorporating protection objectives into the programming of other sector-specific responses to achieve protection outcomes.
- 3. Protection mainstreaming:** Designing and implementing all sector activities so that protection risks and potential violations are actively taken into consideration.



GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY 2025-2030

**COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE
COORDINATION AND QUALITY
PROTECTION RESPONSES**

FOREWORDS



RUVENDRINI MENIKDIWELA

ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PROTECTION, UNHCR

As 2025 begins, armed conflicts are intensifying and climate-related disasters are multiplying, with an estimated 72 million people uprooted within their own countries, and many more in acute humanitarian need. These people are facing real and immediate threats to their safety, dignity, and fundamental rights. And yet, the resources available to respond to their primary needs are shrinking, straining an already overstretched humanitarian system.

With this unsustainable status quo, now is the time for humanitarian actors to take bold and decisive changes to how we work. We must break down inefficiencies, simplify coordination, and persistently focus on impact, keeping protection at the centre of emergency responses and solutions for the internally displaced.

At this critical moment, the Global Protection Cluster's new Strategic Framework provides a clear, results-driven roadmap to reduce protection risks and achieve protection outcomes. It is not just about better coordination; it is about shifting the gravity of coordination to where the concrete work happens, focusing on responding to people's needs and upholding their rights. This strategy calls for just that – a more streamlined, impact-driven protection coordination system that builds on the findings of the independent reviews of the [Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement](#)

and the [Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy](#). It reflects a collective commitment to making protection efforts more effective, more responsive, and more accountable to the people we serve.

The coming years will test us. But they will also provide an opportunity to transform how we deliver for those who need protection the most. As the IASC Co-Champion on [Centrality of Protection](#), UNHCR is committed to leading these changes, ensuring predictable and sustained [protection leadership](#), driving operational effectiveness, and mobilising partners. The rights, safety, and dignity of the people we work with and for will remain our guiding force. Their protection is not just a priority – it is our duty.

Ruven Menikdiwela

Ruven Menikdiwela

Assistant High Commissioner for Protection
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees

March 2025

**JOSEP HERREROS**

GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER COORDINATOR

Leading the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) at this critical moment is both an immense responsibility and a profound challenge. Today, 229 million people face protection risks, and 166 million require urgent protection assistance. The complexity of crises is deepening, funding gaps are widening, and humanitarian needs are outpacing available resources - projected shortfalls may reach 70% of global protection needs in the coming years. This new strategy comes at a defining moment. Business as usual is no longer an option. This strategy is a renewed call to action: to simplify the way we operate, focus our collective efforts to deliver where the needs are the greatest and ensure that protection is at the centre of humanitarian response.

This strategy is the result of extensive consultations with protection partners, humanitarian, development, and human rights actors. It provides a clear direction until 2030, emphasising effectiveness, integration, and simplification to drive quality protection outcomes for the communities affected. This framework focuses on reducing risks, improving access to rights, delivering impactful protection services, supporting country Protection Clusters and members in their efforts while ensuring that people, their safety and their rights, are at the forefront.

To achieve meaningful change, we must sharpen our focus on action, not process. Efficiency is not about doing less but achieving more with the resources available; it is about being strategic - targeting the critical protection risks and driving coordinated, impactful responses. The GPC Strategic Advisory Group will develop and oversee the implementation of annual action plans to translate this framework into concrete steps, ensuring clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability among

the actors. Efficiency requires a strong and integral protection assessment, that identifies critical protection risks and push collective action forward. The Global Protection Cluster will support affected countries to set a coordinated, impactful response ensuring that protection is at the forefront of humanitarian action, and support the centrality of protection. When resources are scarce, coordinated collective action is not just important - it is essential.

Above all, this strategy is about people. It is about the communities whose safety, dignity, and rights must remain our top priority. We must work as a team with the communities we work with and for and make decisions that serve them best.

I want to express my deepest appreciation for the dedication and resilience of the coordination teams and protection partners worldwide, international and national NGOs and particularly frontline workers. Their tireless efforts, often under the most difficult and dangerous conditions, are the backbone of protection responses. They ensure that protection is not just a principle, but a reality for those most at risk.

I am deeply grateful to all colleagues, partners, coordinators, co-coordinators, communities, and donors who have contributed and will continue to contribute to these efforts. Progress will only be possible if we act together - ensuring that protection remains at the forefront of humanitarian action and people are at the heart of all we do. Let's make this strategy a catalyst for real, measurable change.

Josep Herreros

Global Protection Cluster Coordinator

March 2025

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Yemen ©UNHCR/Gregory Doane



GPC STRATEGY 2025-2030

AT A GLANCE



Our Vision

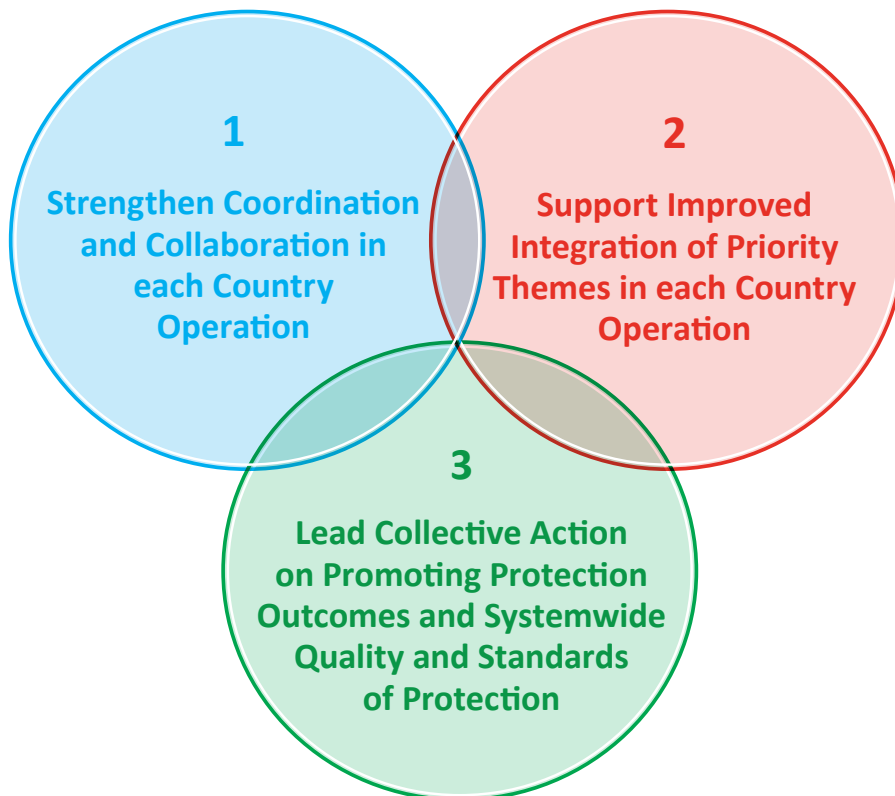
Protection of all people affected by crisis through inclusive and collective action to uphold their rights.



Our Mission

Provide accountable leadership, predictability, flexibility and foster a sense of community for effective coordination of quality protection response activities, contributing to achieving protection outcomes.

Our Strategic Priorities



Our Shared Values and Core Principles



OVERVIEW



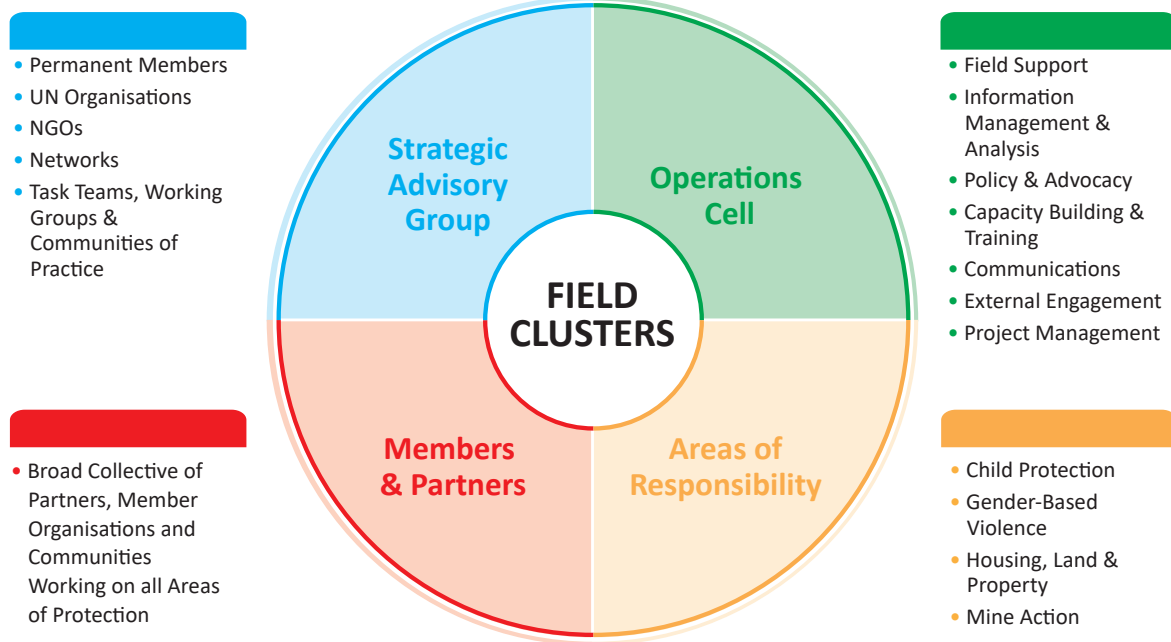
Our Strategy is designed to underpin our coherent approach to:

- Support each country operation in achieving a coordinated and strategic protection response; and
- Provide global leadership and a platform for promoting and advocating for systemwide protection outcomes, quality and standards.

This Strategy reflects findings from a desk review and six months of extensive consultations and sessions carried out throughout 2024. These considered the use of previous GPC strategies; and collated input from the varied experiences of humanitarian actors and stakeholders at country, regional and global levels with particular consideration of the connections between the GPC's work, local actors and people affected by crisis. A Senior [ProCap](#) Advisor, hosted by the GPC, led this process with direction and oversight from a reference group within the GPC Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). The reference group included various members of the SAG, including International NGOs, National NGOs, UN agencies, an International Network and the four specialised Areas of Responsibility - Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Housing, Land and Property (HLP), and Mine Action (MA).

The Strategy draws from the [IASC Protection Policy](#) and the [IASC Cluster Coordination and Reference Module](#). Also considered are the conclusions and recommendations from recent initiatives related to the humanitarian coordination architecture, including the [Independent Review of the Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy](#); the [UN Agenda for Protection](#), [the Independent review of the humanitarian response to internal displacement](#); and the [Flagship Initiative](#). These have highlighted the need for the structure of quality protection coordination and response to be agile, adaptive and accountable to affected people; based on the nuanced understanding of each country context, direct engagement and participation of local actors and crisis-affected communities; and grounded in a strategic and holistic overview from global and regional perspectives.

GPC Structure



CONTEXT

The operating context for protection coordination and response (including all responsive, remedial and environment-building activities) remains challenging. Since the last GPC strategy was developed in 2019, there are new and escalating conflicts, including in Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza and Lebanon; which have regional and global impacts; as well as protracted crises where prospects for solutions have remained elusive. Protection risks, including violence, abuse, coercion and deprivation, are complex and continue to be fuelled by various realities, such as political instability, conflict, climate change, human rights violations, lack of respect for international humanitarian law, limited upholding of international law, and obstacles to claiming rights and accessing assistance. People affected by new and ongoing crises face a range of threats, vulnerabilities and reduced coping capacities; exacerbated by the effects of limited access, for many reasons, to protection and assistance from duty bearers, civil society and the international community.

Protection Responsibilities

- States have the primary role to provide protection to all people under their jurisdiction and, in situations of armed conflict, non-state parties to conflict are bound to protect people in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- De facto authorities are expected to respect international human rights norms and standards when their conduct affects the human rights of people under their control.

For protection coordination and response to meet these challenges in effective and sustainable ways, protection must always be recognised as lifesaving, central to any humanitarian response, primarily delivered by local frontline responders, and firmly connected to solutions, human rights and development responses which address the root causes of protection risks. In addition to the humanitarian community's commitment to achieve protection collectively and centrally to humanitarian action, protection actors implement specialised and specific protection activities and services that meet targeted protection objectives.

Risk Reduction

- Protection activities aim to prevent or stop violations of rights; ensure a remedy to violations; and promote respect for rights and the rule of law.
- An activity is considered to have a protection outcome when the risk to any crisis-affected person is prevented or reduced.
- The reduction of risks occurs when threats and vulnerability are avoided or minimised and, at the same time, the capacity of the affected person is enhanced.

Any protection activity - as part of preparedness, prevention or response - should involve local actors, include all efforts to understand how people experience crisis and are exposed to threats; the intersectionality of their vulnerabilities and capacities; and always strive to support any existing initiatives and capacities to cope. Coordination of quality protection responses includes developing a pragmatic strategy for engaging with local stakeholders to analyse identified threats, vulnerabilities and coping capacities. This information can then be the basis for (a) supporting specialised protection, integration and mainstreaming activities; and (b) contributing to collective outcomes at systemwide level, as part of efforts on the centrality of protection.

PROTECTION PRESENCE

AS OF 2025



168_M
People in Need (PIN)*
of Protection Assistance



60_M
People Targeted

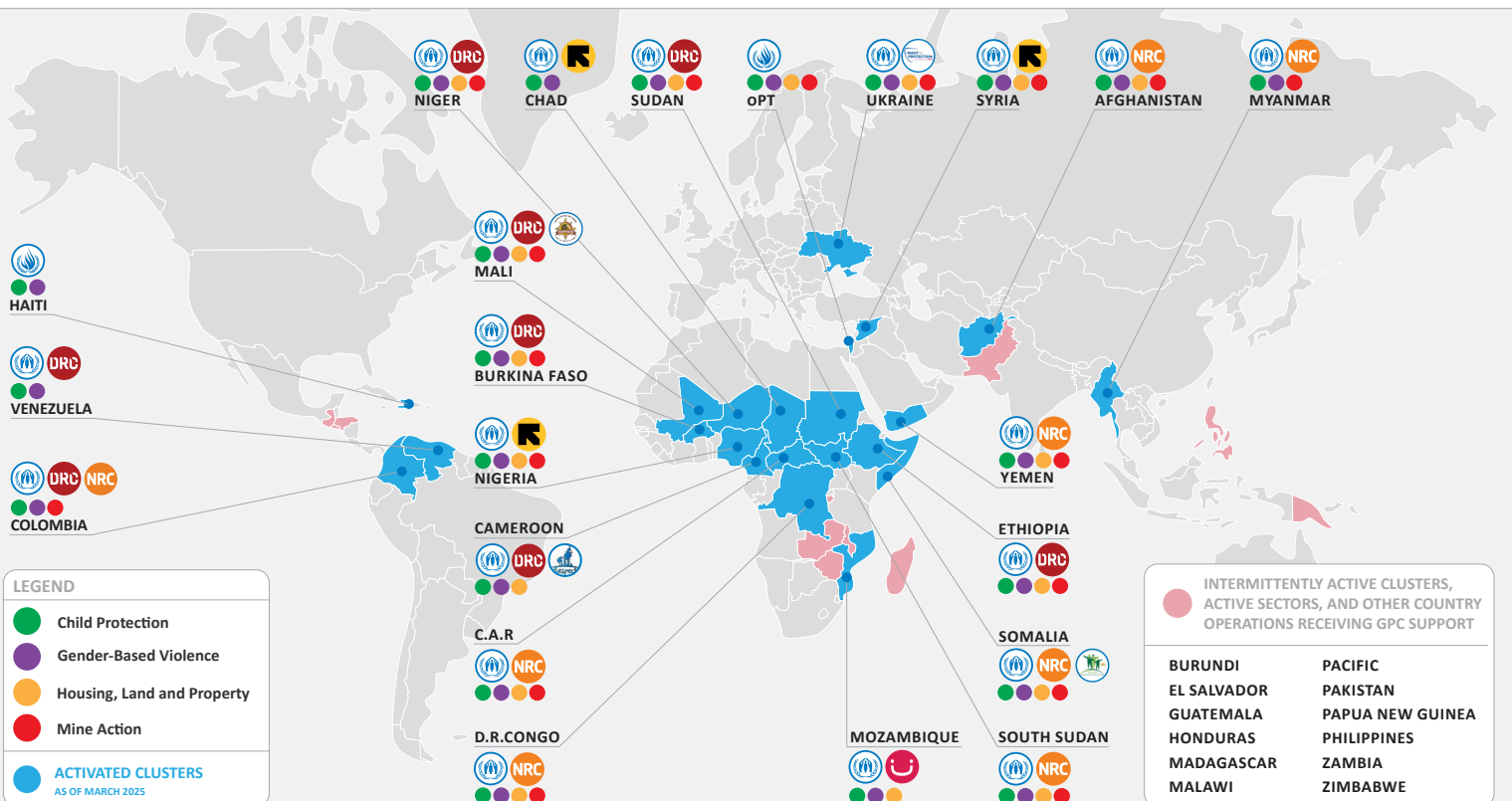


2,876
Protection Partners



34
Country Operations

*All figures are for country operations with an HNRP or flash appeal



Lead & Co-ordinating Agencies & Organisations



Implementation of the GPC Strategy

We will launch the GPC Strategy in early 2025, presenting it to the humanitarian community and beyond, at global, regional and country levels. Ongoing efforts will be led by the GPC Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and Operations Cell to present and use the GPC Strategy as the cornerstone for all GPC activities, in connection with global AoR activities.

GPC Strategy as a standing agenda item

The SAG will have a standing agenda item to review and update the GPC action. Annually, the SAG will also include an agenda item to reflect on progress of the Strategy. This will provide a regular opportunity to refresh the SAG's leadership of the GPC Strategy and its connection to GPC activities and those of all relevant partners. Updates and changes will be communicated to the wider GPC membership.

GPC Action Plan

The SAG (consisting of global and national actors as detailed in the [Annex](#)) will oversee the development of consecutive timebound action plans (each one lasting 12-18 months) to reflect the implementation of the Strategy's priorities. Each GPC action plan will set timebound activities, funding requirements, roles and responsibilities (including for the SAG, the Operations Cell, other GPC members), including for outputs and monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. The SAG is responsible for ensuring that each action plan guides the work of the GPC and is implemented in accordance with its shared values and core principles (set out below). Monitoring and evaluation will include indicators that can be used to measure progress, update and course correct as necessary with a focus on accountability to the people that the activities aim to serve. The GPC action plan should also function jointly with each global AoR action plan or workplan. Each action plan and its progress will regularly be shared with the wider GPC membership.

Simplification of Protection Coordination

In response to a recommendation from the [2021 Independent Review of the Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy](#), the IASC Principals tasked UNHCR to undertake consultations to determine how best to simplify and streamline the protection coordination architecture. Consequently, UNHCR with the support of all protection cluster and AoR lead agencies agreed on 35 recommendations to coordinate systemwide protection efforts more effectively. These include recommendations (a) for integration, optimisation and enhanced response at country and global levels; (b) in support of localisation and Accountability to Affected People (AAP); and (c) for further enhancing advocacy work of the protection cluster.

These recommendations will guide all our activities as part of any action plan to implement this Strategy and related action and work plans across the protection clusters and AoRs at global and country levels.

Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action

The IASC Protection Policy emphasises the affirmation made by IASC Principals in the [IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection](#) that all humanitarian actors have a responsibility to place protection at the center of humanitarian action. This involves collective action towards achieving protection outcomes to address systemwide priority protection risks.

Protection Outcomes

A response or activity is considered to have a protection outcome when the risk to affected persons is reduced. The reduction of risks, meanwhile, occurs when threats and vulnerability are minimised and, at the same time, the capacity of affected persons is enhanced. Protection outcomes are the result of changes in behaviour, attitudes, policies, knowledge and practices on the part of relevant stakeholders.

IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2016

Centrality of Protection - Role of Protection Cluster

For achieving the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, the roles and responsibilities of actors are set out in the IASC Protection Policy. The country-level protection cluster has a particular role for supporting a strategic approach to systemwide centrality of protection. Providing protection technical expertise includes primarily supporting in-depth and integrated protection analysis; ensuring continuous protection monitoring and analysis; contributing to timely, informed decision-making by the HC/HCT; and providing support to other actors to strengthen protection response capacity. The IASC Centrality of Protection Action Plan (2023-2025) and the associated Community of Practice will lead on efforts to strengthen systemwide centrality of protection. As part of this, the GPC commits to its responsibilities and to support country-level protection clusters to fulfil their roles in achieving the agreed Centrality of Protection benchmarks.

Centrality of Protection Benchmarks

for HCT Collective Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy

Benchmarks

Analysis and Prioritisation	Response Planning and Implementation	Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation
GPC/Protection Cluster Partner Overall Activities		
Contribute to the collective protection risks analysis and risk prioritisation exercise to ensure it is evidence-based and in accordance with the priorities of the affected population.	Provide direct assistance to affected populations, support local actors and assist in the development of plans and strategies that aim to achieve interim and longer-term protection outcomes, including through risk identification, analysis and advocacy.	Monitor protection risk trends and the risks severity levels at national and sub-national levels.

SIX-YEAR GPC STRATEGY



This GPC Strategy will be in effect from **2025 to 2030**. It provides a framework to lead all our efforts. Our vision, mission and strategic priorities are all underpinned by our shared values and core principles articulated below.



Our Vision

Protection of all people affected by crisis through inclusive and collective action to uphold their rights.



Our Mission

Provide accountable leadership, predictability, flexibility and foster a sense of community for effective coordination of quality protection response activities, contributing to achieving protection outcomes.

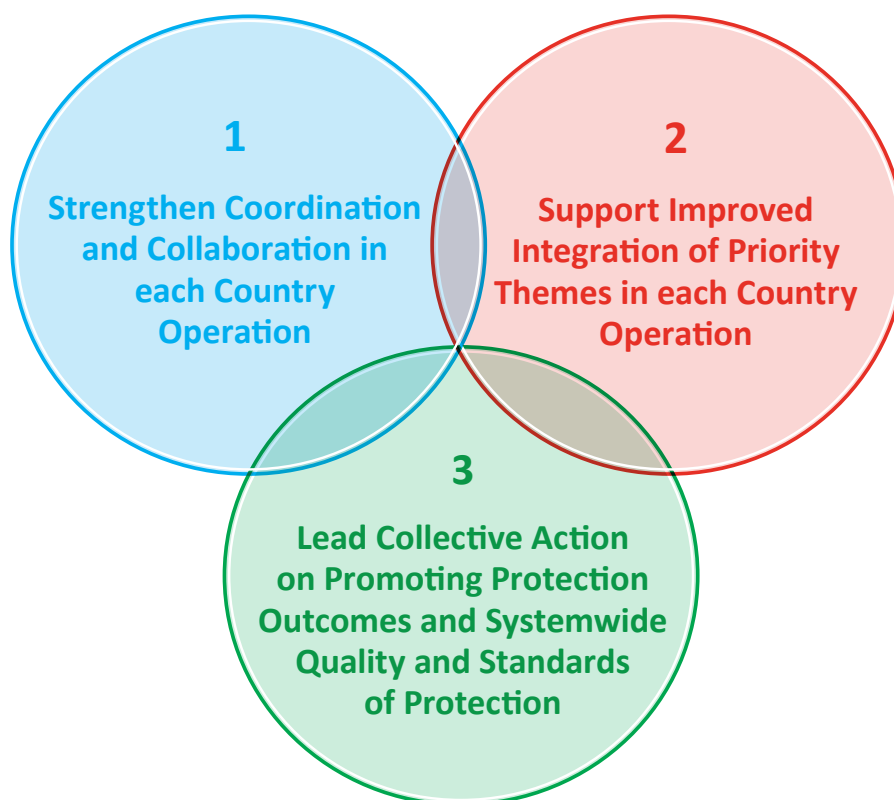
Afghanistan ©UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



We will fulfil our mission, anchored by shared values and core principles, by focusing on **three strategic priorities**.



Over the next six years, these interlinked priorities should bring together all of our previous efforts and strengthen technical consolidation, sustainability and accountability of protection coordination and response. Building on the foundations of previous strategies and, through a responsive and streamlined structure, we will provide leadership, strength, certainty, flexibility and foster a sense of community for effective protection coordination and quality protection responses for protection outcomes. We will endeavour to carry out these strategic priorities, which connect and overlap, in a coherent and collaborative way, building on existing efforts and advocating to address any identified gaps. The roles and responsibilities for delivering our activities will be detailed in the each accompanying action plan.

Our objectives/areas of focus set out under each strategic priority are indicative of the anticipated approach and are not an exhaustive list. Where they refer to country operations, the GPC's interagency role is to provide strategic and operational support to the relevant country clusters/sectors.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

*We will **Strengthen Coordination and Collaboration in Each Operation***

Outcome Effective and accountable protection coordination in each context brings together partners for predictable and collective action to achieve protection outcomes.

GPC support for quality performance of protection coordination and accountability to affected populations.

We will include activities, roles/responsibilities, and indicators in our action plan which will prioritise tailored support to each country context. Throughout the Strategy implementation, our support to country operations will be incremental and consistent to ensure national and global sustainability.

Our Objectives/Areas of Focus

- Each protection cluster (or protection sector or similar coordination body) is empowered to perform its [core seven \(six plus one\)](#) functions and fulfil its functions as provider of last resort. This includes strong performance in leading predictable coordination; basing activities on an updated cluster analysis and strategy; consistent data collection and monitoring; regularly identifying and addressing threats, vulnerabilities and coping capacities; supporting quality service delivery; and regularly informing the HC and HCT's strategic decision-making. The Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) mechanism will help identify priorities and gaps for supporting country operations.
- Provide global support (remotely or through deployments) that is tailored and timely, including connecting protection clusters and other clusters regionally and globally.
- Prioritise sustainability of protection coordination and response through localisation, AAP and building a cohort of experienced coordination actors, including through learning and professional development.
- Promote a people-centred approach to leadership and the participation of relevant authorities, civil society, local organisations and communities in all aspects of coordination and response.
- Position protection, including as part of the centrality of protection, throughout the response so that it is mainstreamed and integrated; as well as establishing appropriate pathways to standalone protection initiatives.
- Promote and support creative and adaptive protection responses (including learning from existing programming) in line with changing operational contexts; across the humanitarian response and beyond – with solutions and the nexus of humanitarian, development, peace and human rights.
- Lead and support advocacy for key themes and appropriate resources – financial and human – for quality and sustainable protection coordination and response and strengthened strategic collaboration for protection within the overall response.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

*We will **Support Improved Integration of Priority Themes in each Country Operation***

Outcome Improved integration of identified priority themes as part of quality protection coordination and response to achieve protection outcomes and contribute to systemwide collective outcomes at country level.

GPC support for integration of key global themes to strengthen the quality of protection coordination and response within and beyond the protection cluster.

We will identify priorities and provide proactive support to country operations for strengthening the integration of these themes. We will also contribute – globally and nationally - to strengthened quality and standards for each theme.

The GPC SAG will prioritise relevant themes for each iteration of the GPC action plan and include activities, roles/responsibilities and indicators to monitor implementation and achievement. Examples of themes include those actively identified by the SAG, as well as core principles and standards on prioritisation of protection programming in responses, preparedness, durable solutions, anticipatory action, AAP, gender equality, PSEA, centrality of protection, people-centred approaches, localisation, anti-trafficking, climate change, community-based protection, etc.

Our Objectives/Areas of Focus

- Identify thematic areas of coordination and response that require strengthening at country level. These should be prioritised based on information and patterns identified from regular interaction with country operations.
- Provide support, in line with objectives under Strategic Priority 1, with the aim of improving integration and sustainability of these thematic areas.
- Support adoption and roll-out of global themes in a timely and realistic manner, ensuring coherence and complementarity with other global clusters or networks.
- Support protection clusters' engagement with human rights, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and special procedures.
- Collate and share good practice and lessons learned with case studies, including from global, regional, national and local partners.
- Support efforts and advocate for appropriate resources – financial and human – for quality and sustainable approaches to integrating priority themes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

*We will **Lead Collective Action on Promoting Protection Outcomes and Systemwide Quality and Standards of Protection***

Outcome As a convenor and leader, we will support and promote the inclusion of quality and standards of protection and address challenges to protection outcomes through consistent engagement at global and systems levels.

GPC global platform and convenor as a leading voice on protection.

As a platform for protection coordination and response, we will identify patterns of protection threats, vulnerabilities and coping capacities. We will convene partners for collating such data as an evidence base for analysis and for informing collective engagement on pursuing systemic actions and solutions; as well as promoting protection in interagency and international processes and fora.

As part of each action plan, the SAG will include activities, roles/responsibilities and indicators to monitor implementation and progress.

Our Objectives/Areas of Focus

- Convene partners for consultation and development of positions on global issues involving protection. Use GPC platform for regular sessions with stakeholders, including donors and member states, to exchange on key global protection matters and mobilise resources as necessary.
- Lead a strategic approach to global advocacy for a consistently protective approach in line with all protection policies and guidance.
- Keep updated and lead collective participation for an overview of protection as part of international systems - including initiatives or work related to humanitarian, human rights, development or peace matters. These include the [UN Agenda for Protection](#); Centrality of Protection initiatives; IASC workstreams; [UN-SG's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#); and similar activities.
- Provide representation on key global protection debates as a leading authority on protection.
- Use the evidence-base of country coordination and response to have an updated overview of protection practice, including to identify patterns regarding context, operationalisation of protection response; gaps in coordination and response; and any recurring themes.
- Provide accessible and timely data, analysis and updates on key protection matters at global level for all relevant partners.
- Contribute to inter-cluster approaches to strengthen protection in the overall humanitarian response and beyond.

OUR SHARED VALUES AND CORE PRINCIPLES



The GPC Strategy and related Action Plans will be guided by the values enshrined in the [humanitarian principles](#) of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; as well as by [key operational IASC guidance](#), the [Sphere protection principles](#) and the [Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and Accountability](#). The ICRC [Professional Standards for Protection Work](#) provide concrete steps and methods for upholding professional and consistent standards of protection in practice.

These values and principles equally inform the commitments for protection members' participation; as well as underpin GPC leadership, inclusivity and accountability, serving to connect and strengthen the work of all partners.

Accountability to Affected People

As affirmed by the [2022 IASC Principals Statement on AAP in Humanitarian Action](#), and set out in the [IASC Collective AAP Framework](#), AAP must be central and humanitarian actors should ensure decision-making power is in the hands of those affected by crisis. Having a people-centred approach, which prioritises the involvement of affected people, local communities, authorities and civil society is essential to ensure that any response is relevant and accountable to the people it serves.

Localisation

[Localisation](#) of response activities, at all levels, includes ensuring meaningful participation, representation and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors. Focus includes strengthening existing local resources and capacities, including how crisis-affected communities are already managing their lives, reducing threats and vulnerabilities and strengthening capacities to cope with crises in the short-term and longer-term.

Protection Mainstreaming

Based on humanitarian and protection principles, we define [protection mainstreaming](#) (or safe programming) as the following elements: (1) prioritise safety and dignity/avoid causing harm; (2) meaningful access; (3) accountability; and (4) participation and empowerment. These represent a coherent approach to all of the core principles underpinning our Strategy and related action plans.

Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action

As articulated in the IASC Protection Policy and the [IASC Centrality of Protection Action Plan \(2023-2025\)](#) and any associated document, the GPC and country protection clusters have a pivotal role in advancing the centrality of protection. We will continue supporting protection analysis, outcome monitoring, and contributing to informed decision-making by the humanitarian leadership in country. In addition, we will support global efforts on promoting the centrality of protection in all humanitarian action, primarily by elevating protection priorities in key fora, ensuring it remains core to all interventions; and using global platforms to highlight the critical protection risks that crisis-affected populations face.

Inclusion

An inclusive response entails reaching out and including any individual affected by crisis, addressing any identified barriers or discrimination, and ensuring ongoing effort to understand and reflect how each individual experiences the crisis. This includes men, women, boys, girls, regardless of their age, disability (as set out in the [IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#)), health status, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or any other characteristic

they may use to define themselves. The distribution of power, and people's needs and capacities often change over time. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure the agency and participation of any person, as well as supporting diverse needs and that any assistance is provided impartially (i.e. in accordance with need). We will endeavour to continue contributing to establishing methods that lead to understanding the distribution of power, vulnerabilities and capacities; as well as the intersectionality of these as experienced by individuals affected by crisis.

Principled Partnership

The [Principles of Partnership](#), endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, articulate the importance of equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity.

Gender Equality

As underlined by the [updated IASC Policy](#) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2024), a gender-sensitive, people-centred, feminist and intersectional vision of equality and inclusion is necessary within humanitarian action and beyond to reflect the differentiated impact that crisis has on each person. This includes taking specific actions (such as those recommended in the [IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action \(GIHA\) Handbook](#)) to contribute to gender equality so that people of all ages, sexual orientations and gender identities have equal enjoyment of all rights, goods, opportunities, resources, rewards and quality of life.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Child Safeguarding

The [2024 IASC Principals' Statement on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment](#) affirms their commitment to actively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment by humanitarian workers. It also sets out the role of humanitarian leadership to implement PSEA commitments in every response operation. We will promote and support the implementation of the [IASC Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA](#) which include integrating a victim/survivor-centred approach; provision of victim/survivor assistance, incorporating SEA risk assessment and mitigation into programs; and engaging women-led civil society organisations in PSEA prevention and response measures. We will promote and support child safeguarding to be fully embedded in response activities.

Durable Solutions and Nexus

We will support the role of protection as part of implementation of the [UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#) to better resolve, prevent and address internal displacement crises. We recognise that protection risks can be addressed with short and longer-term responses to respond to the root causes of internal displacement; and support people's capacities to cope with recurring and prolonged displacement. This approach is also relevant and necessary for the [humanitarian-development-peace nexus](#) which emphasises the importance of humanitarian actors working together with development, human rights, peace and security actors and stakeholders to achieve collective outcomes.

Climate

The consequences of climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly prevalent and contribute to the intersectionality of threats, vulnerabilities and coping capacities of people affected by crisis. We will support an active approach to understand better the protection implications of [climate](#) crises on affected people. This approach should continue to be integrated into humanitarian action as part of understanding how threats and vulnerabilities may be reduced and capacities to cope strengthened; in addition to ensuring that programming minimises its environmental and climate impact.



ANNEX



GPC ROLE AND STRUCTURE

GPC Role

As detailed in the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action \(IASC Protection Policy\)](#), the GPC's overall function is to support country protection clusters with their six core functions. In addition, the GPC has a global leadership function regarding global interagency policy and

Role of the GPC for Protection in Humanitarian Action - as detailed in the IASC Protection Policy

Providing a platform for partners with expertise, resources and capacity relevant to protection, the Global Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, coordinates and contributes to global-level inter-agency policy advice; provides guidance to Protection Clusters in the field on cluster responsibilities (including strategy development, information management, assessment and analysis and operational delivery); supports protection responses in humanitarian action (i.e., non-refugee situations); and leads standard and policy setting in relation to protection in complex emergencies (i.e. conflict and disaster-induced).

Given the broad definition of protection, Areas of Responsibility (AoR) have been established within the GPC: Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Housing, Land and Property (HLP), and Mine Action (MA). These AoRs provide technical advice and support in their specialized areas. AoRs may be replicated at the field level with sub-clusters, and other technical working groups may be formed to address specific context-specific protection issues. Organizations that lead AoRs and field-level sub-clusters have the same responsibilities as cluster leads.

Global Protection Cluster as a Network and Platform

The GPC is a network of partners who are engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises. The GPC membership includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, member states and United Nations agencies. At country level, there are protection clusters, sectors or working groups and these are represented and supported at global level by the GPC. Throughout this Strategy, when the term 'protection cluster' is used, unless otherwise specified, it refers to the protection coordination mechanism that exists at national or sub-national level in an operation.

GPC Structure and Governance

- As the IASC-mandated Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) for protection, UNHCR leads the GPC.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

- The GPC is governed by a Strategic Advisory Group, co-chaired by the GPC Coordinator and a representative of an Operational NGO.
- The SAG provides strategic direction and advice to the GPC and its entities. It also oversees the development, implementation and monitoring of the GPC Strategy and related action plans.

- The composition of the SAG represents the diverse membership of the GPC. As set out in the SAG Terms of Reference, there are permanent and non-permanent UN and NGO members of the SAG. The NGO Co-Chair and non-permanent members are elected in accordance with an agreed process, usually every two years. A representative of the ICRC is invited as a standing observer.
- The GPC Operations Cell provides secretariat functions for the SAG.
- Permanent SAG Members:
 - GPC Coordinator
 - NGO Co-Chair
 - UNHCR as Cluster Lead Agency
 - Coordinators/Co-ordinators of each Areas of Responsibility – Child Protection, GBV, HLP, Mine Action
- Non-Permanent SAG Members
 - 4 International NGOs
 - 4 Local NGOs
 - 8 UN Agencies
 - 3 Networks

GPC Operations Cell

- The Operations Cell, which is accountable to the SAG, is a group of interagency technical experts, consisting of staff from various GPC partners. Staff are either formally deployed to UNHCR or have dedicated capacity to support the GPC on an ongoing basis.
- The Operations Cell, together with partners, supports the implementation and monitoring of the GPC Strategy.
- The GPC field support function is a key focus of the Operations Cell which provides practical guidance to country clusters to deliver protection coordination and response in line with the six plus one core cluster functions.

Task Teams and Working Groups

- Under the guidance of the SAG, a time-bound task team or working group may be established to support priority technical issues. Under previous strategies, a working group has been more long-term with ongoing responsibilities; while a task team has been limited in time until it has achieved defined outputs.
- As part of initiating this GPC Strategy and related annual action plans, and then on an ongoing basis, the SAG will identify when any task team, working group, community of practice or similar entity is required for a specific piece of work. Any agreed procedure will be based on identifying a gap and how best to address it, including through deciding what possible additional support or focus may be required for achieving key deliverables in relation to a particular technical theme or process.
- Any additional entity should only be established after considering what already exists at global/regional/country levels within the GPC/AoRs; partners of the GPC/AoRs; other clusters; or other actors. Utilising what already exists should be a priority and supporting partners to do this well should

help to reduce the risk of duplication and creation of new processes and layers of work.

GPC Members and Partners

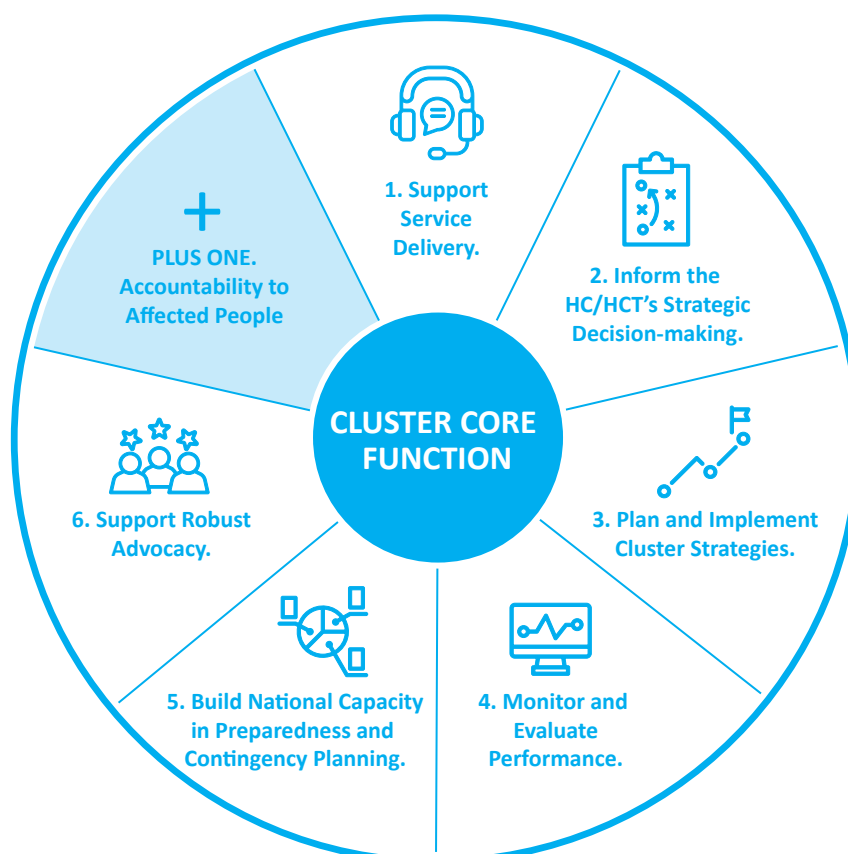
- The GPC membership is a broad collective of member organisations, partners and communities working on all areas of protection.
- Any organisation may join as a GPC member and receive regular GPC communications. Many GPC resources and documents are available on the [GPC website](#).
- GPC partners are usually operational protection actors and, under SAG oversight, are encouraged to participate in activities as part of implementation of the GPC Strategy and related action plans.

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GPC Mandate as Part of the IASC Cluster Approach

Each protection cluster (including the GPC) is mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The [2005 IASC Cluster](#) approach sets out the purpose and scope of leading a cluster in humanitarian settings with clear leadership, predictability and accountability. In addition to supporting formally activated clusters, global clusters may support any humanitarian coordination and response structure. The [2015 IASC Cluster Coordination and Reference Module](#) outlines the six plus one core functions of any cluster at country level to:



Cluster Core Functions	Priority Actions
1. Support Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a platform that ensures service delivery is driven by the Humanitarian Response Plan and strategic priorities. Developing mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery.
2. Inform the HC/HCT's Strategic Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing needs assessments and analysis of gaps (across and within clusters, using information management tools as needed) to inform the setting of priorities. Identifying and finding solutions for (emerging) gaps, obstacles, duplication and cross-cutting issues. Formulating priorities on the basis of analysis.

Cluster Core Functions	Priority Actions
3. Plan and Implement Cluster Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing sectoral plans, objectives and indicators that directly support realization of the overall response's strategic objectives. Applying and adhering to common standards and guidelines. Clarifying funding requirements, helping to set priorities, and agreeing cluster contributions to the HC's overall humanitarian funding proposals.
4. Monitor and Evaluate Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting on activities and needs. Measuring progress against the cluster strategy and agreed results. Recommending corrective action where necessary.
5. Build National Capacity in Preparedness and Contingency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse and address anticipated risks to countries, populations and operations. Establish good working relationships with national authorities, accept their leadership where appropriate, and take fully into account their preparedness arrangements. Establish good working relationships with other partners whose cooperation will be critical in a response.
6. Support Robust Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying concerns and contributing key information and messages to HC and HCT messaging and action. Undertaking advocacy on behalf of the cluster, cluster members, and affected people.
PLUS ONE: Accountability to Affected People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IASC Collective AAP Framework Integrating inclusive, community-centred approaches into protection responses. Systematic engagement, assessments and analysis with diverse community groups for understanding and validation of capacities, vulnerabilities, threats; and preferences for assistance and communication. Enabling participation, feedback and responsive measures that prioritise the dignity, needs and protection of crisis-affected communities.

