



Division of International Protection (DIP)

Overall description of the Division

Reporting to the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, the [Division of International Protection \(DIP\)](#) leads the development of international law and protection policy relating to forced displacement and statelessness. The Division provides the necessary thematic, functional, and operational support and guidance to Regional Bureaux and Country Operations - to enhance protection delivery globally, and contributes to ensuring global coherence, consistent application of international law, and of UNHCR's positions and policies, as well as cross-regional fertilization.

In 2024, through its restructuring within the overall UNHCR's rationalization and realignment process, DIP will support the strategic protection priorities of the organization through a more tailored configuration of its services and sections, and enhanced cross-cutting portfolios to advance divisional, collective endeavors.

The Division's key priorities are to:

- Promote the centrality of protection and uphold UNHCR's role within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).
- Develop global doctrine, policy, protection programming and legal guidance coupled with procedural and operational advice and tools.
- Provide legal interpretation and support judicial engagement; strengthen critical interagency and global partnerships for protection.
- Strengthen knowledge and protection information management to support protection analysis and evidence-based programming and advocacy.
- Expand resettlement and complementary pathways, and promote more inclusive societies.
- Lead on protection capacity development and collaborate with the Global Learning and Development Centre in the establishment, updating and delivery of protection learning programmes.
- Establish a deployment scheme and field missions, particularly in support of emergency responses.

The Division's work is coordinated by the Office of the Director, who reports to the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (AHC-P). The Director manages the Division's resources, including programmes, staffing and administrative allocations through its Resource Management Unit, and ensures compliance with relevant rules, policies and the Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA) framework. The Director, supported by a Senior Policy Officer and a Reporting Associate, ensures coherent communication on protection, both within the organization and externally, notably with donors.

Three Deputy Directors oversee the following Services:

1. Policy and Law
2. Field Protection
3. Resettlement and Complementary Pathways.

Organizational structure

1. Policy and Law Service

The Policy and Law Service performs the following functions:

- Global guidance and strategic advice on asylum capacity and systems, and technical support to Bureaux and Operations on complex cases/case processing.
- Partnership, advocacy and outreach on law and policy-related issues.
- Global analysis, information management and reporting on law and policy.
- Capacity development and training on legal, policy and case processing issues.

The Service is composed of the Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section; the Asylum Systems and Determination Section; the Statelessness Section, and the Asylum and Migration Unit.

The **Protection Policy and Legal Advice (PPLA) Section** leads UNHCR's work on the development of international law and policy relevant to the rights of refugees, internally displaced and stateless people pursuant to UNHCR's supervisory responsibility for refugee law instruments. The Section works positively to influence the implementation of legal standards in relation to the rights of people for and with whom UNHCR works, including by advising governments, international organizations, the legal community, civil society and other partners as well as the whole organization. Advice covers a wide range of legal and protection issues, policies and practice, including in operational contexts and in the frame of the Executive Committee. PPLA guides preparation of inputs to national legislation and engagement with courts and lawyers, including facilitating and supporting the preparation of court interventions by UNHCR around the world as well judicial engagement activities at the global level. Among other themes, it leads, guides and supports UNHCR's legal and policy work in the asylum and migration sphere, on mixed movements, alternatives to detention, combating trafficking and smuggling, as well as on human rights engagement and legal and normative work on the protection of people displaced in the context of disaster and climate change.

In relation to issues arising at the intersection of protection and national security, PPLA advises on approaches to ensure that measures addressing terrorism, as well as serious crimes that threaten national or international security and public order, comply with relevant international legal obligations.

The **Human Rights Unit, within the PPLA Section**, contributes to the development of international human rights law and standards and supports their practical application in order to enhance protection and solutions for displaced and stateless persons. The Unit provides direct support to Bureaux and Country Operations to promote the effective use of international human rights law, human rights mechanisms, and to leverage human rights partnership to advance UNHCR's advocacy and protection work. It acts as the main liaising entity at the global level between UNHCR and a variety of UN human rights mechanisms and partners, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Human Rights Council (HRC), the human rights treaty monitoring bodies and the various Special Procedures mandate holders. The Unit also cooperates with a broad array of global and regional human rights actors and interagency initiatives, mainstreaming issues of displacement and statelessness and promoting initiatives which advance human rights protection for displaced and stateless persons.

The **Asylum Systems and Determination (ASD) Section** exercises oversight of UNHCR's mandate refugee status determination (RSD) operations, seeking to ensure consistency in approach and adherence to global standards. The Section further supports UNHCR's engagement with national asylum systems, contributing to fair, efficient, high-quality State RSD decision-making. It provides leadership, innovation, capacity development and quality legal, policy and procedural advice on the operationalization of legal doctrine related to RSD and asylum, including on specific situations, sensitive cases, thematic elements of RSD, case processing modalities and use of technology. Guidance is provided as well on doctrinal and procedural questions concerning exclusion, including in the context of individual case processing.

The Section is composed of three units which, in collaboration with Bureaux, lead on different aspects of the implementation of global RSD and asylum systems strategy:

- The **Asylum Capacity Development (ACD) Unit** guides UNHCR's engagement with States and other stakeholders on the capacity development of national asylum systems - from the initial assumption of State responsibility for asylum to supporting mature systems - by providing guidance, tools, sharing good practices, bringing together expertise, and enhancing engagement of partners, including through the Asylum Capacity Support Group.
- The **Status Determination Unit** focuses on ensuring that UNHCR mandate RSD procedures are of high quality, have integrity and are fully in line with UNHCR's RSD Procedural Standards. It also leads and innovates on RSD case processing, use of technology in RSD as well as substantive aspects of the RSD analysis, for both UNHCR mandate RSD and national systems.
- The **Country-of-Origin Information (COI) and Country Guidance Unit** leads on UNHCR's strategic engagement with COI information and country guidance, including by issuing country guidance to support States and UNHCR decision-makers. It also facilitates speedy access to relevant law and policy documents on all relevant population groups through UNHCR's flagship database Refworld.

The **Asylum and Migration Unit** addresses challenges arising from the links between refugee protection and international migration and their related frameworks - including in the context of responses to mixed movements. It leads, guides and supports UNHCR's legal and policy work in the asylum and migration sphere, and advocates for States, international organizations, regional, multilateral, and interagency bodies and other actors to support the complementary implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Migration in line with international normative standards and relevant thematic guidance. The aim is to ensure that refugees, asylum-seekers, and other persons with specific protection requirements are identified and their needs properly addressed through enhanced coordination and strategic partnership. Among the key themes of its remit are protection-sensitive entry management, including in relation to interception and rescue at sea as well as at land and air borders, combating human trafficking and smuggling in human beings, promoting alternatives to detention as well as facilitating return of persons found not in need of international protection.

The **Statelessness Section** develops doctrine and policy guidance to operationalize UNHCR's mandate to prevent and reduce statelessness and to identify and protect stateless persons. The Section supports programming to prevent and end statelessness and disseminates best practice to guide planning and implementation of activities related to statelessness. The Section leads UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign 2014-2024 and supports relevant global advocacy. It works to expand strategic partnerships to mobilize a global community towards the goal of resolving statelessness and the establishment of a *Global Alliance to End Statelessness*. The Section will also function as the Secretariat for the Global Alliance.

Under the coordination of the Policy and Law Service, there are as well cross-cutting workstreams – as areas of collaboration among different DIP teams:

- **The coordination of the Task Team on Onward and Mixed Movements (TTOMM)** – aiming to propose alternative, route-based approaches for protection and solutions in the context of mixed and onward movements. The TTOMM is led by DIP, and overseen by the AHC-P, and involves colleagues from DIP as well as from each of the seven Bureaux, Country Operations and from the Office of the Special Envoy for the Mediterranean and other Divisions and Services in HQ. It works closely with IOM and other partners to improve coordination and identify joint action.
- In collaboration with UNHCR's Office of the Special Advisor on Climate Action (OSACA), PPLA advises on UNHCR's mandate role and relevance of international law in situations of **displacement in the context of climate change and disasters**, including within countries of origin and across borders. It further guides on the categories of people who, in climate and disaster-affected situations, may be in need of international protection under existing legal

instruments. It contributes to international discussions, including with partners, on the need to strengthen international responses to human mobility more widely in the context of climate change and disasters, including for people who are not in need of international protection.

- In support of the work of the Data Protection Office within the Global Data Service (GDS), and other parts of UNHCR, DIP provides legal and policy advice and guidance to Bureaux, Operations and Divisions, on **protection issues arising in connection with data processing** relating to refugees and other people in need of international protection, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless persons – in line with refugee law and other relevant legal and policy frameworks.

2. Field Protection Service

The Field Protection Service (FPS) leads on the operationalization of protection and on a number of thematic priorities, including protection by presence in emergencies and in all situations of internal displacement, with an oversight role on the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and portfolios on international humanitarian law, accountability to affected people (AAP) and protection mainstreaming.

It analyses and processes global protection capacity and knowledge to assist Bureaux to address acute protection concerns - ensuring that UNHCR's presence, leadership and coordination are effective and support mechanisms for preparedness and response to emergency situations are in place.

In close cooperation with DRS, FPS also provides support to solutions – for both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) - from a protection perspective, with particular reference to voluntary repatriation. FPS is also in charge of protection monitoring, advocacy and analysis standards setting and tools. In addition, FPS leads UNHCR's contributions to interagency efforts to promote the centrality of protection in reference to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Protection Policy, and, to develop a system-wide approach to age, gender and diversity (AGD) in line with the UN Secretary General's 'Our Common Agenda' Report.

The **Community Empowerment, AAP and Data Analysis Section** is composed of:

- The **Community-Based Protection Unit (CBPU)** drafts guidance, develops systems and tools, and offers technical support to Bureaux and Operations to advance UNHCR's community-based approaches. It leads advocacy for the implementation of age, gender, and diversity (AGD) across UNHCR's programs and interventions. It is the penholder of the yearly AGD Accountability Report and promotes the meaningful participation of persons with and for whom UNHCR works, including through support to community-based initiatives and to grass-root organizations led by displaced and stateless persons at all levels. To this effect, with the Partnership and Coordination Section of DER, CBPU co-leads the Inter-divisional Task Team on Meaningful Engagement. CBPU's responsibilities include the provision of technical advice to Bureaux and Operations on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and persons of different sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics (SOGIESC/ LGBTIQ+).
- The **Accountability to Affected People (AAP) Unit**, responsible for developing AAP policies, guidance and tools as well as providing technical support and advice to Bureaux and operations. It works in close collaboration with all Bureaux and GDS, DER and the Innovation Service to strengthen UNHCR's approach to AAP in line with UNHCR's five-year AAP plan. It leads on UNHCR's engagement with AAP coordination platforms at global level and support UNHCR's engagement with regional AAP fora.
- The **Gender Equality Unit** promotes gender equality at all levels within UNHCR's activities and is guided by the five commitments to women and girls as

outlined in UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy. This includes advancing the operationalization of the AGD Policy as well as providing support to and collaborating with different sectors, divisions, and units across UNHCR to ensure gender equality and women and girls' empowerment components are integrated throughout programming, policies, strategies and guidance to address discrimination and protection gaps affecting the forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The Unit works closely with UN Women and in support of the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

- The **Emergency Unit** provides support - from the onset of emergencies and in close collaboration with the Protection Pillars of Regional Bureaux and DESS - to strengthen preparedness and response to the most critical protection risks arising from displacement contexts - through analysis, guidance, emergency deployments, and by mobilizing partners and other actors.
- The **Data Analysis and Information Management Unit** coordinates the work of the whole Division on data analytics and knowledge products in support of DIP's policy and advocacy functions at global level, and on improving protection data flows, data quality and data-driven protection products, in close collaboration with the Global Data Service (GDS).

The **Protection from Violence and Displacement Section** is composed of:

- The **Gender-based Violence (GBV) Unit** leads on efforts to advance the implementation of the UNHCR GBV Policy across the organization and provides technical guidance and support to Bureaux and Operations on all aspects of specialized GBV programming, i.e., prevention and response, and provision to sectors of technical support on GBV risk mitigation. It supports specialized capacity development and the creation of practical tools and guidance based on field needs and in accordance with global standards and best practice. It promotes and creates channels to advance key institutional priorities such as working with displaced women-led organizations and the commitment at global level to advance strategic, interagency, and operational partnerships.
- The **Child Protection Unit** is responsible to monitor the global implementation of UNHCR's new Child Protection Policy and to develop strategies, guidance, and tools for the protection of forcibly displaced children. It provides assistance, advice and support to Bureaux and when required to Country Operations, and is responsible for global reporting and monitoring of UNHCR's child protection results and works at the global level, both bilaterally and in interagency fora, and to enhance and expand partnerships, including in particular with UNICEF.
- The **Internally Displaced Persons Unit** provides expert advice on IDP law and policy development at national level as well as operational guidance and support to field operations on protection in situations of conflict and internal displacement, including on international humanitarian law. In close collaboration with the Global Protection Cluster, other Divisions and Regional Bureaux, and the Principal Advisor on Internal Displacement, the Section monitors the situation of IDP protection globally and supports operational and strategic efforts to ensure protecting the rights of IDPs remains at the center of international and national action. Focus is both on operational delivery and on ensuring the responsibility of states with the participation of affected people is galvanized to address internal displacement. The Section represents UNHCR in the Global Protection Cluster, bringing the contribution of UNHCR, particularly on IDP protection, to collective efforts on humanitarian emergencies around the world. It closely collaborates with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, including through the IDP Protection Expert Group.
- The **Programming and Policy Unit** - working across the whole DIP and collaborating with other Divisions - aims to formulate and advance a revamped approach to UNHCR's protection response in all operational contexts that is grounded in a robust theory of change, which is cognizant of, adaptive to and workable in the current global context, to lay a foundation for UNHCR's protection leadership.

The **Global Protection Cluster (GPC)** supports National Protection Clusters in more than 30 contexts. Its core mandate is to provide strategic guidance and technical support to Operations in the fulfilment of their functions as described by the IASC. It comprises a network of NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises, including armed conflict and disaster related contexts. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working across the spectrum of protection activities, with four specialized areas of responsibility: child protection, gender-based violence, housing land and property, and mine-action. It provides field support through helpdesk, missions, learning and capacity building, coordination, and community of practice.

Under the coordination of FPS, there are three cross-cutting workstreams – as areas of collaboration among different DIP teams:

- **Protection leadership** through collaborative work, including i.a., on data analysis, evidence-based programming and protection in the digital space.
- DIP's engagement in the **Digital Gateway project**, a self-service system capturing critical individual protection data to maximize socio-economic opportunities and better tailor assistance and solutions through strong AAP and community engagement components, is led by FPS in support of the Global Data Service (GDS).
- FPS coordinates with GDS to ensure that the registration and protection tools of **PRIMES** (Population Registration and Identity Management Eco-System) respond to the needs of Operations.

3. Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service

The Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service (RCPS) is composed of a **Resettlement Section** and a **Complementary Pathways Unit** as well as an **Integrity**, a **Development Mainstreaming**, and a **Protection Learning Units**. It works with Bureaux, Operations and States to ensure effective and targeted delivery of the global resettlement programme against States' resettlement quotas, and to expand and improve access to family reunification and other complementary pathways programmes globally. RCPS carries responsibility for the following areas:

- Liaise and advocate with States for resettlement quotas that allow for an effective and fair distribution of resettlement places globally (including emergency and urgent dossier places) based on Projected Global Resettlement Needs as well as UNHCR's priority situations.
- Support UNHCR operations in the delivery of their existing resettlement and complementary pathways programmes through global and regional coordination, monitoring and support, and through the coordination and development of global funding proposals and timely reporting. Work with Regional Bureaux and key operations on the lifting of obstacles to both resettlement and complementary pathways through a combination of advocacy, programming and partnership.
- Advocate and support to States and all stakeholders to meet the objectives of the *Third Country Solutions for Refugees Roadmap: 2030*, including through engagement with the Resettlement Diplomacy Network and regional fora.
- Manage and monitor the global Resettlement Deployment Scheme to ensure resources are aligned with planned activities, and coordinate timely implementation of resources between HQ, deployment partners, regional offices/service centers and Operations.

- Provide technical advice on the development of procedures and the use of electronic submission tools to emerging resettlement countries as well as to new and currently engaged actors in complementary pathways and family reunification, and work with States and civil society on the evolution of third country opportunities to help refugees achieve the best possible protection outcomes.
- Review and ensure compliance with monthly statistical reporting as well as support for the Resettlement Data Portal, a data management and analysis tool. Coordinate with partners including the OECD on the collection and analysis of data on complementary pathways and family reunification.
- Participate in relevant interagency fora and support the Chairs in organising the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (CRCP) involving states, NGOs, refugees and UNHCR and its associated thematic Working Groups, as well as with Core and Contact Groups.
- Ensure continuous support to and engagement with complementary pathways and family reunification task forces and global networks.

Under the coordination of RCPS, there are four cross-cutting workstreams – as areas of collaboration among different DIP teams:

- The function related to **integrity** of the protection processes - to support Country Operations towards a globally consistent and proactive implementation of a new Policy on Fraud committed by forcibly displaced and stateless persons being rolled out by end 2023 - is devolved by DIP to Bureaux from 2024. Oversight and coordination support will be provided by DIP and further guidance by ERM.
- The **Development Mainstreaming Unit** ensures the centrality of protection in the overall engagement and collaboration with development actors - including from the private sector - and peace actors, by monitoring and documenting the protection and solutions dividends achieved through development cooperation. It advises on how to shape UNHCR's directions on development engagement and partnerships at policy and operational level; supports the institutionalization of protection analysis tailored to inform development responses as well as the integration of development approaches in UNHCR protection standard setting, policies and trainings, and protection workforce's engagement. It also supports the Organization's contribution to the nexus through high quality protection work.
- DIP engages in briefings with donors as well as coordinating with partners including from the private sector, and collaborating with academia. It works with the global legal community to make legal aid and research available at little or no cost, and with businesses that hire refugees for labour mobility. The Division is contributing actively to the shift in direction initiated by the Private Sector Engagement team, and will grow its collaboration with private sector partners accordingly.
- **Protection learning** needs will be addressed with one dedicated staff responsible for consolidating and advancing a strategic approach to protection learning, in collaboration with the Global Learning and Development Centre, Bureaux and other parts of the house, as a priority within the organization and for partners.

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