Global Protection Cluster
Human Rights Engagment
Task Team

GPC Human Rights Engagement Task Team

Newsletter

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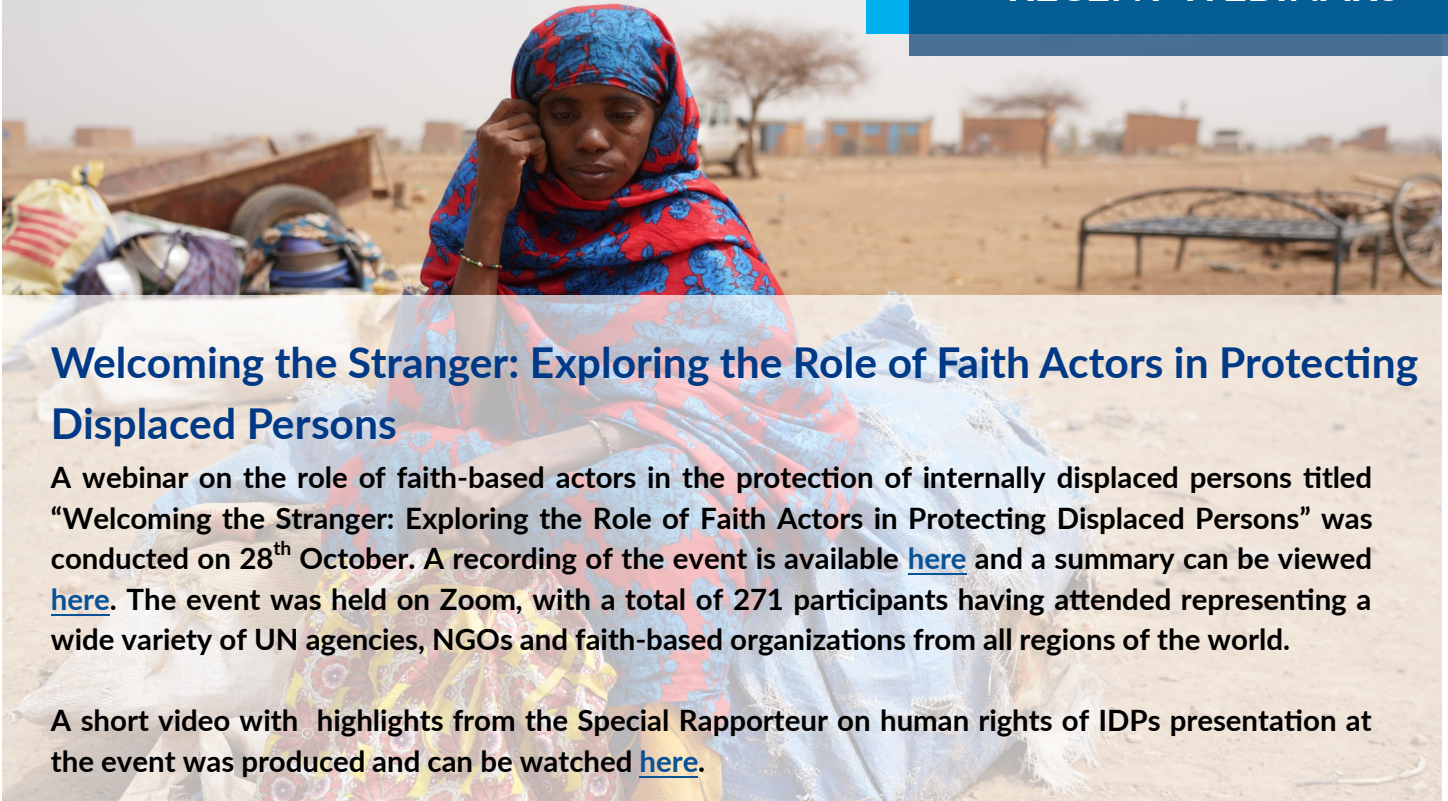
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Welcoming the Stranger: Exploring the Role of Faith Actors in Protecting Displaced Persons

A webinar on the role of faith-based actors in the protection of internally displaced persons titled "Welcoming the Stranger: Exploring the Role of Faith Actors in Protecting Displaced Persons" was conducted on 28th October. A recording of the event is available here and a summary can be viewed here. The event was held on Zoom, with a total of 271 participants having attended representing a wide variety of UN agencies, NGOs and faith-based organizations from all regions of the world.

A short video with highlights from the Special Rapporteur on human rights of IDPs presentation at the event was produced and can be watched here.

How to Tackle Racism in the Context of Internal Displacement

A webinar titled "How to Tackle Racism and Related Intolerance in the Context of Internal Displacement" was held on 7th October. A recording of the webinar can be viewed here, along with the summary note.

Resources shared during the webinar include the following:

- UNHCR, Guide on how to address and prevent racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
- UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities webpage
- UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Checklist to strengthen UN work at country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights
- CERD Committee webpage
- CERD Committee, General recommendation XXII on article 5 of the Convention
- UN Fight Racism Campaign (for those with access to iSeek: Fight racism | United Nations)

Planning and Designing Human Rights Education Interventions

On 13th December, the GPC Task Team on Human Rights Engagement (GPC HRE TT) held a webinar on planning and designing human rights education interventions. The aim of this webinar was for participants to obtain an improved understanding of the core elements of human rights education, the Logic Model as a tool to undertake human rights education activities, and how NHRIS can carry out human rights education activities with IDPs.

Opportunities and Challenges: Collaborative Advocacy by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors

On 3rd November, HPG and the GPC HRE TT jointly hosted a webinar on *Opportunities and challenges: collective advocacy by humanitarian and human rights actors*. Following the publication of an HPG policy brief on strategic advocacy partnerships between humanitarian and human rights actors, the event disseminated and discussed the findings of this research, including the lessons learnt identified for future collaboration between humanitarian and human rights actors.

The event was chaired by William Chemaly and included a presentation of the recent report from Vicki Metcalfe Hough. The panel included:

- Patrick Eba – UNHCR, Deputy Director of the Division of International Protection
- Donatella Rovera – Amnesty International, Crisis investigator
- Sameer Saran – IRC, Whole of Syria Protection Cluster co-lead
- Francesco Motta - OHCHR , Chief of MENA and Asia section

The panellists and the participants shared examples of effective collaborations between international humanitarian and human rights actors in their efforts to influence conflict actors vis-à-vis their behavior towards civilians.

The summary report can be accessed here. You can listen to the recordings in English and French translation here.

We look forward to working with you on the implementation of proposed recommendations.

AFGHANISTAN - GPC ADVOCACY MESSAGES

With many thanks to all of you who contributed to crafting and refining the **key protection messages for Afghanistan**, please see below the final version, along with the latest Protection Analysis Update on Afghanistan:

GPC Advocacy Messages on Afghanistan, November 2021

Presentation of and exchange with the Special Rapporteur (SR) on violence against women (VAW) during GPC HRE TT November meeting

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women presented her mandate to Human Rights Engagement Task Team members on 11th November.

The mandate consists of receiving information on VAW from various stakeholders and recommend measures at local, national, regional and international levels to eliminate violence against women and address its causes and consequences. The SR works with other Special Procedures Mandate Holders (SPMHs) on cross-cutting issues. The mandate presents two reports per year, one to the Human Rights Council and one to the UN General Assembly. The themes are chosen by the mandate holder, who welcomes information submitted by various stakeholders. Protection actors can actively participate in the discussions on upcoming reports.

SPMHs can also carry out country visits. There is wide room for participation and support in providing the mandate with relevant information on VAW in the country to be visited, suggestions on issues to pay attention to and stakeholders to meet on the ground. All of this can be done through confidential processes. As another major area of engagement, SPMHs can issue a communication to governments raising a specific issue based on reliable information. This can put pressure on governments to address the problems raised.

The thematic priorities of the SR on VAW are:

- Violence against indigenous women and girls
- Violence against women and girls of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations
- The relationship between climate change, environmental degradation and violence against women
- The relationship between statelessness and VAW
- Psychological forms of violence suffered by women and girls

Collaborating with OHCHR Field Presences

Protection of Human Rights is an overarching and key component of humanitarian action. The statement on the centrality of protection (2013) and the policy on the centrality of protection (2016), both upheld by the inter-agency partners emphasize the importance of placing at the centre the rights of the affected people who are at risk in the face of a humanitarian crisis. The policy has assigned responsibility to the Protection Cluster to lead on the protection analysis and inform the HC and the HCT on decision making. While the Cluster has helped raise the profile of protection and put protection mainstreaming on the agenda of other clusters, challenges remain in implementing the key aspects of the Protection Policy and realizing the collective protection outcomes as highlighted in IASC Protection Policy. The protection cluster is a crucial forum for strategic collaboration between humanitarian and human rights actors. However, multiple factors including overlapping institutional, structural and cultural factors, inadequate leadership, and the prevailing culture of risk aversion within the humanitarian sector have inhibited strategic and systematic collaboration among the two groups.

OHCHR has led the Protection Cluster three times since 2006 – in Haiti, Mauritania and in Occupied Palestinian Territory. In a few instances, OHCHR has taken on a co-lead role, notably in Liberia, the Pacific, and Ukraine, and staff have acted as focal points for advocacy within a UNHCR-led cluster. In other contexts, OHCHR`s participation and coordination with protection clusters has not been part of a strategic commitment to support leadership of the cluster. This has rendered engagement with the Protection Cluster being determined by context-specific elements, including OHCHR`s mandate, profile, priorities, actual resources and capacity in the respective country situation.

Likewise, UNHCR-led Protection Clusters—with their predominant focus on programmes and service provision— have not systematically reached out or collaborated with human rights actors on issues beyond their traditional 'populations of concern.' Protection Clusters have not invested adequate resources and efforts to build institutional capacity on human rights law and protection advocacy, or systematically enabling space for human rights actors to join planning of protection cluster response framework and advocacy.

Regardless, OHCHR's mandate is integral to humanitarian action, with its substantive expertise on mainstreaming a human rights-based approach to humanitarian action, empowering people to claim their rights and strengthening the capacities and accountability of duty-bearers to meet their legal obligations under international human rights and humanitarian laws. OHCHR's support to the effective functioning of the Protection Cluster can be instrumental in ensuring that appropriate tools and mechanisms are in place to allow a rights-based analysis of protection risks, violations and priorities of affected persons.

The webinar on this topic, held on 23rd November, sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Clarify the roles and mandates of different OHCHR field presences (country office, regional offices, human rights components, and human rights advisors);

- Exchange ideas and lessons learned on entry points for engaging on human rights and collective protection advocacy between Protection Clusters and OHCHR field presences with a focus on Human Rights Advisors and country offices;

- Recommend measures and practical steps to strengthen synergies and collaboration between Protection Clusters and OHCHR field presences.

Key questions that were discussed included:
- What are the entry points for OHCHR-Protection Clusters collaboration taking into account different roles and mandates of OHCHR field presences?
- Were there any examples, modes of collaboration or good practices that can be captured and documented?
- Were there any challenges and bottlenecks in the context of OHCHR – Protection Cluster collaboration?

A recording of the webinar can be viewed here, and the summary note can be accessed here.

Global Protection Forum Virtual Exhibition: HRE TT Stand

On 27 October 2021, the GPC HRE TT held a virtual stand at the Global Protection Forum Exhibition. After an initial 45 second pitch to all participants inviting them to attend the HRE TT's stand, four segments of presentations were given by Valerie Svobodova representing UNHCR as co-chair of the TT. Participants included colleagues from the following countries: Switzerland (Geneva HQ), Central African Republic, Tunisia, Mozambique, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Lebanon, Norway, Ukraine Rwanda, Myanmar, Afghanistan, State of Palestine, and many more.

In each presentation, the HRE TT was introduced by elaborating on achievements in its three pillars: field support, guidance and policy development, and training and capacity building. Also underscored were key areas where need of support was identified by field colleagues, such as strategic engagement with national human rights institutions and international and regional human rights bodies, PC protection monitoring activities, and sharing of good practices. In addition, the HRE TT's main advocacy strategies were presented. Finally, the presentations closed by highlighting the High-Level Event launching a research paper on collaborative human rights and humanitarian advocacy, and the Human Rights Engagement learning program to be piloted in December.

14 colleagues expressed interest in becoming members of the HRE TT.

Human Rights Engagement Learning Program

The pilot run of the online training program on human rights engagement for protection clusters took place between September and December 2021.

The program is composed of eight modules, each covering one of the following topics:

Session 1: Basic concepts and Human Rights Engagement (HRE) as a process
Session 2: Human rights analysis
Session 3: Mapping stakeholders for human rights engagement
Session 4: Engaging with affected populations
Session 5: Integrating human rights in cluster work
Session 6: Implementing HRE 1
Session 7: Implementing HRE 2
Session 8: Addressing racism

The sessions, each of them lasting max. 2 hours, are designed in an interactive manner allowing discussion time and exchange of experiences. The aim of the modules is to strengthen human rights engagement in the field for protection clusters and exchange experience between the different cluster members. The pilot training is currently running in English. The program is currently being adjusted based on feedback from participants as well as GPC HRE TT members, and the material will be available for all protection clusters to use in their cluster work as they deem appropriate. The final full training package also includes a "mini series" versions of all eight sessions that can be used as a handout or discussion topic for cluster members.

Call for Interest: 2nd Cohort to be Held in January

The second cohort of the training program will take place from 11th to 14th January 2022. You can share your nominations by 14th December 2021 with svobodov@unhcr.org (including: name, organization, position title, country, duty station, email).

Opportunities to Engage with UN Human Rights Mechanisms

You can now find opportunities of engagement with UN human rights mechanisms in a Team Up online calendar, managed by OHCHR, which enables you and staff in UN Country teams to sign up for email notifications and set reminders in the calendar for specific country Treaty body, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Special Procedures meetings and their deadlines for submissions. The calendar, which will be updated continuously, can be accessed here (please use the Google Chrome or Firefox browsers). In the calendar, Special Procedures appear in yellow, Treaty bodies in blue, and UPR in green.

There exists a wealth of publicly available, country-specific information emanating from the human rights mechanisms that should inform analysis in CCAs, and the design, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of Cooperation Framework priorities, and programming. The UPR Practical Guidance for UN entities on maximizing the use of the Universal Periodic Review in their work at the country level, is one such tool, published as part of the UN Secretary General's Call to Action for Human Rights, and in follow up to an DC/EC decision of August 2020. It provides practical advice on how UN entities at country level can engage in the UPR process to support progress by Member States on human rights as well as the SDGs, as well as in relation to the prevention and sustaining peace agendas.

The UNSDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams provides insights on the UN human rights mechanisms, and how RCs and UNCTs can strategically engage with them, including by providing specific country case studies. The UNSDG web-based Guide on Strengthening Engagement with the UN Human Rights Machinery provides additional guidance on how UNCTs can strengthen their involvement with the UN human rights mechanisms.

The UN human rights mechanisms have issued a wealth of thematic guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The treaty bodies have issued guidance to States for a human rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a key tool for UNCTs. These guidance documents are available in a Compilation of statements by human rights treaty bodies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (PDF | Word). The OHCHR Toolkit of treaty law perspectives and jurisprudence in the context of COVID-19 (PDF | Word) translates treaty law perspectives and jurisprudence into an operational contribution to strengthen the human rights-based approach to both UN and States' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Special Procedures have been identifying trends and emerging issues, and have issued over 120 press releases, 13 guidelines, different social media campaigns, and sent over 200 communications to State and non-State actors in relation to COVID-19. Moreover, 15 thematic reports devoted to aspects of the pandemic have been issued and/or presented to either the Human Rights Council or the General Assembly. A one-page infographic and detailed information about all special procedures' COVID-19 initiatives are available on a new dedicated web page. Special procedures have also undertaken a significant change in the way cooperation from States is assessed and made public, in particular in relation to country visits. All visit-related information is recorded through a new system, and Special procedures' success stories are regularly collected.

Over 170, 000 observations and recommendations made to States by the Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and UPR can be accessed in the recently upgraded Universal Human Rights Index, which is available in all UN languages to inform analysis including of Leaving No One Behind and programming in support of human rights based laws, policies and practices. Lastly, for reference, there is specific guidance on HRBA and LNOB now available, including the Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19, which was issued in June 2020.

Seeking Feedback on the HRE TT's Work in 2021

As 2021 draws to a close, we would like to hear from you regarding the work the GPC HRE TT has accomplished this year. It is an opportunity to assess the work we have all done so far and make sure that, moving forward into 2022, the GPC HRE TT can continue to provide a space, the resources and a community that can help you and your organization enhance the work you do on the ground, as well as to bring your expertise to the greater collective outcome. The survey is anonymous, unless you opt for leaving your email address at the end (optional field). It should take about 10 minutes to complete and we would appreciate if you could complete it before 13th December to discuss the results at the next meeting of the GPC HRE TT.

The connection link to the survey is here.

It has been a challenging year, as we all have had to work remotely most of the time, with the impact it has had on our professional and private lives. That is why we want to address you with an even more heartfelt thank you for your contribution and participation in the Task Team during this difficult year.

Thank you in advance for your time answering the survey and the time and work you have put into the GPC HRE TT going into 2022!

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