Global Protection Cluster

Global Protection Forum

Delivering Protection Amidst Movement and Access Constraints: Lessons from Remote, Mobile and Localized Responses

Thursday 05 November, 14.00-15.30 CET

CONCEPT NOTE & AGENDA

Summary:

Restrictions on movement, sieges, and other acute access constraints present some of the greatest challenges to delivering protection for and with people affected by crisis. Across diverse operational contexts, protection actors have adapted their approaches to continue reaching affected populations and reducing risks of violence and deprivation through innovative operational models and protection mechanisms, including mobile and remote responses, community-based networks, and protection interventions such as humanitarian evacuations and mine action. This session will showcase practical experiences from country operations, highlighting how protection actors have enabled protection through tailored approaches and interventions in besieged and hard-to-access areas. The discussion will focus on operational lessons, enabling factors, limitations, risks and the trade-offs involved in maintaining principled protection action and risk-sharing under severe access constraints.

Organizing leads: GPC, UNFPA, NRC, UNHCR, IMC, PRIDE Center, OCHA, NPA

Background:

People affected by conflict and crisis face a range of severe restrictions on movement and humanitarian access that limit their ability to stay safe, to survive and exercise their rights. From sieges and encirclement in contexts such as Gaza and Yemen, to confinement in contexts such as Colombia, these constraints are seemingly expanding while creating significant protection risks for crisis-affected people. Importantly, such restrictions often limit the most basic self-protection action available to communities: to flee from violence and deprivation, and access life-saving assistance and protection. Across a number of contexts, these restrictions are evident not only as unfortunate side effects of war and crisis, but as part of intentional strategies by armed actors to control, isolate and punish civilian populations. Such movement and access restrictions are often indicators of protection failures and, in some cases, failures to uphold obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

As a growing necessity, together with affected communities, protection actors have developed a range of front-line, adaptive approaches aimed at addressing these restrictions, mitigating their impact and supporting communities to protect themselves. This includes the implementation of community-based protection mechanisms, remote programming, mobile responses and humanitarian evacuations, underpinned by ongoing humanitarian negotiations and advocacy with duty bearers.

These approaches continue to drive forward a range of critical protection outcomes in highly constrained environments. However, they also face complex dilemmas and challenges. At a time of worsening protection risks and steep funding cuts, frontline protection capacities are diminishing and the ability for

protection actors to invest in the often-intensive efforts needed to operate in restricted contexts and reach the most vulnerable is under strain. Further, protection actors and communities face a range of risks in delivering protection amidst movement and access constraints, bringing to the forefront urgent duty-of-care, risk-sharing and 'do no harm' considerations.

Amidst the growing use of siege, confinement and severe movement restrictions across crises, ensuring protection action in such contexts is further enabled across the humanitarian system is a pressing priority for the protection of millions of people. This requires further understanding the success factors behind effective protection interventions in restricted contexts, unpacking the dilemmas and challenges, and creating clear pathways for such frontline efforts to consistently inform and shape higher-level humanitarian diplomacy with duty bearers in support of compliance with international law and strengthened civilian protection.

This session aims to advance reflections and action in support of the creative, principled ways protection partners are working with diverse communities affected by movement and access constraints, the dilemmas and challenges they're managing, and what's needed across the humanitarian system to ensure this work can effectively reduce people's exposure to violence and harm, and drive protection.

Guiding questions:

- What operational approaches and enabling factors have facilitated inclusive protection for people in different contexts affected by severe movement and humanitarian access restrictions? How have local organizations and community networks shaped successful protection responses in restricted contexts?

- What are some of the key considerations and promising practices for meaningful and gender-responsive forms of risk-sharing, duty of care, and safeguarding when frontline action is primarily undertaken by local actors, volunteers and communities?

- What are some of the ethical dilemmas that protection actors have to grapple with in advancing principled protection interventions in highly constrained contexts, and how are organizations navigating them? How are protection actors able to effectively identify and support those experiencing the greater barriers and vulnerabilities in contexts of restricted access?

- How can frontline protection action in restricted settings better inform advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy on freedom of movement, civilian protection, humanitarian access, and compliance with international humanitarian law towards duty bearers?

Registration for the session is available here.

Topline Agenda:

Element	Speaker
Welcome and Framing the Session	**Kristele Younes, Moderator & UNRWA Geneva Director**
Opening Reflections – how restricted movement and access impact protection for communities, and how they intersect with forced displacement and solutions	**Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur for the Protection of IDPs**
Panel Discussion - How protection actors are addressing constraints and working with marginalized communities to deliver principled protection	**Fidaa Shurrab, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, OPT** **Felipe Nery Martínez Arboleda & Lay Cáceres, ACADESAN, Colombia** **Dr. Susan Tanwie, Sirri Care Foundation, Nigeria** **Kseniia Lisna, East-SOS, Ukraine** **Michael Bruce, PRIDE Center** **Naw Eh Ni Thaw, Meikswe, Myanmar**
Closing Reflections - connecting frontline protection response with humanitarian diplomacy for IHL/IHRL compliance and accountability	**Chiara Ciminello, IHL, Access and Humanitarian Diplomacy Policy Officer with DG ECHO**

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