



Mozambique, 2024 ©UNHCR/Hélène Caux
Edna, 18, and her brother Elson, 23, fled their village in Chiure district when it was attacked by armed groups in February 2024.

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit

Chapter 9: Advocacy and Communication



Global Protection Cluster

Chapter 9: Advocacy and Communication

Overview

Advocacy and communication are integral to addressing protection violations, mobilizing resources, and ensuring accountability. Effective advocacy and communication amplify the voices of affected populations and enable stakeholders to prioritize and address critical protection issues.

This chapter contains:

- Developing collective advocacy strategies and action plans.
- Delivering protection briefings to ICCG/HCT and other key stakeholders.
- Engaging and building relationships with donors to support resource mobilization and advocacy efforts.
- Leveraging human rights mechanisms and procedures for advocacy.
- Creating communication products and engaging with media effectively.

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9.1 Collective Advocacy

Core Concepts and Principles

Advocacy is one of the six core functions of the Cluster system. It involves identifying protection concerns, raising awareness, and engaging with stakeholders, including humanitarian leadership, donors, national authorities, and the diplomatic community. Advocacy efforts typically focus on funding priorities for donors, as well as addressing protection risks with duty-bearers, non-state armed groups, the HC/HCT, donors and Member States, and other relevant stakeholders. Human Rights mechanisms can also serve as effective channels for collective advocacy.

Key Advocacy Principles

Evidence-Based Messaging

Advocacy must be grounded in accurate protection data and analysis to ensure credibility and impact.

Inclusivity

The participation of affected populations, particularly marginalized groups, is key to advocacy efforts to reflect their needs and perspectives.

Collaborative Approach

Collaborative approaches to advocacy are essential to maximise impact and coherence.

Risk Management

Sensitivities and risks associated with advocacy must be addressed carefully, ensuring no harm to affected populations or partners.

Role of the Protection Cluster

A. Collective Advocacy Strategy

To strengthen the Cluster's advocacy efforts, it is essential to develop a cohesive strategy or simple action plan with clear objectives, priorities, and key messages that are tailored to the specific context. This process should involve active engagement with Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) and operational partners to ensure their advocacy priorities align with those of the Cluster, thereby fostering unity and enhancing overall efficiency.

Protection Cluster may consider establishing an **Advocacy Working Group** to support strategy development, production of advocacy materials and messages, and other advocacy actions, while also leveraging the diverse expertise and capacities of partners (see ToRs template).

Protection Cluster Advocacy Actions	
Briefings	Organize formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, including duty-bearers, donors, and international actors.
Advocacy Notes	Draft advocacy notes, position papers, and key messages for dissemination to targeted audiences.
Joint Advocacy Initiatives	Conduct joint advocacy initiatives with other sectors and clusters to address cross-cutting issues.
High-Level Advocacy	Engage in high-level advocacy / humanitarian diplomacy to influence policy and funding decision.
Advocacy Outcomes	Monitor and evaluate advocacy outcomes to refine strategies and ensure accountability.

B. Protection Briefings to ICCG/HCT and Other Key Stakeholders

The Protection Cluster should proactively and strategically brief key stakeholders, including the HCT and ICCG. These briefings should be grounded in collective protection analysis, and jointly defined protection messages.

Guidance/Tips:

- Coordinate with SAG/AoRs/partners to provide timely and strategic protection briefings to the ICCG, HCT, and other stakeholders.
- Present key protection messages, analysis, and actionable recommendations that address identified risks and gaps. While the format of protection briefings can vary, clarity of message and a focused ask are essential for driving meaningful HCT engagement.
- Track the implementation of recommendations through structured follow-up actions and regular updates.
- Regularly brief the CLA Representative and management team on strategic matters, ensuring joint positions and overall coherence of action.
- The Protection Cluster should also leverage forums like the UN Security Council Informal Expert Group on PoC to influence decision-making and global policy discussions.

Briefing the Humanitarian Country Team

Regular engagement with the HCT varies across contexts. While some Protection Clusters have protection as a standing item on the HCT agenda, in many operations, attendance is limited to when specifically requested.

This is not necessarily negative, it provides flexibility, but it does require strategic timing and a clear purpose when requesting to brief the HCT.

Effective engagement often involves focusing the HCT's attention on a specific issue where collective action is needed. In this regard, presenting a Protection Analysis Update (PAU) or similar product can be a useful entry point, but the impact is strongest when linked to a specific request for action, such as developing a common position or an engagement strategy with key stakeholders.

Briefing the UN Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Protection of Civilians (IEG PoC)

One important influencing channel available to Protection Clusters on issues related to the Protection of Civilians (PoC) is the UN Security Council's informal Expert Group (IEG) on PoC in armed conflict. The Group is an informal mechanism through which Security Council Member State experts are briefed on key protection of civilians' issues and trends in advance of relevant decision-making at the Security Council. The IEG on PoC meetings are attended by Member State thematic and/or country focal points and OCHA plays the secretariat role.

A primary avenue for Protection Clusters to engage with the IEG on PoC relates to peacekeeping and special mission mandate adoptions and renewals for Council authorised operations. Several weeks ahead of UN Security Council decisions on mission mandates, OCHA will share a background document and brief the informal Expert Group, providing an update on the main protection of civilians-related concerns in the country considered, outline the actions taken to address these, and make recommendations for possible Security Council response. Protection Clusters are one of the partners OCHA regularly invites to provide inputs ahead of these briefings. They use inputs received from partners to develop the oral briefing as well as the background 'Building Blocks' document, which often includes information concerning conduct of hostilities, displacement, humanitarian access, human rights violations and abuses, children, gender-based violence and conflict-related violence, and conflict and hunger.

C. Donor Engagement and Resource Mobilisation

The Protection Cluster should actively engage the donor community to mobilise resources for Cluster priorities and underfunded protection activities. Advocacy for funding protection programs and responses must be done to address both immediate and long-term needs.

Humanitarian donors and Member States can be important stakeholders in protection advocacy efforts. The Protection Cluster should therefore establish and maintain relationships with diplomatic corps from relevant embassies and humanitarian donors at country and regional levels to strengthen political and diplomatic support for protection issues.

Donors should be invited to actively participate in the Protection Cluster meetings. Their presence can enhance discussions and decision-making, as many donor representatives bring valuable humanitarian experience and insights. In some operations, donors also have a seat at HCT meeting, and the Protection Cluster should leverage these strategic positions.

Steps for Donor Engagement	
Donor Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing and potential donors and their priorities using tools like the Donor Mapping Matrix. Tailor engagement strategies to align with donor interests and areas of focus.
Regular Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise periodic briefings to present strategies, response priorities, funding needs, and gaps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use templates and SOPs, such as the GPC Donor Briefing SOPs, to ensure consistency and professionalism in donor engagement. • Highlight the impact of donor contributions to build trust and transparency.
Joint Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host donor visits to field locations to showcase activities, build relationships, and increase visibility for protection programs.
Trusted Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain open and continuous communication channels with donors, sharing timely updates and success stories to demonstrate progress and accountability.

The Protection Cluster can also leverage the relationships established by the GPC with global and capital level donors. The GPC regularly organizes country-specific briefings in Geneva, lobby trips to donor capitals, and engagement with UN Member States at New York level to amplify country-level advocacy.

D. Engagement with Human Rights Mechanisms

Effectively addressing the complex protection threats faced by civilians affected by armed conflict requires a holistic, multidisciplinary response involving various international actors. Current policy discussions on the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus and the United Nations Secretary-General’s [Call to Action for Human Rights](#) have reinvigorated the push for more integrated and collaborative approaches within the aid sector.

Protection Clusters can strengthen advocacy through collaboration with human rights mechanisms, including:

- [Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council](#) include special rapporteurs and independent experts (thematic and country-specific) are appointed by the Council and serve in their personal capacity. They undertake country visits; act on individual cases and concerns of a broader, structural nature by sending communications to States bringing alleged violations or abuses to their attention; conduct thematic studies and convene expert consultations; and raise public awareness.
- The [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations.
- [National Human Rights Institutions \(NHRIs\)](#) are independent bodies established by a state to promote and protect human rights at the national level. NHRIs often monitor human rights situations, investigate complaints, advise governments on human rights laws and policies, and raise public awareness.

Guidance/Tips:

- Share confidential submissions with special rapporteurs to inform country visits, thematic reports, and recommendations.
- Collaborate on thematic studies, expert consultations, and joint advocacy campaigns.
- Submit inputs to UPR mechanisms to highlight protection concerns and systemic gaps.
- Amplify advocacy efforts and ensure follow-up on protection recommendations.
- Develop and disseminate resources such as the Tip-Sheet for Engagement with Human Rights Mechanisms to build capacity and knowledge among partners.

9.2 Media and Communications

Effective communication raises awareness and garners support for protection priorities. The Protection Cluster should consider the following:

1. **Producing communication material:** The Protection Cluster should create high-quality factsheets, dashboards, reports, photographs, and videos to communicate key messages and data. They can be public or limited in circulation to specific partners/audience.
2. **Using social media:** Due to high staff turnover and the demands of account management, setting up separate social media accounts for country-level Protection Cluster is generally not recommended. Protection Clusters are encouraged to share updates and key messages through GPC's social media channels, avoiding the complexity of managing separate accounts.
3. **Engaging the media:** Through the CLA, the Protection Cluster can cultivate relationships with journalists and media outlets to amplify advocacy messages and ensure coverage of critical issues.
4. **Ethical storytelling:** The Protection Cluster should follow consent and ethical guidelines when using photographs and videos to safeguard the dignity and privacy of individuals.

Guidance/Tips:

- Use tools like the GPC Branding and Style Guide to maintain consistency in messaging and visual identity.
- Share impactful stories and case studies to illustrate successes and challenges.
- Translate communication materials into local languages to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

9.3 Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Collective Advocacy			
Protection Advocacy Toolkit	Guidance Tools	EN, AR, ES, FR, AMH	2022
Protection Advocacy Training Modules / Materials	Training	EN, FR, ES <i>Upon request</i>	2022
Template Advocacy Working Group ToRs	Template	ENG, FRA <i>Upon request</i>	2024
Examples of Advocacy Strategies/Action Plans	Strategy	EN, FR, ES <i>Upon request</i>	N/A
Advocating for Protection Podcast	Podcast	ENG	2022-23
GPC/UNHCR Aide Memoire: Using IHL in Support of the Protection of Civilians	Aide Memoire	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2025
Webinar on Capturing the Impacts of Advocacy	Webinar	ENG	2024
GPC Statement on the Importance of Women Humanitarian Workers for Protection in Afghanistan	Statement	ENG	2022

GPC Statement on the Situation in Port-au-Prince: Protection Now for the People of Haiti	Statement	<u>ENG, FRA</u>	2022
IASC Key Protection Advocacy Messages on COVID-19	Key Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2020
DR Congo Advocacy Note on Attacks Against IDP Sites	Advocacy Note	<u>FRA</u>	2022
GPC Advocacy Messages - Democratic Republic of Congo	Advocacy Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2025
South Sudan Protection Cluster - Conflict and Food Insecurity Advocacy Note	Advocacy Note	<u>ENG</u>	2023
Sudan PoC Flash Updates	Advocacy Note	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2023-24
Position Paper: Principled Returns of IDPs in Northern Mozambique	Position paper	<u>ENG</u>	2022
Briefing to ICCG/HCT and Other Key Stakeholders			
Myanmar Protection Cluster Briefing to HCT – Earthquake May 2025	Presentation	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2025
Niger Protection Cluster Briefing to HCT	Presentation	FRA <i>Upon request</i>	2022
GPC Template for Protection Briefing to HCT	Template	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2025
GPC Template for Meeting Briefing Note and Talking Points	Template	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2025
Somalia HCT Common Policy Position on: Enhancing Efficiency of Humanitarian Aid through Effective Targeting, Registration Systems and Data Sharing	Policy Paper	<u>ENG</u>	2025
Iraq HCT Guiding Principles and Strategy for the Rapid Response to Internally Displaced Iraqis Affected by Camp Closures and Consolidation	Position Paper	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2020
GPC Guidance on Engaging with the informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict	Guidance	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2022
Submissions of Protection Clusters to the IEG on PoC ahead of mandate renewal	Example Document	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	N/A
DRC Policy Brief on Community-Based Protection in the Context of MONUSCO Withdrawal	Policy Brief	<u>ENG, FRA</u>	2024
GPC Protection Advocacy Messages – Renewal BINUH, Haiti	Example Document	<i>Upon Request</i>	2022
Confidential Letter to Ambassador	Example Document	<i>Upon Request</i>	2022
Donor Engagement			

ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work 2024 - Donor Chapter	Professional Standards	<u>ENG, FRA, ARA, ESP, RUS</u>	2024
GPC Engaging with Donors - Thoughts and Tips 2024 / GPC Donor Engagement Guidance Note 2021	Guidance / Tips	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2021 / 2024
GPC Donor Mapping Matrix Template	Template	<i>Upon request</i>	2021
GPC Donor and Member States Briefing SOPs	SOPs	<i>Upon request</i>	2021
GPC Protection Messages for Senior Officials on Central Sahel	Key Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2022
Topline Recommendations for G12+ donors following the Global Protection Cluster Briefing on the Protection Crisis in Central Sahel	Key Messages	<i>Upon request</i>	2021
GPC Protection Messages - Lake Chad Basin Conference	Key Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2023
GPC Donor Briefing on the Situation in Ethiopia, Key Messages	Key Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2021
GPC Donor Briefing on the Situation in Afghanistan, Key Messages	Key Messages	<u>ENG</u>	2021
GPC High-Level Humanitarian Donors Briefing Note: The State of Protection in 2024	Briefing Note	<u>ENG</u>	2024
oPt Protection Cluster – Advocacy Field Visits Do-no harm Checklists: for Humanitarian Actors and for Donors and Diplomats	Checklist	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2022
Human Rights Engagement			
GPC Human Right Engagement TT: Tip-Sheet for Protection Cluster: Special Procedures	Tipsheet	<u>ENG</u>	2021
GPC Human Right Engagement TT: Tip-Sheet for Protection Clusters: Treaty Bodies	Tipsheet	<u>ENG</u>	2021
Tip-Sheet for Protection Clusters: Universal Periodic Review (UPR)	Tipsheet	<u>ENG</u>	2021
Collaborative Advocacy by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors	Webinar	<u>ENG</u>	2021
GPC Coordinator Letter on Protection Clusters' Human Rights Engagement	Letter	<u>ENG</u>	2022
Guidance for the Field Protections Clusters on Engagement with National Human Rights Institutions	Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2021
Training Series on Human Rights Engagement	Training	<u>ENG</u>	2021
Confidential submissions/briefings by PC with SPMH (Nigeria, Myanmar, Sudan, DRC)	Example Document	ENG, FRA <i>Upon request</i>	2021-24
Video Message by the Protection Clusters in Iraq, Nigeria and Mozambique on Human Rights Day	Video	<u>ENG</u>	2022
Media and Communications			

GPC Branding/Style Guide/Logo manual	Guidance	<i>Upon request</i>	N/A
Communication Templates	Template	<i>Upon request</i>	N/A
Social Media Guidelines for Country Cluster (incl. PowerPoint Presentation)	Guidance	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2022
Filming an interview with your Smartphone	Guidance	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2022
SOPs for GPC Public Statements and Media Releases	SOPs	ENG	2021
Mozambique Protection Cluster - Media Guidelines	Guidance	ENG, POR	2021
Somalia Protection Cluster – Communication Strategy	Strategy	ENG	2024
Ethiopia Protection Cluster – Communication Strategy	Strategy	ENG <i>Upon request</i>	2023
Afghanistan Protection Cluster - Media Monitoring	Media Monitoring	ENG	2021

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters

Visit the [main toolkit landing page](#) or navigate directly to the chapters below to access more resources and information on the Protection Cluster's role in the following areas:

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1: Humanitarian Coordination Overview

- Coordination models for internal displacement, refugee response and mixed situations
- Cluster Activation Criteria and Processes

Chapter 2: Humanitarian Programme Cycle

- Elements / Principles of the HPC and the Role of the Cluster
- Flash Appeals and Pooled Funds
- Integration cross-cutting issues and the Centrality of Protection into the HPC

Chapter 3: Internal Displacement

- Internal displacement and the needs of IDPs.
- Legal frameworks and displacement

Chapter 4: Protection in Armed Conflict

- International Law/Principles
- Humanitarian protection and Protection of Civilians (PoC).
- Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

Chapter 5: Centrality of Protection

- The Protection Cluster's responsibilities in CoP
- The difference between mainstreaming, integration and the centrality of protection.
- IASC processes and HCT benchmarks

Chapter 6: Climate, Disaster, and Sudden Onset Emergencies

- Terminology and definitions in climate and disasters.
- Responding to sudden onset emergencies
- Actions that can be taken after a sudden onset shock (day 1-5)
- Climate and disaster preparedness and response.

Chapter 7: Durable Solutions

- Global frameworks guiding Durable Solutions
- Supporting durable solutions at strategic and operational levels.
- The GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters

Chapter 8: Cluster Transition, Deactivation and Reform

- Criteria for cluster deactivation and transition
- Transition processes
- Humanitarian reform initiatives
- Area-based coordination

Chapter 9: Advocacy and Communication

- Developing advocacy strategies and action plans
- Preparing briefings to ICCG/HCT and engaging donors
- Leveraging human rights mechanisms
- Communication products and media engagement

Chapter 10: Data Responsibility and Safe Information Management

- Principles of data safeguarding, management and sharing
- Data responsibility in humanitarian action
- Safe and effective data handling

Chapter 11: Cross-Cutting Issues

- Age, Gender, Diversity and Disability Inclusion
- MHPSS
- AAP
- PSEA
- Protection Mainstreaming

Chapter 12: Understanding Protection Programmatic Approaches and Interventions

- Locally Led Responses
- Community Based Protection
- Case Management
- Service Mapping and Referrals
- Legal Aid, Law and Policy
- Cash and Protection
- Humanitarian Negotiations
- Anti-Trafficking
- Mobile and Rapid Protection Responses