



GLOBAL PROTECTION UPDATE

MARCH 2023



PROTECTION DURING ELECTIONS: THE RIGHT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS

CONTEXT UPDATE

Conflicts, combined with climate shocks, political crises and rising food and energy prices, will make 2023 a year of vast humanitarian needs. Violence continues to grow with no signs of deceleration across several countries where Protection Clusters are active.

Since the beginning of the year, fighting has intensified in the Democratic Republic of Congo and caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children. Similarly, the displacement trends observed in the first quarter of 2023 in Somalia indicate a potential shift to more conflict-related displacements throughout the year. Mounting concerns over protection of civilian issues is threatening livelihoods and pushing the population into food insecurity as violence soars in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Haiti.

Principled humanitarian action is under threat in Afghanistan, where the de-facto authorities banned women from working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – and more recently, with the United Nations (UN) – creating serious protection risks for millions of people in already vulnerable situations. Several international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Afghanistan temporarily paused operations, including many protection partners¹. In early January, the GPC reiterate that protection cannot be ensured if women are not allowed to work in its [Statement on the Importance of Women Humanitarian Workers for Protection in Afghanistan](#), standing with our Protection Cluster members in-country engaged in negotiations, engagement and advocacy efforts for the rights of women to work in the humanitarian sector and to access assistance in safe and dignified ways.

Across several operations, the climate crisis has translated into immediate and protracted humanitarian crises. Mozambique and Malawi have experienced the combined impact of tropical storm Freddy and previous heavy flooding, affecting more than 1 million people. Evacuation centers include a high proportion of vulnerable individuals unable to return home. The UN and partners ramped up the response in support of the government-led relief efforts, activating the Protection, WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters in Malawi. The devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye compounded an already severe humanitarian and protection crisis in Syria, where a total of 15.1 million people were already requiring protection interventions at the start of 2023.

During the reporting period, bleak anniversaries highlighted that the cost of prolonged conflict is paid by the most vulnerable. In March 2023, one year after Russia launched its full-scale invasion in Ukraine, around 5.3 million people are still displaced within the country. Many are struggling to meet their most basic needs, with the elderly and people with disabilities amongst the most vulnerable. Two years after the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, the conflict has deepened, with violence in nearly all parts of the country. Far from being spared, civilians have been the targets of attacks – victims of indiscriminate artillery barrages and air strikes, extrajudicial executions, torture, and the burning of entire villages. The protracted conflicts in Yemen (9th year) and Syria (12th year) have led to two of the world's largest humanitarian crises, where millions displaced continue to live in poorly serviced areas and on the front line of conflict. Despite the peace agreement in Colombia, changing conflict dynamics in the department of Chocó is taking its toll on civilians, marked by large-scale confinement, sexual violence, landmine casualties and disappearances.

Escalating protection needs, coupled with rapidly shifting frontlines, access constraints, and the deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers, are stretching protection resources beyond capacity and hindering delivery of essential, life-saving services. Three months into the year, availability of protection resources remains hard to project in cluster operations for 2023. Two donor pledging conferences to raise funds and coordinate the relief response in the areas affected by the earthquake in Syria and Türkiye, and with regards to the humanitarian situation in Yemen, highlighted the disproportion of available resources compared to rising needs globally.

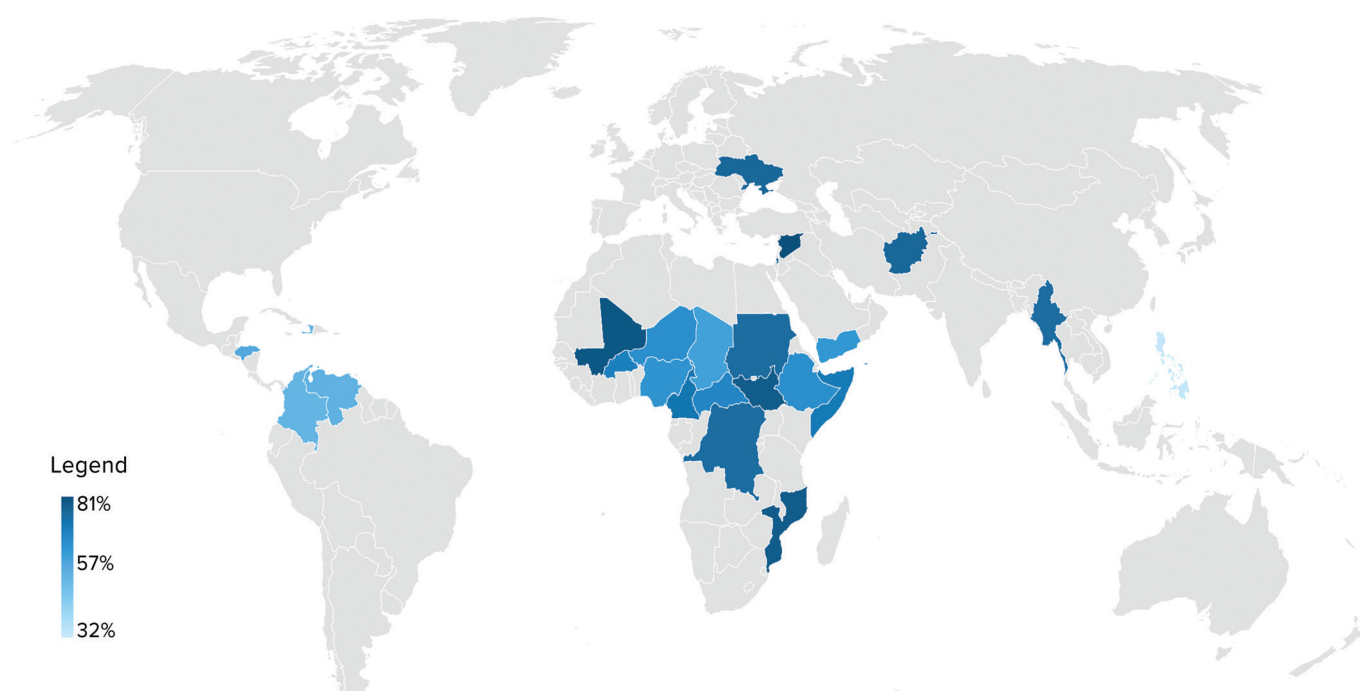
Protection should be given special consideration in transition planning. Following the activation of the clusters in 2014, the number of Iraqis requiring humanitarian assistance has decreased significantly, from 11 to 2.5 million. At the end of 2022, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) finalised the cluster deactivation process, as development interventions were assessed as increasingly more appropriate to address the situation of internally displaced persons, returnees, and the wider Iraqi population. The Iraq Protection Cluster² worked extensively to address barriers to civil documentation for conflict-affected communities – contributing to dignified and durable solutions. Similarly, following the decision of the HCT to deactivate the Cluster approach in Libya, a temporary Protection Transition Task Force was created to ensure continued response to protection. The extension of such a protection forum is considered critical to minimize the risk of emerging violations and avoid regressing on gains made by protection partners in the humanitarian response.

¹ [Afghanistan Protection Analysis Update, February 2023](#)

² [Iraq Protection Cluster De-Activation Process - Snapshot, December 2022](#)

According to the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Global Protection Risks Tracker, in the first quarter of 2023 13 Protection Cluster operations (50%) have reported a combined severity of 15 protection risks is as high or very high³. The population in the majority of the territory of Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, South Sudan, oPt, Syria and Ukraine is extensively exposed to simultaneous sources of harm directly related to human actions. Similarly, in these countries the population faces serious barriers in accessing protection services. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mali the situation with regard to access is even worse. The role of perpetrators, authorities and non-state armed groups is increasing the magnitude of the threats to populations, causing a spiral of increasing needs and an erosion of coping capacities. The regions most affected by elevated protection risks are West and Central Africa, MENA and East & Southern Africa. The denial of resources and opportunities, discrimination and stigmatization have risen steeply across operations, in correlation with gender-based violence, impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice, and unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement and forced displacement. An increase of psychosocial abuse or inflicted distress, in parallel to the unavailability of protection services to the population or the increased bureaucratic impediments hampering protection actors' capacity to deliver assistance, has also been identified.

Protection Risks in Cluster Operations



PROTECTION ANALYSIS UPDATES

79% of 29 Protection Clusters have produced 43 Protection Analysis Updates, including 26 national, 16 sub-national and 1 thematic since the 1st of January 2022. The PAUs are produced regularly on the basis of the Protection Analytical Framework.

PAU PUBLISHED SINCE LAST GLOBAL PROTECTION UPDATE

Afghanistan	2023	Mar	Guatemala	2022	Oct	Sudan (Blue Nile)	2022	Dec
Afghanistan	2022	Dec	Mozambique (Cabo Delgado)	2022	Nov	Sudan (South Kordofan)	2022	Dec
Afghanistan	2022	Nov	Myanmar	2022	Oct	Venezuela	2023	Feb
Burkina Faso	2023	Mar	Pakistan	2022	Nov	Yemen	2023	Jan
Colombia (Buenaventura)	2022	Dec	Sudan	2022	Dec			

* Click on the country to access the latest PAU

* The approach to PAUs have been revised during the 1st quarter of 2023, please see here the latest guidance.

³ Median value across protection risks is 4 = high or 5= very high.

KEY COUNTRY NEWS

Challenges remain overwhelming in **Afghanistan**, with Protection partners seeing an increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms, following the ban on women humanitarian workers.

About one in 10 people, or 1.9 million people, have been displaced in **Burkina Faso** due to insecurity and violence.

The Far North region of **Cameroon** was impacted by the Nigerian elections of February 2023, with members of Boko Haram and ISWAP crossing the border, displacing 2,000 individuals.

Phase II of the 24-month political transition has begun in **Chad**, with the establishment of the National Commission Responsible for the Organization of the Constitutional Referendum, risking dispute that could cause social unrest.

In January, a militia called “Azande Anikpi Gbe” was created in the Mbomou prefecture of **CAR**, resulting in forced displacement, abduction and forced recruitment of youth.

Colombia's new government is proceeding with plans to forge peace with ELN, FARC dissidents and other non-state armed groups not included in the 2016 agreement, yet armed confrontations persist, causing displacement, confinement, and forced recruitment.

A truce with M23 fighters in the North of **DR Congo** failed in March, with Angola announcing it will send troops to the region.

The hostilities between UAGs and ENDF in Western Oromia worsened in late 2022, inducing movements of IDPs towards the Amhara region. The south-east of the country (Somali, SNNP, Oromia) is notably affected by one of the worst droughts seen in **Ethiopia** in the last two decades.

The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 04 April calling for

the appointment of an independent rights expert on **Haiti**, amid mounting concern over deadly gang violence, threatening livelihoods, and pushing half the population to hunger.

As an alternative to control crime and extortion, 123 municipalities in **Honduras** (41% of the country's territory) are under a State of Emergency. Human rights organizations have warned of the consequences of these measures for the rights of the population.

Deterioration of the protection situation in the North and Central regions of **Mali**, with an expansion towards the South, is concerning with 2,064 incidents recorded in the first quarter of 2023.

The double landfall of Tropical Cyclone Freddy in February and March 2023 has devastated **Mozambique's** infrastructure, displacing some 184,000 people.

Almost 1.8 million people remain displaced across **Myanmar**. This includes more than 1.4 who have been internally displaced by conflict and insecurity since the military coup in February 2021.

People in need of humanitarian assistance increased by 14% in **Niger** due to population movements in Tillabéri, Tahoua, Diffa and Maradi in 2023.

The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in **Nigeria** strongly condemned the ambush and brutal killing of more than 30 civilians in Mukdolo village in Ngala Local Government Area in Borno State on March 10.

Continuing high levels of tension and violence in the **oPt** drove up protection risks including threats to life, insecurity, loss of property, and movement restrictions.

Displacement observed in 2023 thus far in **Somalia** indicate a potential shift towards conflict-related displacements due to the conflict in Lascaanood,

Galmudug and Hirshabelle, as well as in relation to the anticipated military offensive 'Black Lion'.

South Sudan remains tense owing to localized conflicts in 7 of the 10 states, with inter-communal violence accounting for over 60% of civilian casualties. The situation may further deteriorate in view of postponed elections in late 2024.

Clashes between the **Sudanese** Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted in Khartoum on 15 April. Three WFP staff were killed in the crossfire of clashes between SAF and RSF in Kebkabiya, North Darfur.

As a result of the devastating earthquakes that hit **Türkiye** and **Syria** in February, more than 6,000 people have died, 11,300 have been injured, and hundreds of thousands of families have been displaced in **Syria**. Loss of properties, livelihoods and civil documentation accompany high numbers of separated and unaccompanied children, and increasing cases of exploitation and abuse, GBV and harmful coping mechanisms.

With the official **Venezuelan** exchange rate devalued by approx. 110%, inflation is a rising threat for the most vulnerable groups.

One year after the invasion of **Ukraine**, protection issues affecting conflict-affected individuals, including older people, minorities and people with disabilities, remain significant. Protection needs are third biggest driver of household extreme multi-sectoral needs, after livelihoods and shelter/NFI.

An expired truce still delivering positive results, and a recent mass prisoner exchange, are signs of hope in **Yemen**, but over 21 million people need humanitarian assistance as the country continues to face extreme hunger and instability.

EMERGING PROTECTION TRENDS

CRISIS WATCH

ALARMING SITUATIONS

SYRIA

The protection situation in earthquake affected areas is alarming, exacerbating an already very concerning protection situation in a challenging environment where needs are very high, and funding limited. Along with ongoing human rights abuses, displacement and protection risks, the further loss of homes and properties, livelihoods, civil documentation, and access to essential services, means that people are experiencing compounded protection risks and have even less capacity to keep themselves and their families safe⁴. A humanitarian system wide scale-up activation in relation to the earthquake was announced for a duration of 6 months.

HAITI

The first quarter of 2023 was marked by the expansion and intensification of violence linked to armed groups. Protection needs almost doubled in one year and no area in Port-au-Prince is safe. Gang violence has escalated across the metropolitan area, and spilled over into neighbouring regions, particularly the Artibonite department. Violence surged in areas already controlled by gangs (Cité Soleil, Croix-des-Bouquets and Port-au-Prince) and extended to other communes considered relatively safe until now (Kenscoff and Pétion-Ville), progressively cutting the capital off from the rest of the country.

SUDAN

Since mid-April, widespread fighting between Sudan's military and main paramilitary force has resulted in over 400 civilian deaths and over 3,500 injured. Millions of people are trapped inside their homes. Fighting has halted food distributions and is preventing health professionals from reaching hospitals. Civilians are increasingly fleeing areas affected by fighting, including Khartoum. With some 15.8 million people – roughly a third of the population – in need of humanitarian relief and facing acute food insecurity this year, continued violence threatens the already precarious humanitarian situation.

PROTECTION RISKS

OF CONCERN

HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION RISKS

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, FORCED LABOUR OR SLAVERY-LIKE PRACTICES

23% of cluster operations report the risk as high or very high.

50% of cluster operations report this risk as high or very high. This represents the highest increase in terms of reporting from cluster operations (compared to 29% in September 2022).

DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION, DENIAL OF RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND/OR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

CHILD AND FORCED FAMILY SEPARATION

38% of cluster operations report this risk as high or very high. This represents a 9% increase compared to the latest reporting

⁴ A clearer picture of the most pressing protection priorities in different earthquake areas of Syria is now possible, including based on the rapid protection assessments undertaken since the earthquake, which include insights from an estimated 232 Key Informant Interviews conducted in 26 sub-districts with support from over 12 protection partners in GoS areas and 1,579 interviews conducted in 259 communities across North-West Syria by 32 partners.

MONITOR

TRACKING OF 15 PROTECTION RISKS ACROSS EMERGENCIES

The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility monitor and track 15 protection risks⁵ across crises with active Protection Cluster operations. In the last quarter, the Global Protection Risk Tracker has been revised, including through elaborating common definitions of the 15 protection risks guiding collective protection analysis. Additional information is available in the methodology.

PROTECTION RISK		VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
ABDUCTION & DETENTION	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention	2	1	7	14	2
ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS	Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	2	0	7	13	4
FAMILY SEPARATION	Child and forced family separation	0	5	11	7	3
MARRIAGE	Child, early or forced marriage	1	2	14	7	2
DISCRIMINATION	Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access	2	3	8	10	3
DISINFORMATION	Disinformation and denial of access to information	3	8	12	3	0
FORCED RECRUITMENT	Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups	1	2	11	11	1
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Gender-based violence	0	1	3	13	9
LEGAL IDENTITY	Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice	1	4	7	13	1
PRESENCE OF MINE	Presence of mine and other explosive ordnance	4	1	7	13	1
PSYCHOSOCIAL	Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	0	3	8	10	5
THEFT & EVICTION	Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property	2	2	12	9	1
TORTURE & CRUELTY	Torture or inhuman, cruel, degrading treatment	3	7	10	6	0
TRAFFICKING & LABOUR	Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	0	9	11	6	0
MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT	Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement	2	2	5	12	5

⁵ [GPC Protection Risks Explanatory Note, March 2023](#)

MONITORING AND ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The below heatmap provides a regional overview of protection risks, indicating the protection risks median across the countries in a same region. 'Gender-based violence' is notably widespread in **East & Southern Africa**, while **West & Central Africa** has been significantly affected by 'gender-based violence', 'attacks on civilians', 'abduction & detention', 'movement & displacement', 'discrimination' and 'psychosocial'. In the **MENA** region, 'gender-based violence', 'psychosocial' and 'movement & displacement' risks have been rampant, with an increase of 'discrimination'. **East & Southern Africa** has been significantly affected as well by 'attacks on civilians', 'abduction & detention', 'family separation', 'marriage', 'presence of mine' and 'movement & displacement'. While **Asia & Pacific** does not suggest the direst protection situation as a region, **Myanmar** and **Afghanistan** report the highest level of combined impact of protection risks of all operations.

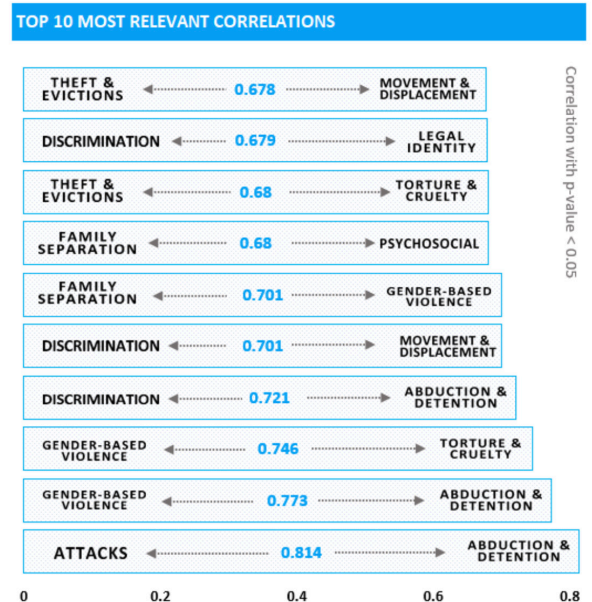
REGIONAL OVERVIEW	ABDUCTION & DETENTION	ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS	FAMILY SEPARATION	MARRIAGE	DISCRIMINATION	DISINFORMATION	FORCED RECRUITMENT	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	LEGAL IDENTITY	PRESENCE OF MINE	PSYCHOSOCIAL	THEFT & EVICTIONS	TORTURE & CRUELTY	TRAFFICKING & LABOUR	MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT
Americas	3	3	2.5	2	2.5	2.5	3.5	4	3	1	3	3	2	2.5	3
Asia & Pacific	2.5	2	2.5	3	2.5	2	2.5	3.5	3	3.5	3	2	2	3	3
East & Southern Africa	4	4	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	5	3.5	4	3	3	3	3	4
Europe	4	5	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	5	5	3	3	4	3
MENA	3.5	3.5	4	3	4	3	3.5	4.5	4	4	4.5	4	4	3	4.5
West & Central Africa	4	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	4

During the reporting period, **7 protection risks** have had a median **4 (high)** across all protection clusters operations, illustrating an elevated level of harm and exposure by affected population, and/or an important negative role of human activities in the magnitude of threat's effects to population⁶:

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE | PSYCHOSOCIAL | MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT | PRESENCE OF MINE | ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS | LEGAL IDENTITY | ABDUCTION & DETENTION

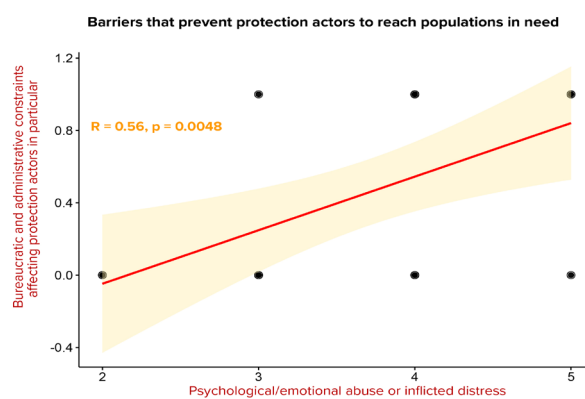
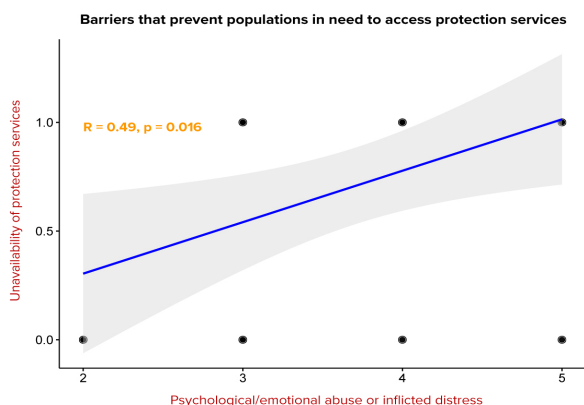
A correlation analysis examines the relationship between two protection risks determining how closely they are related. The analysis of various protection risks reveals that in the first quarter of 2023 there is a strong connection (correlation) between 'attacks on civilians' and 'abduction & detention' (**0.81**), as well as between 'gender-based violence' and 'abduction & detention' (**0.77**).

This means that as one protection risk increases, the other protection risk also tends to increase. This also suggests that common factors may be driving both types of risks, and the same individuals (perpetrators) or groups could be responsible for causing these problems. Additionally, those who are vulnerable to one type of risk may also be more likely to experience the other⁷. In the same period, both 'gender-based violence' and 'discrimination' seem to be related to several other protection risks, indicating that people affected by these issues may also be more likely to experience other types of harm. Specifically, 'gender-based violence' is correlated with 'family separation', 'torture & cruelty' and 'abduction & detention'. Similarly, 'discrimination' is correlated with 'movement & displacement', 'legal identity' and 'abduction & detention'.











⁶The explorative analysis is based on the median values of the severity (4 = HIGH) of the 15 protection risks monitored. The goal is to illustrate the overall tendency of protection risks situation and effects across crises and not to provide a measuring of the population affected or resulting needs.

⁷The statement highlights that these correlations are statistically significant, which means that the relationships observed are unlikely to be due to random chance alone. This finding suggests that the presence of one risk at a location is likely to be accompanied by the presence of the other risk.



The situation of protection risks and the above correlations are even more worrying when considered in comparison to the situation of access for protection. In all operations with a 4 (high) median protection risk the population faces at least 2 out of 5 barriers to access protection services, in 69%, protection actors face at least 3 out of 5 barriers to reach the population.

The analysis of the current period reveals strong correlations between several protection risks and barriers to access for protection, manifesting that specific barriers are having a direct effect on the impact of specific protection risks to population groups. For example, 'psychosocial' protection risk showed a tendency to increase proportionally to the unavailability of protection services and when protection actors are facing bureaucratic and administrative constraints in delivering protection services across all operations.

AT A GLANCE		MOST SEVERE PROTECTION RISKS REPORTED IN THE LAST QUARTER			
<p>Since October 2022, protection risks related to 'discrimination, stigmatization and denial of resources' are among the 8 most severe risks as reported by Protection Cluster operations (+20%), with 'theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property' decreasing to the 10th most reported. Gender-based violence remains the highest reported risk and the last quarter has seen a 10% increase in severity across operations. 'Legal identity' remains among the top protection risks, but with a significant increase in reporting in terms of severity (+9%).</p>					
 <p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</p> <p>100% of operations report gender-based violence as being the most concerning. 85% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS</p> <p>Attacks on civilians or infrastructures are occurring in 92% of operations. 65% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT</p> <p>92% of operations report forced displacement and impediments to freedom of movement as a risk. 65% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>ABDUCTION & DETENTION</p> <p>92% of operations highlight abduction, forced disappearance, arrest and/or detention as a major concern. 62% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>		
 <p>PSYCHOSOCIAL</p> <p>All operations report psychological/ emotional abuse or inflicted distress amongst the affected populations. 58% rate the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>LEGAL IDENTITY</p> <p>96% of operations impediments and/or restrictions to access to documentation, remedies and justice. 54% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>PRESENCE OF MINES</p> <p>Presence of mines and other explosive ordnance is a risk across 85% of operations. 54% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>DISCRIMINATION</p> <p>92% of operations report discrimination, stigmatization and denial of resources or access as being the most concerning. 50% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>		

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

AFGHANISTAN	DRC	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	SOMALIA	SOUTH SUDAN
SUDAN	SYRIA (WoS)	SYRIA (NW)	BURKINA FASO	CAMEROON	CAR
CHAD	ETHIOPIA	HAITI	HONDURAS	MYANMAR	NIGER
NIGERIA	oPt	UKRAINE	VENEZUELA	COLOMBIA	PACIFIC
YEMEN	PHILIPPINES				

Niger saw an increased number of child marriages occurring in the localities of Torodi, Makalondi and Goroual under the threat and ultimatum of armed groups. In **Haiti**, gangs continued to use sexual violence, including collective rape, to terrorize, subjugate and punish the population. Other forms of sexual violence, such as sexual slavery, was also reported as being used by gangs. Women are highly exposed to GBV in **Burkina Faso**, especially during the search for firewood, as shown by the kidnapping of women in Arbinda in 2023. Restrictions on women and girls' presence in the public sphere in **Afghanistan** coupled with the issuance of a number of decrees have pushed people to succumb to negative coping mechanisms, including forced marriage. GBV cases increased by over 200% in the drought-affected Somali region of **Ethiopia**. By the end of February, 74 femicide were registered in **Honduras**. High rates of domestic violence and femicide in **Venezuela** are fuelled by economic instability. A significant presence of a human trafficking network within Venezuela is reported, with victims subjected to sexual exploitation and forced labour. In **Ukraine**, women and girls experience increased GBV—including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and conflict-related sexual violence. The risk of GBV has significantly increased in **Syria** due to inadequate shelters in the aftermath of the earthquake. Severe drought, protracted conflict and communal violence are driving increasing levels of sexual and gender-based violence in **Somalia**.

ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, AND ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN OBJECTS

CAMEROON	SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	UKRAINE	BURKINA FASO	CAR
DRC	ETHIOPIA	HAITI	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR
NIGER	NIGERIA	oPt	SOMALIA	SYRIA (NW)	AFGHANISTAN
COLOMBIA	CHAD	HONDURAS	SYRIA (WoS)	VENEZUELA	YEMEN
PACIFIC	PHILIPPINES				

Violence associated with armed groups in **Haiti** resulted in the deaths of at least 531 people and injured 300 others since the beginning of the year. **Cameroon** noted an increase of attacks on schools in the first quarter of 2023 – with around 54% of schools still closed in the North-West and South-West regions (NWSW). Protection incidents continue to raise serious concerns for the protection of civilians and violation of IHL/IHRL in **Myanmar**, stemming primarily from artillery and mortar shelling, air and drone strikes, remote explosives/landmines, security operations, and indiscriminate attacks. More than 30 civilians were killed in an attack in Mukdolo village in Ngala Local Government Area, Borno State in **Nigeria**. Attacks against civilians reduced in Tigray but increased in the Oromia region of **Ethiopia**. 85 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli Forces in the **West Bank** in the first three months of the year. In **Ukraine**, 22,734 civilian casualties have been recorded so far: 8,490 killed and 14,244 injured. The erupting fighting in Lascanood in **Somalia** has led to attacks on civilian facilities, including indiscriminate shelling affecting the main hospitals, destruction of property, markets, and water points. At least 413 people have been killed in **Sudan** and more than 3,500 people are injured as of 20 April.

UNLAWFUL IMPEDIMENTS OR RESTRICTIONS TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, SIEGE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	oPt	SUDAN	SYRIA (NW)	CAMEROON
CAR	DRC	ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE
MYANMAR	NIGER	NIGERIA	SYRIA (WoS)	YEMEN	CHAD
COLOMBIA	HAITI	SOMALIA	UKRAINE	PACIFIC	SOUTH SUDAN
PHILIPPINES	VENEZUELA				

Violence-related internal displacement in **Haiti** is on the rise, with more than 160,000 people displaced, twice as many as in 2021. In January alone, more than 15,130 people were displaced in **Cameroon** due to violence and targeted attacks. Between January and February 2023, more than 20,000 people were displaced in the regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua in **Niger**, due to the activity of non-state armed groups (NSAGs). Conflict and other threats to the safety of civilians have intensified in **Myanmar**, with an estimated 258,000 individuals displaced during the first quarter of 2023. In **Somalia**, nearly 600,000 people were internally displaced during the first quarter of 2023 – 64% due to the conflict in Lascanood and the military offensive in Galmudug and Hirshabelle. With the rains starting, some 110,000 people were displaced by



floods in Bardheere, Baidoa, Dhusamareeb and Cadaado, Burtinle and Garowe, as well as in Burco districts. More than 86,000 people in NW Syria were reportedly newly displaced after the earthquake. 2 million people had to leave their homes between January 2022 and 2023 due to fighting in the East of DR Congo. Attacks by non-state armed groups forced 17,000 people to move towards Menaka town and Kidal in Mali. Increased displacement is being reported in multiple locations across Khartoum state in Sudan, as well as to Aj Jazirah, Sennar, White Nile, River Nile and Gedaref states, due to fighting and lack of basic commodities.

ABDUCTION, KIDNAPPING, DISAPPEARANCE, ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION

SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	CAR	DRC
HAITI	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGER	NIGERIA
oPt	SOMALIA	SYRIA (WoS)	UKRAINE	CAMEROON	CHAD
ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	SYRIA (NW)	VENEZUELA	YEMEN	COLOMBIA
PACIFIC	PHILIPPINES				

Between 1 January and 15 March 2023, at least 277 people were abducted in **Haiti** through gang-related incidents that took place mainly in the capital. In an unprecedented mass kidnapping, armed men abducted 66 women and children on January 12 in the district of Arbinda, in northern **Burkina Faso**, while women were picking leaves and wild fruits in the bush due to food shortages. Abduction of young boys and men and execution by NSAGs in NWSW region of **Cameroon** were reported in the first quarter of 2023. On the border strip of the Maradi region in **Niger**, there has been an increase in kidnappings of children against demand for ransoms by NSAGs. Abduction and kidnapping of civilians and humanitarian workers have been a tactic used by NSAG in the Northeast of **Nigeria** since the beginning of the conflict. The **oPt** is reporting daily arrests of Palestinians, including children, by Israeli Forces and a high use of administrative detention. As verified by relevant entities, serious concerns remain about the arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture or ill treatment of conflict-affected individuals, including children in **Ukraine**. Insecurity and incursions of NSAGs in the Lac **Chad** province is causing kidnappings, looting and destruction of property, recruitment of children and challenges to humanitarian access. Kidnapping for ransom, including of children, is increasingly becoming the modus operandi of armed groups in **CAR**.

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR INFLICTED DISTRESS

CAMEROON	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIA (WoS)	SYRIA (NW)	UKRAINE	AFGHANISTAN
BURKINA FASO	CHAD	ETHIOPIA	MYANMAR	MALI	NIGER
oPt	VENEZUELA	YEMEN	CAR	COLOMBIA	DRC
HAITI	MOZAMBIQUE	NIGERIA	SOMALIA	SUDAN	HONDURAS
PACIFIC	PHILIPPINES				

The fear of attacks on women appearing in the public sphere in **Afghanistan** has increased psychological distress and desperation. The population in the **oPt** is experiencing a severe mental health crisis. War trauma, stress and anxiety continue to impact conflict-affected individuals in **Ukraine**. Children, caregivers, older persons and persons with disability are mostly affected. Levels of psychological distress are very high in **Syria** after the earthquake and translate into signs of excessive worrying and fear, nightmares, insomnia, disorientation and recalling incidents. Crisis-affected girls and boys faced with the consequences of the drought, disease outbreak and armed conflict in **Somalia** are highly exposed to numerous risks, including violence, psychosocial distress and trauma, and increased child labour and forced marriage.

IMPEDIMENTS AND/OR RESTRICTIONS TO ACCESS TO LEGAL IDENTITY, REMEDIES, AND JUSTICE

SYRIA (NW)	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	CAMEROON	ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS
MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	oPt	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIA (WoS)
UKRAINE	YEMEN	CAR	CHAD	DRC	HAITI
SOMALIA	SUDAN	VENEZUELA	COLOMBIA	NIGER	NIGERIA
PACIFIC	PHILIPPINES				

Inadequate legal framework and law enforcement in **Venezuela** is leading to impunity for perpetrators and a lack of justice for survivors. Lack of legal documentation in **Ukraine** hampers access to government assistance and services; access to government social benefits (pension) and the ability to apply for official employment. IDPs are the group who faces most restrictions in accessing specific mechanisms to remedies/compensations for conflict related injuries. The lack of identity cards and titles of tenure is hindering access to basic rights in **Ethiopia**.

PRESENCE OF MINES AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

UKRAINE	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	CAR	COLOMBIA	ETHIOPIA
MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	SOUTH SUDAN	SOMALIA	SYRIA (NW)
SYRIA (WoS)	YEMEN	CAMEROON	DRC	NIGER	NIGERIA
MALI	PHILIPPINES	SUDAN	CHAD	HAITI	HONDURAS
PACIFIC	VENEZUELA				

Thirteen IED incidents were reported in February in **Cameroon**, which represents double the number from January 2023. In March, IED killed 3 children and injured 8 in the NWSW region. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) are a major impediment for returns, access to livelihood and humanitarian operation in **Northern Ethiopia**, with increasing number of EWR-related incidents. Landmines and UXOs contamination remain one of the main issues affecting the safety and security of conflict affected individuals in **Ukraine**, with high concentration in the Eastern and Southern regions. Four children were already injured and 3 injured by explosive ordnances in **CAR** in 2023 compared to 3 children killed and 15 injured in 2022. Explosive ordnance used in indigenous territories as result of territorial disputes between non-state armed actors in **Colombia** remain of concern. A larger explosive threat is spreading south to Koulikoro, Sikasso, Kayes, Ségou, Mopti in **Mali**. The ongoing armed conflict and the renewed military offensive in **Somalia** have resulted in an increase in the use of IEDs, critically endangering civilian lives and resulting in extensive injuries, often leading to amputation and subsequent disability.

DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION, DENIAL OF RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES

AFGHANISTAN	oPt	SUDAN	BURKINA FASO	CAMEROON	CHAD
MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGERIA	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIA (WoS)	SYRIA (NW)
UKRAINE	CAR	DRC	ETHIOPIA	HAITI	HONDURAS
MALI	SOMALIA	YEMEN	COLOMBIA	NIGER	VENEZUELA
PACIFIC	PHILIPPINES				

In **Ethiopia**, IDPs have started returning to their areas of origin despite limited availability of services and opportunities at their destination. Longstanding targeted stigmatization, severe movement restrictions and discriminatory planning regimes by Israel persists in the **oPt**. Women face increased vulnerability and reduced access to resources and support in **Venezuela** due to the financial crisis. Instances of discrimination in the provision of humanitarian assistance vis a vis IDPs coming from the east of **Ukraine**, including newly accessible areas (previously under the control of the Russian Federation), are reported. Humanitarian access to areas not under the control of the government of Ukraine remains significantly limited and possible only via local actors registered with Russian Federation de facto authorities – increasing the risk of impartiality in service delivery. With aid agencies unable to deliver critical assistance in **Sudan**, and communities' resilience severely undermined by the ongoing conflict in multiple areas, the food security situation is expected to deteriorate in the coming period. Concerns persist over moves to close displacement camps in many parts of the **Myanmar**, while many IDPs remain worried about safety and livelihoods opportunities in their places of origin. This reporting period has seen the impact of two decrees issued by DFA in **Afghanistan** restricting women and girls from public spaces and depriving them of their basic rights and opportunities. The last decree issued banning female humanitarian aid workers, not only impacted the female workers, but also deprived people of critical lifesaving services.

PROTECTION DURING ELECTIONS

Internally displaced persons are entitled to enjoy, equally and without discrimination, the same rights and freedoms under international and national law as other persons in their country. The rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to exercise their civil and political rights are enshrined in international standards and human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. States have the primary duty to protect the rights of internally displaced persons, including their right to vote and be elected, and to ensure they can exercise this right without discrimination despite their displacement. Moreover, the realization of IDPs' electoral rights is key for achieving durable solutions to internal displacement, and in promoting democratic governance, the rule of law and economic development.

Around the world, however, IDPs face several obstacles in exercising their right to public and political participation, including a lack of information and documentation, insecurity hampering return of IDPs to their areas of origin, legal and administrative issues, such as restrictive residency requirements, or a lack of legal and administrative arrangements that enable absentee voting. Indeed, even where national instruments on internal displacement affirming IDPs' right to political participation are in place, reforming electoral laws may be necessary to ensure IDPs' actual participation in national and local elections⁸. The disenfranchisement of the internally displaced not only infringes their rights, but can also exacerbate the social, political, and economic marginalization they often experience and further hamper the pursuit of longer-term solutions to displacement.

In her [report](#) presented at the Human Rights Council's 50th session in 2022, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons examined the participation of internally displaced persons in electoral processes, in particular their ability to exercise their right to vote and to stand in elections on equal terms with the non-displaced population. The report notes the challenges internally displaced persons often encounter on account of their displacement, which may relate, for instance, to residency requirements for determining the place of voting and constituency, lack of documentation, lack of access to information, obstacles to accessing registration sites and polling stations, among other issues. The report also highlights that different groups of internally displaced persons may encounter multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to participate in elections.

During a [roundtable on public and political participation of internally displaced persons](#), the Global Protection Cluster and its field partners reiterate that they have a role to play to uphold and ensure full respect for the human rights of IDPs, including their right to public and political participation. The Protection Cluster should work to facilitate as possible and appropriate, through programming and advocacy, enabling factors such as (i) freedom of movement; (ii) access to civil documentation; (iii) the empowerment of IDPs to participate while ensuring comprehensive protection monitoring to identify key protection risks and priorities that can further inform needed actions by protection actors and other key stakeholders. Different examples of actions that were undertaken to facilitate IDP political participation in [Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq and Ukraine](#) include establishing partnerships and alliances with development and peacebuilding organizations with elections-related expertise, conducting public awareness campaigns and contributing to drafting bills that ensure the full exercise of IDPs' right to participation in public and political life.

In 2023, elections took place in Nigeria in February and national, regional, or local elections are set to take place in Guatemala (June/August), Sudan (July), CAR (July/October), Zimbabwe (August), Colombia (October), DR Congo (December), Haiti (end of 2023), and Myanmar (end of 2023). In most countries, there is a high probability for multiple protection issues to arise – including elections related violence, exclusion of displaced communities and returnees, lack of freedom of expression and of information, and disenfranchisement of vulnerable population groups. Further enforced disappearances, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention, torture and executions of political opponents are also very likely.

Protection Clusters and partners are working together, across sectors and with governments and authorities, identifying protection risks related to the public and political participation of IDPs, elaborating guidance and recommendations aimed at supporting IDP participation, and revising strategic advocacy approaches. The following examples from Nigeria, Somalia and DR Congo aim to highlight the challenges faced by internally displaced persons to participate in elections, and the measures undertaken by Protection Clusters to support their enfranchisement and prospects for durable solutions.

⁸ UNHCR – GPC, Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement: Implementing National Responsibility, December 2022, page 11, <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/publications/810/reports/report/global-report-law-and-policy-internal-displacement-implementing>

GOOD PRACTICES

NIGERIA

MONITORING PROTECTION RISKS



Alleviating bureaucratic and administrative impediments



Evidence-based advocacy using household-level protection monitoring

In February and March 2023, Nigeria held national and state-level elections during which more than 90 million Nigerians, in a population estimated at over 210 million, were eligible to vote. Among the 2.1 million IDPs in the conflict-affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe across North-East Nigeria, 725,000 were eligible to vote, including approximately 402,000 women and 322,000 men. In Nigeria, the 2022 Electoral Act and the 2022 Revised Regulations and Framework for Voting by IDPs guide the conduct of IDP voting and allow IDP communities the opportunity to vote in recognition and protection of their rights as Nigerian citizens and as enshrined in the 2021 National Policy for IDPs and in compliance with international and regional instruments and conventions.

In the lead-up to the elections, the Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) collected quantitative and qualitative data through its household level protection monitoring system on the ability of different community members, including IDPs, returnees and host communities, to participate in the elections. The collected data clearly shows that IDPs were disproportionately excluded from exercising their right to vote, including due to bureaucratic and administrative challenges associated with securing needed documentation, a barrier exacerbated by their displacement. As an example, one quarter (26%) of the monitored heads of households across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States were not eligible to vote due to the lack of Permanent Voter Cards (PVC) – with IDPs representing the population group most affected by the lack of PVCs (27%). In addition to the loss of required documentation, the lack of awareness of the administrative process and the absence of registration points close to their location were among the main barriers cited by IDP respondents. IDPs also highlighted how the volatile security situation in conflict affected areas limited their ability to undertake the administrative process to get their PVCs, fearing they may be exposed to abuse and violence while trying to secure needed documentation. Overall this data indicates a marked pattern of exclusion for IDPs, pointing to the link between their displacement status and heightened risk of disenfranchisement.

Findings also clearly show the gendered dimensions of these barriers, with women disproportionately lacking a PVC (31%), compared to men (16%). Ultimately, IDPs surveyed had higher levels of interest in voting compared to host communities. While 19% of host community respondents indicated they did not have an interest in the elections and believe their vote does not count, only a minority of

IDP respondents indicated this (6%). In addition, the PSNE analysed the specific risk of exclusion of IDP voters who were forcibly relocated by the Borno State Government (BSG) as part of the camp closures in Maiduguri and the risk of exclusion of IDPs coming out of inaccessible areas and having gone through the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) transition centres and military detention.

Based on this evidence, the PSNE has been actively engaged in a range of efforts to raise the visibility of these barriers faced by IDPs and what can be done in future to further support their ability to participate in elections and exercise their right to vote. An [Advocacy Note](#), based on the protection monitoring data collected, was shared with partners, humanitarian actors (including RC/HC and HCT), elections-focused actors and donors. Issues of IDP exclusion are now being taken forward by a range of these stakeholders as part of discussions with authorities on learnings from the electoral process and needed actions to support equitable participation of IDPs and other groups experiencing additional barriers moving forward. The Protection Sector further discussed how programming can be adapted to support enhanced IDP, especially women IDP, participation in civil in political rights on an ongoing basis.

Key recommendations included scaling up of legal services (for issuance of civil documentation), engagement with AAP/CE Working Group, intensification of protection monitoring especially with a link to durable solutions – looking at the full range of rights, including civil and political ones that IDPs should enjoy, as well as engagement with legislators.

SOMALIA

CONTINGENCY PLANNING



Response and preparedness measures



Intersectoral contingency plan and targeted advocacy with parties to the conflict

In 2021, political tensions arising from the planned elections were elevated in Somalia and risked exacerbating the impacts of the country's prolonged humanitarian crisis, characterised by ongoing conflicts, climate shocks including floods and drought, communicable disease outbreaks and fragile social protection. Tensions, violence, and intensified pressures by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) due to the election situation in Somalia were expected to affect and displace about 258,000 people in the likely scenario and 652,000 people in the worst-case scenario, specifically in hotspot areas such as Mogadishu and Jubaland.

A contingency plan was developed by the clusters, including the Protection Cluster, and endorsed by the Somalia Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT) in February 2021.



This plan – aligned with the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2021 – aimed to prepare and provide protection and lifesaving assistance to the people affected by possible conflict due to the upcoming elections and to inform joint preparedness and response planning for humanitarian partners in Somalia. It captured decisions, collective agreements on the triggers, and approaches of the humanitarian community to support a principled humanitarian response to people by possible implications of the tensions and intensified pressures by NSAGs. In addition, the humanitarian community aimed to engage in targeted advocacy with parties to the conflict to continue the dialogue and resolve elections related issues in a peaceful manner to eliminate and mitigate the risk and impact of possible violence on the civilian population and to ensure that those displaced due to elections related violence and conflict were granted the right to freedom of movement and choice of place of displacement.

DR CONGO

ELECTIONS AMID ACTIVE CONFLICT

Insecurity, displacement and logistical impediments

Advocacy and capacity building on the public participation of IDPs

In the DR Congo, general elections (presidential, parliamentary and municipal) are planned to take place in December 2023. The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) outlines several challenges including the logistics of transporting ballots materials in this vast

country, health concerns about Ebola and Covid-19 and the security risks due to the unrest that has forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

Voters' registration started already in December 2022, but registration centres were understaffed and lacking necessary materials. In the East, where more than 120 armed groups continue to operate, registrations were delayed due to security concerns with no voter registration taking place in areas controlled by the M23 group. It is unlikely that the population in M23 controlled areas will be able to express their civic rights by the end of the year. Attacks against registration centers have also been reported in other areas of the country. Freedom of expression and of information will likely be curtailed before and after the elections.

Electoral upheavals are common in the DRC. The last electoral process in DRC took place in December 2018, in a period of political instability, ongoing and increasing violence, due to the presence of armed groups or ethnic tensions and internal displacement. At the time, the Protection Cluster undertook several measures to advocate for the rights of IDPs to vote including through (i) alerting the Humanitarian Country Team about the issue through the issuance of a Protection Cluster advocacy note, (ii) attending the MONUSCO electoral task forces who has a mandate to provide technical and logistical support to the DRC Government for the electoral process and protect civilians from human rights violations and (iii) providing training on the Guiding Principles to Internal Displacement, the Kampala Convention and the national law. Previous experience will be used to develop a contingency plan and reduce the protection risks related to elections.

ACCESS THAT PROTECTS

The past year witnessed a concerning increase in access constraints, with profound reverberations on protection actors' access to affected communities, and the access of those communities to humanitarian assistance and protection. The GPC recognized the foundational role that protection by presence plays in supporting effective protection response and pushed to better understand the linkages between access and protection. This included a Campaign on Access that Protects, culminating in the publishing of an [Agenda for Change](#) in collaboration with OCHA. In 2023, the GPC looks forward to working further with OCHA, Protection Clusters, Access Working Groups and other stakeholders to move the needle on an access that provides the critical sustained and quality space for protection.

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

ACCESS OVERVIEW FOR PROTECTION

ABILITY OF PROTECTION ACTORS TO ACCESS AFFECTED POPULATIONS

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the ability of protection actors to access affected populations has remained similar in **69%** of operations. The situation deteriorated in **23%** of operations [Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan]. The situation improved only in Venezuela and Syria (NW).

BARRIERS		REGIONAL OVERVIEW					
		Insecurity Hostilities	Attacks Threats	Restriction and obstruction	Environmental and logistical	Unavailability of services	
Bureaucratic and administrative constraints	42%						
Environmental and logistical constraints	58%						
Interference from authorities and non-state actors	54%						
Direct attacks or threats	42%						
Ongoing insecurity or hostilities	77%						
		Americas	75%	25%	50%	50%	50%
		Europe	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
		MENA	100%	50%	75%	75%	75%
		Asia & Pacific	25%	25%	50%	50%	50%
		West & Central Africa	100%	71%	43%	57%	71%
		East & Southern Africa	67%	50%	50%	67%	67%

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

> 25%	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	75% or more
REPORTED BY 31% of operations	REPORTED BY 27% of operations	REPORTED BY 35% of operations	REPORTED BY 8% of operations

Percentage of population that can be reached by protection actors

In **Afghanistan**, 53% of the targeted population will not be reached with protection services following the ban on female I/NGO workers. In **Colombia**, the expectation of a "total peace" is increasing pressure against the civilian population and is forcing protection partners to greater negotiation to access territories. In **CAR**, protection partners are forced to provide minimal services remotely due to attacks by armed groups and the presence of mines. In **Ethiopia**, while access in Tigray

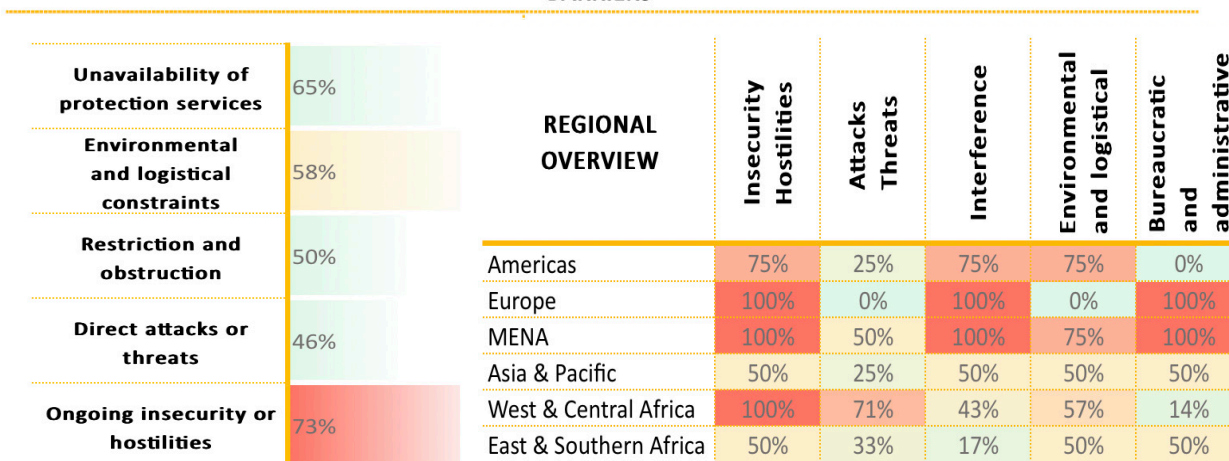
improved, the presence of explosive remnants of war prevented the scale up of much needed protection services. In Western Oromia, road closures and level of insecurity are hindering protection services. In **Mali**, difficulties to find specialized personnel (i.e. in Menaka) and the absence of coordination mechanisms (i.e. Ségou, Kidal) is curbing the ability of protection partners to access the population. In **Niger**, in regions such as Tillabéri, Tahoua and Diffa, protection partners are limited by the obligation of military force escorts. In **South Sudan**, a complex combination of factors, including extortion, denial of access at checkpoints and need to resort to state armed forces to access areas controlled by non-state actors is putting in the provision of protection services under strain. In **Sudan**, humanitarian actors have yet to maintain sustained access to at least 76 localities in 8 states.



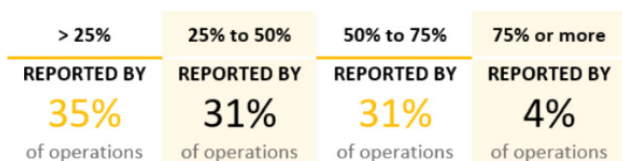
ABILITY OF AFFECTED POPULATIONS TO ACCESS PROTECTION SERVICES

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the access situation for affected populations to reach protection services has remained similar in **65%** of operations. The situation deteriorated in **31%** of operations [Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, DRC, Myanmar, Syria]. The situation improved only in Venezuela.

BARRIERS



SITUATIONAL UPDATE



Percentage of population that can reach protection services

In **Burkina Faso**, 23 provinces out of 45 are not accessible and around 1 million people live in armed groups-controlled areas, including more than 10 communes under blocus. In **Cameroon**, persistent attacks by Boko Haram and ISWAP elements in the Far North, Tourou Zone, Mayo Tsanaga and Mayo Tsava is impeding access to protection services. In **Haiti**, the situation is alarming, with armed groups controlling entrances and exits of populations through gender-based and general violence.

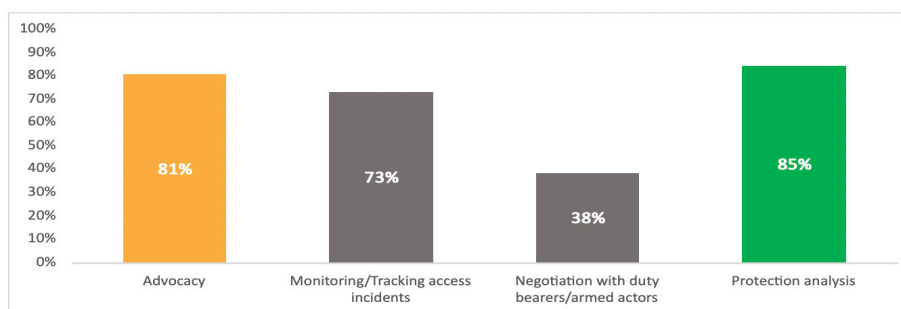
In **Nigeria**, facilitated return of IDPs to relocation areas is straining their ability to access protection services. In oPt, the combination of physical and bureaucratic barriers imposed by Israel authorities is severing the population's access to services. In **Syria**, following the earthquake, recent protection assessments indicate an increasing lack of access to assistance and protection services. In **Afghanistan**, according to Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM) findings, 32% of the respondents indicated that they have been denied access to essential services, showing a consistent decrease in access over the past year.

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION CLUSTER COMMITMENTS

Protection Clusters reported a range of efforts in relation to access, including bringing protection considerations into access discussions and fora (85%), and bringing attention to the impact of access constraints on protection through advocacy (81%). Protection Clusters also encouraged their members to report access incidents through OCHA reporting system or other mechanisms in place at country level (73%), and to a lesser extent supported negotiation efforts undertaken by its members, OCHA or HC/HCT (38%).

TYPES OF EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY PROTECTION CLUSTERS



PROTECTION AT THE CORE OF ACCESS MECHANISMS

COMMITMENT: Encourage the systematic participation of Protection Clusters in Access Working Groups and other collective platforms for enhanced access coordination.

OPERATIONS WITH ACTIVE ACCESS WORKING GROUP	PROTECTION CLUSTERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN ACCESS WGs	PROTECTION CLUSTERS PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE ACCESS WORKING GROUPS
<h1>77%</h1>	AFGHANISTAN, CAMEROON, CAR, COLOMBIA, DRC, ETHIOPIA, HAITI, NIGERIA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN, SYRIA (NW), VENEZUELA, UKRAINE, YEMEN	<h1>58%</h1>

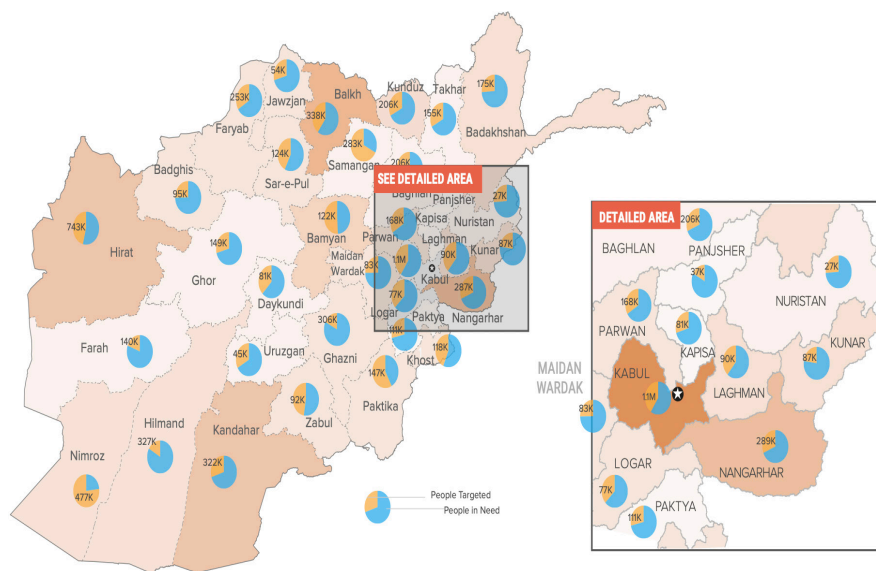
COMMITMENT: Ensure Protection Clusters systematically provide an analysis of the impact of access constraints on people in need of protection, including by overlapping OCHA’s access severity mapping with the number of people in need from the Protection Cluster.

CASE STUDY: AN OVERVIEW OF ACCESS CONSTRAINTS ON PROTECTION IN AFGHANISTAN

During the first quarter of 2023, the GPC has started the development of an approach to overlay access and protection data and information. An initial pilot analysis has been carried out in ETHIOPIA, AFGHANISTAN, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO and SYRIA. In Afghanistan, the ban on female I/NGO aid workers has added an overwhelming layer of barriers to access. The map illustrates the results of the analysis. In the provinces of Farah, Ghazni, Ghor, Hilmand, Hirat, Kabul, Kandahar, and Nangarhar, where at least six security incidents occurred up until January 2023, the combined number of people requiring protection services amounts to 11.38 million. This represents 54% of the total protection needs in Afghanistan. Among the female population, 27% of women and 30% of girls are identified as being in need of protection services.

[Access the full map here.](#)

Our logistic regression analysis on the Afghanistan Protection Monitoring data reveals that gender, the inability to move freely in an area, socio-cultural barriers for women, and discrimination against women all have a significant impact on the freedom of movement protection risk outcomes. Being female is associated with a higher likelihood of a protection risk outcome compared to being male. Furthermore, when people cannot move freely in an area, the likelihood of a protection risk outcome also increases. Socio-cultural barriers for women and discrimination against women are both positively related to a protection risk outcome, meaning that as these barriers and discrimination increase, so does the likelihood of a protection risk. All of these relationships are statistically significant, which means there is strong evidence that these factors play a role in determining the freedom of movement protection risk outcome.





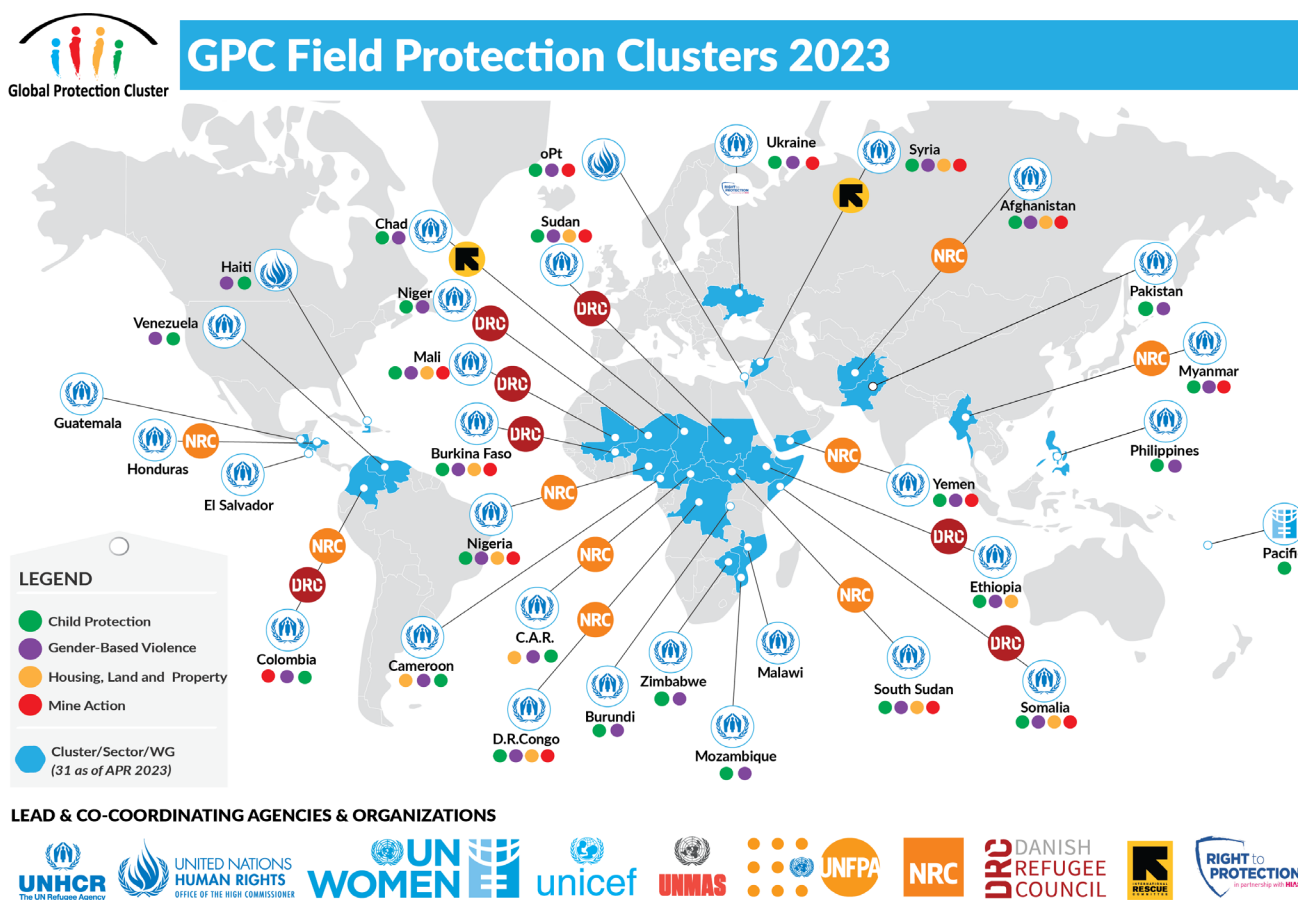
EVIDENCE-BASED, ROBUST ADVOCACY

COMMITMENT: Amplify the story of access restrictions as experienced by those most affected, building on enhanced data collection by the GPC, Protection Clusters and allies.

HAITI	ETHIOPIA
 <p>OCHA estimates that around 80% of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area is now under the control or influence of armed groups. Communities struggle to have adequate access to basic social services such as health, education and drinking water due to the gang activities across the country. According to the Access Working Group Strategy, 4.2 million children who have been deprived of their right to education are further exposed to risk of being recruited and associated with armed groups. National roads are partially or totally blocked by the activities of armed groups. From May 2022 to March 2023, OHCHR recorded more than 2,604 victims of protection incidents of sexual violence, recruitment of children, loss of property, gunshot wounds and other types of violence. 70% of the above-mentioned incidents have not received a response due to the presence of several checkpoints erected by armed groups. This slows down the movement of humanitarian actors who are forced to negotiate access to the population in need.</p>	 <p>The Peace Agreement for Tigray has improved security and access, together with the resumption of electricity, communication and banking services in the region. However, explosive remnants of war (ERW) remain one of the main obstacles for the resumption of education, livelihood and in general to scale up humanitarian response in Northern Ethiopia. Road closures and high level of insecurity in Western Oromia, are hindering access of humanitarian aid, where basic services infrastructures have been damage limiting availability of services. 1.4 million people in need of protection are in hard-to-reach areas, and 2.8 million in partially accessible areas. Access the full map here.</p>
SYRIA	DR CONGO
<p>Immediate access following the earthquake in North-West Syria was hampered by damage to infrastructure, including roads, as well as limitations related to the existing cross-border aid mechanism. Some progress was noted with exemptions on some US-imposed sanctions, GoS facilitating visas and in-country freedom of movement for humanitarian staff. A three-month authorization for UN humanitarian assistance delivery to pass through two more border crossings was approved, including access to personnel, improving protection actors' access to the population. However, recent protection assessments indicate that the affected population lack access to assistance and protection services following the earthquake. Lack of abidance by humanitarian principles and diversion of aid remained a major concern. Low-level armed conflict remained an obstacle to access including in earthquake-affected areas.</p>	 <p>In the regions of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri 826,000 people in need of protection are in areas with an elevated access severity, straining protection partners' capacities to target the 443,000 people foreseen in 2023. Specifically, 77,000 people in South Kivu, 669,000 in North Kivu and 79,000 in Ituri are at serious risk of having their protection needs responded to, due to the severity of access. In these three regions, 3 out of 4 people targeted by protection partners are living in areas with high numbers of access barriers. The situation is extremely worrying considering that the protection partners' capacities and resources only allow them to target 31% of the total population in need in these regions. Access the full map here.</p>

FIELD COORDINATION AND OPERATIONS

In Q1 of 2023, the GPC rolled out its updated Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) based on key deliverables and minimum requirements of the Field Coordination Package. The roll out focused on targeting Strategic Advisory Groups in field operations, though many expanded the scope to other key partners and sub-national coordination colleagues. 346 surveys have been submitted by end of March 2023, from 23 different operations (80%). 14 have already organised their workshop and identified strategic collective priority actions to strengthen field coordination in 2023-2024, and the support needed from the GPC, another 7 operations are planning their workshop for April 2023. **This represents a completion ratio of 72% (compared to 10% in 2021).** The results of the CCPM will inform GPC field support priorities for 2023-2024, strategic planning at global level, as well as discussions during the GPC Global Protection Conference in Amman (8-12 May 2023).



KEY FIGURES

REQUIREMENTS (US\$)

\$3.0B

FUNDED (US\$)

\$455M

PEOPLE IN NEED

165M

TARGET

60.8M

Source: FTS, HNO 2023, HRP 2023

METHODOLOGY NOTE

Between September and December 2022, the Global Protection Cluster carried out a **stocktaking exercise of Protection Analysis Updates across operations**. The process included more than **45 meetings** and an analysis of **197 feedbacks**. The results have been used to revise the dedicated guidance for **Protection Risks** and **PAUs elaboration**. The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility, with the support of OHCHR, worked together between October 2022 and January 2023 to revise the 15 Protection Risks. The exercise aimed at having **common definitions that guide collaborative protection analysis** and a better tracking of protection risks across operations.

This **Global Protection Risks Tracker** has been revised and the following changes introduced in 2023:

AREA	2021 - 2022					2023				
	MINOR	STRESSED	MODERATE	SEVERE	EXTREME	VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
APPROACH	Value judgement survey completed each quarter by Protection Cluster operations.					Training on the 15 protection risks definitions to all operations to facilitate continuous collective analysis at country level and elaborate Protection Analysis Updates.				
						A revised value judgement survey completed each quarter by Protection Cluster operations.				
CRITERIA	Monitoring based on value judgement of Protection Cluster operations, using data, information and analysis of partners at country level.					Introduction and testing of common criteria for each level of severity.				
						Introduction of dimensions per each severity criteria to support value judgement in all situations on the basis of available data.				
SCOPE	Percentage of operations reporting severity levels per each protection risk.					Introduction of regular correlation and trend analysis.				
	The reporting from Protection Cluster operations was looking at the combination of both current and potential protection risks					The reporting from Protection Cluster operations covers current protection risks, by looking at: (i) Level of harm, (ii) Role of human activities, (iii) Exposure to harm				
	The overall results were based on the total number of Protection Cluster operations. The values of Protection Cluster operations that would not report for a specific period, were calculated on the projection of the latest monitoring provided.					A minimum threshold, corresponding to 70% of Protection Cluster operations (excluding Working Groups) is introduced. The values correspond to the Protection Cluster operations reporting in the period, ensuring the minimum threshold is achieved at all times.				
IDs.						Introduction of standard IDs for each protection risks to better visualize results and findings.				

The Global Protection Cluster is a network of NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict and climate change related disaster. The GPC ensures well-coordinated, effective and principled protection preparedness and responses, and that protection is at the core of all humanitarian action and recognized as essential in any nexus with development and peace. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working on the full gamut of protection activities, including in four specialized Areas of Responsibility: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Housing, Land and Property and Mine Action. The GPC contributes to and benefits from the broader IASC system.

