



Global Protection Forum 2025 Concept Note

Session 1: Threats, Risks and Needs: A Global Overview of Protection Trends and Protection of Civilians Efforts in 2025

Monday 10 November, 14.00-15.30 CET

Lead/Co-Lead: GPC, Global AoRs.

Background

In 2025, civilians continue to face unprecedented protection challenges driven by armed conflict, climate-related crises, political instability, and shrinking humanitarian space. Despite growing recognition of protection as a central pillar of humanitarian action, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law remain widespread and accountability elusive. The Global Protection Update 2025 provides a consolidated analysis of protection trends across field operations, offering an evidence base for policy and operational discussions. This is particularly critical at a time when misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation are distorting the truth and undermining trust in the legitimacy of the humanitarian enterprise.

As of September 2025, Protection Clusters estimate that 395 million people across 23 countries are exposed to protection risks. These risks include direct threats to life from extreme violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation. Across operations, the main protection risks reported are attacks on civilians, explosive ordnance, abductions and movement restrictions, alongside gender-based violence, denial of services, lack of legal identity, and psychosocial distress. The convergence of these risks, coupled with the erosion of protective environments, has created an unprecedented global protection crisis, challenging both humanitarian response and political accountability.

Gaza & the West Bank, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ukraine, and Myanmar face the most extreme situations, where populations experience overlapping patterns of violence, exclusion, and deprivation. Since January 2025, conflict dynamics have intensified as a major driver of protection risks. In Gaza, the humanitarian crisis deepened, culminating in a famine declaration, while in the DRC, violence escalated across North and South Kivu, displacing over a million people in just weeks, adding to nearly 6.4 million IDPs. Sudan continues to face severe threats, particularly in El Fasher and the Zamzam IDP camp, where civilians are exposed to ongoing attacks, siege and displacement. Rising violence in Mozambique (Cabo Delgado), Haiti, and Colombia (Catatumbo) region has further exacerbated vulnerabilities, while fragile institutions and economic collapse compound risks in protracted and forgotten crises in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad, Syria and the Sahel.

Objective

The opening session will set the tone for collective reflection and action. The session will include a presentation of the main findings of the Global Protection Update (GPU), providing a global overview of protection trends and the persistence and evolution of threats and resulting protection risks across crises. The session will explore the mounting challenges to upholding international law and protecting civilians amid complex and protracted conflicts, while identifying opportunities for strengthened collective action to address protection risks and advance accountability.

Guiding questions

- What are the **key protection trends** in 2025? How are protection risks and threats evolving across different contexts – and what do these changes tell us about the state of protection today?
- What are the **most pressing challenges** in ensuring respect for international humanitarian and human rights law in current crises? How are violations of international law manifesting, and what are the implications for protection actors on the ground?
- Where have we seen **effective examples of collective action** leading to tangible protection outcomes; and what lessons can we draw from them? How can the humanitarian system adapt to address emerging and complex protection threats more effectively?
- What **opportunities exist** to reinforce accountability and protection of civilians through collective action, collaboration, and innovation?

Format and Speakers

The session will include a short presentation of the Global Protection Update 2025, followed by a moderated panel discussion featuring senior representatives from field operations, UN agencies, and NGOs. The discussion will encourage forward-looking reflection on global protection priorities and opportunities for joint action.

Agenda

Time	Component	Speakers
14:00 – 14:10	Welcome participants	Josep Herreros Global Protection Cluster Coordinator
14:10 – 14:20	Introductory Remarks	Anna Rahm Deputy Humanitarian Director / Head of Unit, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Ramesh Rajasingham OCHA Representative in Geneva

14.20 – 15.15	Panel Discussion – Opportunities and Challenges in Upholding International Law and Protecting Civilians in 2025	Moderation by Cathrine Andersen, Special Representative for the Protection of Civilians, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <u>Speakers:</u> Pierre Apraxine, Head of Protection of the Civilian Population Unit, ICRC Abdoul Aziz Thioye, Deputy Director Global Operations Division, OHCHR Alma Taslidzan, Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager, Humanity and Inclusion Gunvor Knag Fylkesnes, Director of Advocacy, Save the Children Norway Kifaya Khraim, International Advocacy Officer at the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (Palestine) Sandrine Lusamba, Executive Coordinator, SOFEPADI (Democratic Republic of Congo)
15.15 – 15.30	Closing Remarks	Cathrine Andersen, Special Representative for the Protection of Civilians, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Josep Herreros Global Protection Cluster Coordinator