



THE IDP-INITIATIVE

QUARTERLY UPDATE

JUNE 2021

More than four million persons have been newly internally displaced due to violence and conflict in 2020 alone, despite the call for a global cease-fire during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR continues to respond to their needs, including through direct operational delivery and coordination leadership. This update to the IDP-Initiative on Internal Displacement provides examples drawn from some country operations of our efforts to respond in IDP emergency settings, including through risk assessment, participation in inter-agency preparedness measures, scenario-based contingency planning, shelter and settlement work, camp/site coordination and management and protection leadership.

UNHCR emergency preparedness and response in IDP settings

UNHCR defines a humanitarian emergency as any situation in which the life, rights or well-being of internally displaced persons, refugees, and other persons of concern will be threatened unless immediate and appropriate action is taken; and which demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures because current UNHCR capacities at country and regional level are insufficient¹.

UNHCR internally declares a humanitarian emergency to ensure that, together with its partners and interlocutors, it provides an appropriate level of attention and support when it prepares for and responds to potential, unfolding or escalating emergencies.

The revised in 2019 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response aligned the approaches on duration of emergencies with the new Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) emergency-related protocols and ensured consistency with recently updated guidance and directions, including the Global Compact on Refugees.

Specifically, the policy sets out UNHCR's internal emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, including the criteria that determine their declaration and level, and describes the effects of activation on:

- Access to resources and simplified procedures.
- Internal leadership arrangements.
- Processes for reviewing and reinforcing operational capacity.
- Headquarters coordination and decision-making arrangements.
- Accountability.
- Partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including government and non-government development actors, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

¹ <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/171151/policy-on-emergency-preparedness-and-response>

The complementary 2020 *Preparedness package for IDP emergencies* (PPIE)² examines the management of risk, focusing specifically on emergency situations characterized by internal displacement. It reaffirms existing standards, including the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Approach, and suggests practical measures that should be taken to enable UNHCR to respond promptly and operate effectively in IDP emergencies, fulfilling its obligations as an operational agency and its responsibility, under IASC arrangements, to lead the clusters on protection, on shelter and on camp coordination and camp management (CCCM). UNHCR is committed to contribute to the inter-agency operational response, and more broadly to participate in over-arching HCT and cluster management to ensure the centrality of protection and the drive for solutions.

As recent highlights:

- In 2020, UNHCR has supported and steered the development and implementation of comprehensive cluster strategies in 9 IDP emergencies, while mobilizing internal and external resources and engaging a range of stakeholders to fill response gaps.
- UNHCR maintained 18 bilateral emergency standby partnerships and continued to be actively engaged in the inter-agency Standby Partnership Network, which consists of 15 United Nations agencies and 54 partner organizations that deploy a range of experts to humanitarian emergencies.
- Over the past 18 months, 50 deployments to augment cluster coordination capacity were undertaken. In recognition of the sharp increase in new IDP emergencies, steps have been undertaken to further strengthen emergency response capacity. As of June 2021, UNHCR has an additional roster of persons with inter-agency coordination capacity, with 25 persons identified and trained for immediate deployment.
- Similarly, a deployment roster for emergency information management is now operational and eight colleagues are additionally available for Senior Management roles.
- Countries with potential emergency risks were supported to undertake risk analysis, develop planning scenarios, identify urgent preparedness gaps and implement advanced preparedness measures.
- UNHCR procured and delivered COVID-19 personal protective equipment and other critical items and services for a timely response against the pandemic in 95 refugee and IDP operations. At the same time and despite of global shortage and the near collapse of transport network, continued to supply emergency core relief items to new and ongoing emergencies from its seven global stockpiles.
- UNHCR has promoted protection mainstreaming, working with all clusters to design and deliver an inter-agency preparedness and response strategies that are shaped by protection considerations. UNHCR aimed at the reinforcement of local and national actors, including those responsible for development, to engage in and eventually lead the response to internal displacement.
- UNHCR closely coordinated its emergency responses at the global level through the IASC Emergency Directors Group, as well as at the country level. Proactive data- and information-sharing was an important element, enabled through substantial contributions to information portals, such as the [humanitarian data exchange](#), and increased collaboration with development actors.

2 <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/408136/preparedness-package-for-idp-emergencies-ppie>



Internally displaced woman in Bambari in the Ouaka region of CAR. To help return to her place origin, she received a package of 50,000 CFA francs that will allow her to start a small business to support her family. © UNHCR/Stella Fatime

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Coordination leadership and IDP emergency response in CAR

Background

Violence erupted in the Central African Republic following the 27 December 2020 election, between the Government and a coalition of armed groups, disrupting the 2019 peace agreement, and triggering a new wave of displacement. As of end of May 2021, more than 100,000 people are estimated to have newly been internally displaced within CAR, while more than 111,000 refugees have fled to neighboring Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. In total, there are over 730,000 IDPs in the Central African Republic.

Scaling the Operational Delivery to address the post-electoral emergency

As this new crisis unfolded, UNHCR reaffirmed its co-leadership role in the Protection, CCCM and Shelter clusters in CAR and declared a level 1 emergency to scale up its operational response in line with its internal contingency plan. The 2019 revised Policy on *UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement* helped guide this response. Despite the continuing volatility hampering humanitarian access to the internally displaced populations, UNHCR and its partners increased their presence in the most affected

areas. Using sub-national field offices as hubs for joint protection and CCCM/shelter/NFI evaluation missions, they were able to reach the newly displaced populations and assess their humanitarian needs as well as deliver much needed assistance.

The emergency response was also the opportunity to deploy the institutional IDP Step-Up approach to the protection monitoring project. Because of limited humanitarian access, remote protection monitoring was strengthened through a community-based approach involving community focal points (*“relais communautaires”*) and key informants living in the communities, and through regular information sharing with other protection actors in CAR. Through this mechanism, UNHCR was able to identify key protection trends while strengthening community structures to support a community-based protection response.

In a country where the protection situation was already dire, the crisis has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, particularly among women and children with an increase in gender-based violence. About 37% of the GBV incidents reported through UNHCR’s protection monitoring were of sexual nature and 50% of these were perpetrated by armed men. UNHCR has therefore strengthened its GBV prevention and response through a service called *“Ma Mbi Si”* (*“Listen to Me”* in Sango) providing survivors with a holistic response including remote and face-to-face psychosocial support, GBV case management and medical, legal or other referrals, accompanied where relevant by financial support for transport and medical costs, dignity kits, and / or other forms of material support (NFI/shelter kit and/or cash-based assistance). UNHCR and partners are also mobilizing the community structures to provide support to survivors who wish to participate in local women’s groups.

As co-lead for Shelter and CCCM clusters, UNHCR has also implemented emergency shelter interventions and non-food items (NFI) kit

distributions to assist newly displaced IDPs. Between January and May 2021, shelter and non-food items (NFI) kits consisting of mats, blankets, kitchen kits, jerry cans were distributed to over 12,000 individuals, including IDPs and host communities.

Enhanced coordination in the Protection and CCCM/NFI/ Shelter Clusters

As lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR has enhanced the coordination of protection actors and deployed senior staff to strengthen sub-national clusters which are increasingly mobilized to share information from their respective areas. An action plan to empower and better support sub-national clusters has been developed by the Protection cluster at the national level. This reinforced capacity in the field will inform the response planning within the Humanitarian Country Team and feed into the discussions of the protection coordination forum with DPKO in Bangui and in the field.

As co-lead of the CCCM and Shelter clusters, UNHCR continues to monitor the key IDP sites in CAR to assess people’s needs for rehabilitation or restructuring of the sites where they live, and to help decongest the most overcrowded settlements. We continue to work with a variety of other actors to address the presence of or incursions by armed actors which remains a cause of great concern and represents a major protection risk. A strong focus of our work is on the mobilization and confidence building of IDP leaders to promote a community-based approach to programming, implementation, and monitoring assistance provision. In its role as co-lead of the cluster, UNHCR has also strengthened the coordination of interventions by cluster members to maximize efficiencies through limited humanitarian access. UNHCR has also deployed a senior staff to strengthen the sub-national clusters in the locations with large numbers of IDPs.

Towards a more comprehensive response to the CAR displacement crisis

To sustain this level of assistance and fulfill its leadership role, UNHCR reprioritized its resources in line with its revised contingency plan and emergency response plan. UNHCR's revised IDP Policy was instrumental in facilitating a coherent vision between the country operation and the Regional Bureau and speeding up resource reallocation between programming modalities as well as in supporting joint internal advocacy for additional resources to respond to the new crisis.

Lack of funding remains a major challenge in CAR which remains one of the most overlooked crises globally. While this influx brought the total of Central African forcibly displaced to over 1.5

million, nearly a third of the country's population, only 21% UNHCR's needs for its CAR response are covered.

To address underfunding, UNHCR is supporting the launch of a new multilateral platform to mobilize resources as well technical and political support from all stakeholders at local, regional and global levels. This platform should help ensure a more comprehensive response to the CAR displacement crisis combining humanitarian assistance with longer-term development interventions to provide protection and solutions to all affected populations in the Central African Republic and key host countries.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

UNHCR's IDP engagement following the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano

Following the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo volcano in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), thousands of people fled their homes on 22 May, seeking safety and shelter from the lava.

Some families crossed the border into neighbouring Rwanda. On 27 May, the Congolese authorities ordered a partial evacuation of the city of Goma due to the possibility of another eruption. According to local authorities, over 400,000 people left the city in the following days, many by road to Sake, west of Goma, and Rutshuru north of Goma, while others left to Bukavu, in South Kivu Province.

This region is afflicted by conflict-induced forced displacement. UNHCR leads Protection and Shelter and co-leads the CCCM Working Group jointly with IOM. Given its presence and capacities, UNHCR was one of the first humanitarian responders in the affected areas and worked closely with other protection, shelter and CCCM stakeholders. This swift coordinated response was possible due to investments in strengthened inter-cluster coordination mechanisms.



Neema, 29, fled from Goma to Sake with her 6 children. They were sleeping outside as there was not enough space for them to sleep in. Now, thanks to UNHCR's support, they have a roof over their head again. © UNHCR/Guerchom Ndebo

As the lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR and partners worked to identify the priority needs and rapidly developed a response plan to assist the most vulnerable families, many of whom are sheltered by already affected host families or staying in overcrowded churches and schools. This approach focuses on protection monitoring, psychosocial support, medical assistance to displaced gender-based violence survivors, and Identification, Documentation, Tracing and Reunification (IDTR) of displaced children. The Shelter and the Protection Clusters and CCCM Working Group analysed the data from the multi-sectorial evaluation to define a shelter response plan. In the displacement areas, the aim was mainly to provide temporary collective shelter, and support host family situations.

As the volcanology experts indicated the end of the lava flow as well as a significant decrease in earthquakes in the area, the Congolese government announced the gradual return of displaced people to Goma where over 3,600 houses have been completely destroyed and

1,000 others which need to be repaired. To ensure a holistic humanitarian response, the UNHCR's lead role in the three clusters (Protection, Shelter and CCCM) are conducting joint assessments where the UNHCR-led shelter cluster is planning an emergency shelter response accommodation for the most vulnerable families whose homes have been destroyed and who currently occupy schools and other abandoned buildings in Goma. This will limit the protection and health risks. The Shelter Cluster response plan envisages limited construction of emergency shelter and emphasis on support through rental assistance and the construction of small house extensions for host families.

UNHCR funding appeal of US\$ 204.8 million for DRC is only 23 per cent funded. Enhanced funding will ensure a scale up of the response supported by the synergy between protection, shelter and CCCM which helps ensure a coordinated and comprehensive response.



Forcibly displaced Mozambican families recover from heavy rain and flooding at the 25 de Junho IDP Site in the district of Metuge, Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique. © UNHCR/Martim Gray Pereira

MOZAMBIQUE

Emergency preparedness and response in Mozambique

Since October 2017, the deteriorating security situation in the northeast province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, has resulted in more than 200 reported attacks, of which many against the civilian population. These attacks and the significant escalation of violence on the ground are characterized by the use of heavy weaponry and explosives.

The situation is causing large-scale human suffering, loss of lives, violations of human rights and mass forced displacement. Over 700,000 persons have been uprooted across at least three provinces of Mozambique, representing a fivefold increase in displacement since the beginning of the year. These compound an already difficult situation, with the country still recovering from two tropical cyclones in March and April 2019 affecting

some 2.2 million people and significantly reducing the capacity of local communities to effectively respond to internal displacement.

A recent wave of violence at the end of March 2021 triggered more than 70,000 people to flee the district of Palma, most of whom found refuge in the local community or in transit centres and sites for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Thousands more continue trapped in Palma or are still attempting to find safety.

Since the onset of the recent crisis, UNHCR Pemba has been monitoring and directly assisting the new arrivals in Pemba city and other districts in Cabo Delgado with high concentration of IDPs. The risk of protection violations, including gender-based violence and forced recruitment is high. Persons affected are also desperately in need of food, shelter, water, and education.

UNHCR is currently prioritizing and referring persons with heightened vulnerabilities and specific needs for essential services. This includes prioritization and referrals for unaccompanied and separated children, survivors of sexual violence, pregnant women, people with disabilities and the elderly. UNHCR also provides core relief items (CRIs) for vulnerable people such as sleeping mattress and blankets, as the majority arrived in very dire conditions.

As key part of our participatory response, UNHCR established a Community Engagement Group (CEG) at the transit center and in IDP sites to improve the provision of information, awareness messages, community consultations, and involve the community in the management of essential services and safety of the transit center and thus stimulate community-based interventions.

UNHCR is also conducting protection needs assessments in remote areas with high concentration of IDPs, to verify the protection response capacity as the number is expected to increase further and needs are massive, including identification and support to unaccompanied and separated children, GBV survivors, Health cases, shelter, CRIs distribution, improvement of WASH infrastructures and conditions at the different IDP sites. To address the critical issue of IDPs losing their identity documents while fleeing or having their documentation destroyed during attacks, UNHCR launched a pilot project in December

2020 to provide legal counselling and assistance to IDPs and host communities, reaching more than 10,000 individuals in the first months. Mobile support brigades have also been organized for the recent forcibly displaced living in transit centers and IDP sites.

As a priority measure, UNHCR partakes in the Emergency Protection Units (EPUs) established by the Protection Cluster at the airport, port and temporary accommodation sites in Pemba, to provide direct emergency protection services/ referrals to families fleeing violence in Palma. Each EPU is composed by experts on general protection, child protection, gender-based violence (GBV), mental health, and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The EPUs are currently identifying and referring cases with specific needs, tracing and reunifying families, creating emergency service mapping, providing key protection information and messages to new arrivals, as well as mainstreaming protection, across the emergency response, in coordination with other partners and local authorities.

As part of a coordinated inter-agency response, UNHCR is providing life-saving protection and assistance for IDPs but urgent support is needed. On 20 April, UNHCR launched a \$13.5 million appeal for the Cabo Delgado situation which is largely underfunded.



Mural painted by Youth Against Violence volunteers in Choloma, Honduras. The mural states: "There are more than 247,000 reasons to adopt the law; stand up for the internally displaced".

HONDURAS

Support to the Government in the design and implementation of a legal framework on internal displacement in Honduras

UNHCR's Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement highlights the importance of promoting the responsibility of the State to respond to internal displacement. The adoption of an IDP law is thus a main objective.

In 2013, the State of Honduras acknowledged that forced displacement required urgent action, and thus created the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of People Displaced by Violence (CIPPDV). The adoption of a legal framework was set as a main goal. The Government committed to it, following the recommendations highlighted by

the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs in his 2015 mission report.

Since 2015, UNHCR has provided support in analyzing the national human rights and protection frameworks to identify the institutional capacities and gaps for the protection of IDPs. The first IDP

profiling study was subsequently published. Based on the existing evidence, the Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH) conducted consultations with institutions, NGOs and IDPs, and reviewed the draft alongside the CIPPDV. By 2019, the CIPPDV approved the final draft and began its advocacy actions. More work is needed with public institutions to advance promptly and give effect to the draft.

With the support and technical advice of UNHCR, the Government has taken important steps towards the design of protection mechanisms and strengthening the coordination among institutions, resulting in: (i) establishment of specialized committees and action plans within local governments; (ii) international exchanges to gather best practices on humanitarian assistance and protection of abandoned properties; (iii) strengthening systems for the protection of children and youth, as well as abandoned properties; (iv) piloting institutional protection mechanisms at national and local level, including humanitarian assistance and start-up capital; (v) inclusion of a differentiated protection response to children, women and other population groups at risk, with the support of Doctors of the World; and (vi) definition of internal displacement as a crime in the Penal Code in 2019.

Close collaboration between public institutions and civil society organizations alongside ICRC and NRC to promote the adoption of the legal framework has also been achieved; the CIPPDV joined the “247,000 reasons to adopt the IDP law” campaign, led by the community-based organization, *Youth Against Violence (JVC)*. As a result, in October 2020 the draft bill was finally introduced to the legislative agenda thanks to the advocacy of JVC; it is currently pending discussion.

The design of institutional protection mechanisms while advocacy is carried out will lay the ground for the implementation of the IDP law. By doing so, UNHCR contributes to the strengthening of institutional capacities and identifying current challenges. Once the law is adopted, the Government with a better understanding of the national context will be ready to establish coordination channels that will allow for a more efficient, comprehensive, and rights-based response.



UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements joins community-based organization Youth Against Violence in Choloma, Honduras. The mural states “247,000 reasons, IDP law now!”



After training in tailoring, displaced Yemeni women in Ibb receive tools to generate income for their families. Sewing machines, solar panels, and fabric are the recipe for success and empowerment. In Yemen, 1 in 4 displaced families is headed by a woman. ©UNHCR/YWU

YEMEN

Emergency response in Yemen

At the heart of the humanitarian emergency in Yemen is a seven-year conflict that threatens the life, safety and well-being of millions of civilians.

The continuing armed conflict resulted in over 10,000 civilian casualties, forced displacement, damage to vital infrastructure such as health, education, water and electricity facilities as well as loss of livelihoods. Four million Yemenis are displaced with one million residing in informal hosting sites with substandard conditions. Coupled with decades of underdevelopment and the collapse of the economy and basic public services, particularly in the North due to the embargo, the conflict has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the Yemeni population, leading families to resort to harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage, forced recruitment, survival sex and family separation breaking down community support structures. IDPs are four times more at risk of hunger with conflict and

displacement being amongst the main drivers of the famine.

Humanitarian actors are constantly adapting their response to emergencies within this protracted humanitarian crisis. Since 2015, the division of the country into two areas of control under the Government of Yemen in the south and the *de facto* authorities in the north, hampers country-wide programming. Administrative, movement and access impediments imposed by the authorities and security as well as socio-cultural constraints further increase risks for the most vulnerable groups. Expertise by national organizations with better local knowledge is very limited and capacity building initiatives are often not approved.

In Yemen, UNHCR contributes to inter-agency efforts through its leadership of three clusters (Protection, Shelter and Camp/ Site Management) and area-based approaches to foster synergies in the response and improve the protective environment for IDPs. UNHCR responds to the emergency needs of newly displaced families by the conflict and natural disasters such as flooding. UNHCR also recently adapted its cash interventions to target IDPs in districts with high food insecurity (IPCIV) to help them be free from hunger. To anchor these cash interventions in UNHCR's protection mandate, the targeting takes into consideration the profile of individuals with specific protection risks, such as female headed households, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, in addition to looking at socio-economic and shelter/living conditions.

As part of its emergency preparedness, UNHCR has enhanced its storage capacity for pre-positioned emergency stock of shelter kits and essential household items by establishing warehouses in key geographic areas with a goal of responding within 72 hours. Cash (rental subsidy) allows for quick interventions for recently displaced without shelter in urban settings or facing imminent threats of eviction. Similarly, cash is integrated in the management of emergency protection cases such as access to medical care for survivors of violence.

The challenge remains on how to make sure that some of these emergency interventions, such as cash, are sustainable – especially given donor fatigue in relation to such emergencies – and help build the self-reliance of Yemenis to avoid a cycle of dependence on external humanitarian aid. UNHCR is working together with donors and interested stakeholders to strengthen the resilience of affected communities while awaiting the outcomes of peace initiatives.



Ali, an internally displaced Yemeni, listens to an information session on how to protect himself and his family from COVID-19, at a UNHCR-supported community centre in Sana'a. Ali fled to the capital from Hudaydah in 2018. ©UNHCR/Shadi Abusneida

Addressing forced displacement in Yemen: UNHCR coordination response

Escalation in hostilities since the beginning of 2018 in Yemen's northern Al-Jawf governorate has left at least 189,340 displaced Yemenis and members of hosting communities in acute need of humanitarian assistance. Most of these people are displaced from areas in Al-Hazm, Al-Khalaq, Al Ghayl, Bart Al-Anan and Khab Wa Al-Sha'af districts where fighting was more intense.

According to inter-agency statistical estimations, Al-Jawf is home to more than 125,500 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Hajjah, Hudaydah, Sa'ada and Marib governorates. Displacement from Marib to Al- Jawf are ongoing following the recent escalation in violence. Groups of families displaced from the northern part of the Marib Governorate at the beginning of April 2021 have arrived in Al-Ghayl district – Yam Mountain. Most of them have arrived with no belongings, citing increase in hostilities and intense airstrikes as the main reason for their flight.

UNHCR has responded to the needs of the newly displaced with interventions in collaboration with a local partner with extensive knowledge of the area.

UNHCR and partners in Al-Jawf governorate have been providing regular and emergency response to displaced families, including shelter, protection services, non-food items, and support in 40 hosting sites through the **Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM)**.

From the beginning of 2020 to February 2021, UNHCR in partnership with YARD has provided cash assistance to more than 90,000 displaced persons (some 15,000 HH) to help them meet a variety of needs, including access to food, water, shelter, health. UNHCR also distributed 2,393 non-food items kits to displaced families in the governorate.

Additionally, UNHCR-led **Shelter Cluster's partners** provided 1,300 displaced families with non-food items in Al-Rayan area in Kha Wa Al-Sha'af districts, targeting mainly women and children.

Through community center and mobile interventions, UNHCR partner provided psychosocial support to more than 3,300 displaced persons including women and children who suffer from displacement -related psychosocial distress. More than 2,680 people (including 108 women and girls) **received legal assistance** to replace their documentation (birth certificates and national ID cards) which were lost during their flight, to enable them to access public services.



Displaced person and his son leaving with essential household items provided by UNHCR in Al-Hudayd. © NMO-Tareq Al-qurashi



Joint assessment team monitoring a displaced Afghan family in Qala-e-Naw, Badghis province, Afghanistan 2018 © Anita Rahman

AFGHANISTAN

Internal displacement response in Afghanistan

UNHCR continues to call for greater support from the international community for Afghanistan's people, including those displaced within its borders and refugees seeking safety outside the country.

Afghanistan today has a population of nearly 35 million people, the majority of them young, facing insecurity and economic challenges. Millions also remain displaced within the country and outside as refugees, generously hosted by countries such as Iran and Pakistan despite the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

In the past six months alone, UNHCR has assisted over 100,000 internally displaced Afghans in the through the distribution of hygiene kits, emergency shelter kits, family tents, sanitary kits and other non-food items. Cash assistance has

also been provided to vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly, children and women at risk, people with disabilities, and those with serious medical conditions³. UNHCR has also undertaken to support the Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to register internally displaced persons.

While the international community has made immense contributions during the last 20 years, aid and funding for Afghanistan have been on the decline, with – humanitarian assistance facing the largest funding shortfalls. UNHCR's financial appeal of US\$ 123.5 million for 2021 is only 24 per cent funded.

3 <https://www.unhcr.org/asia/news/press/2021/5/60af79194/unhcr-calls-continued-engagement-increased-support-afghanistan.html>

UNHCR's coordination leadership in support of the UN Country Team is agile and active. As Protection Cluster lead, a series of initiatives were launched to reinforce the imperative to protect displaced populations against a backdrop of increasingly complex and unabated conflict, drought-like situation and the long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increased movement of persons to urban areas, as a coping strategy.

Included among these initiatives is:

- a comprehensive, country-wide service mapping of all protection service providers and existing referral pathways.
- renewed engagement with the Advocacy working group to define priorities for advocacy messaging regarding the increasingly volatile context,
- joint Protection Monitoring data collection and analysis with protection cluster members to produce a cross-sectoral analytical report for the Humanitarian Country Team with concrete and actionable recommendations, and
- field-oriented, flexible protection programming that meets the needs of affected communities, notably through four Area-Based Response pilots in various parts of the country

There is growing concern over a probable deterioration of the security situation in the country; for such a situation, sub-national coordinators are entry points to displaced communities in contested areas where the humanitarian community faces access constraints.

Should the situation further deteriorate, UNHCR will kick-in its tested approach through boosting the capacity of national non-governmental organizations to deliver critical and life-saving protection assistance to vulnerable households.

In the Northern, Southern and Western regions, UNHCR has partnered with international NGOs - NRC and DRC as co-coordinators for protection. This partnership enables the Protection Cluster to reach out to key stakeholders in the field, reinforce two-way communication with affected communities, and pool resources to deliver coordinated quality services.

UNHCR is actively encouraging NGOs to support coordination mechanisms by becoming co-coordinators of the Protection Cluster at the sub-national level and welcomes expressions of interest to take on such a role in other regions of Afghanistan.

In regard to the Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster, it is led by UNHCR and co-chaired by IOM. It has an established coordination mechanism at National level as well as in eight sub-national regions i.e. Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, North Eastern, South Eastern, Central and Central Highland. Leadership at sub-national level is currently undertaken by UNHCR staff including through double hatting.

To enhance coordination and response, the ES/NFI cluster also has Provincial focal points in all Provinces with the aim of supporting the Sub-National ES/NFI Cluster Coordinator (Regional Focal Point) in representing the cluster, sharing information on displacement, undertaking assessments, mapping partners and facilitating response.

These national and sub-national roles form the ES/NFI Cluster coordination team. The team ensures the inclusion of humanitarian partners within the Cluster and identifies overall requirements in the response to natural and conflict emergencies.

Best efforts are being made by UNHCR in partnership with the UN Country Team to address the humanitarian needs in an evolving and dynamic situation in the country. Increasing support from international stakeholders is urged.



Interviews of Key Informants by monitors from Proliska, UNHCR partner along the Line of Contact.

UKRAINE

Protection monitoring and community empowerment

Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2015, the protection of communities living along the ceasefire line (the Line of Contact) between parties to the conflict, continues to require attention.

The ceasefire remains fragile and the daily life of communities in the conflict zone remains impacted by the conflict, which separates families, deprives people of their jobs, and disrupts access to basic services. Conflict-affected people live in a long string of isolated villages, inhabited by a majority of elderly and vulnerable people, and most often in small urban centres which struggle to provide their residents with access to basic services.

In this context, UNHCR believed it to be critical that the protection situation along the Line of Contact should remain within the focus of all concerned stakeholders. This objective resulted in UNHCR further strengthening its protection monitoring in conflict-affected settlements. Given the complexities involved, a community-based approach was adopted and is currently functional.

Towards this end, a questionnaire was developed reflecting the prevalent human rights concerns in these communities. Included are questions relating to physical security, freedom of movement, GBV, access to essential services and utilities, livelihood opportunities, essential utilities, and public transportation and communication. This questionnaire is used for data collection through observation or interviews with key informants in the communities.

Since February 2021, data collection has been carried out monthly by monitors from UNHCR partner Proliska in nearly 160 villages or urban centers, on the side of the Line of Contact controlled by the Government of Ukraine. The protection monitoring has already contributed in highlighting protection gaps and concerns which had been neglected.

As example, protection monitoring and related advocacy helped to quantify the dependence of isolated communities on public transportation to access essential services. As a result of the data made available, the Ukraine Humanitarian Funds decided to support public transportation services, until local administrations restore their budgetary resources temporarily disrupted by the ongoing decentralisation reform.

People who left their homes during the conflict settled in urban centres and villages across the country. While their local integration is making progress, IDPs continue to face a number of

challenges, in particular with regard to access to adequate housing. In response, UNHCR, through its partner The Tenth of April, supports the empowerment of IDP communities in urban centres in seven regions across Ukraine. The Tenth of April works with IDP communities to facilitate the development of their own advocacy strategies and promote their participation in decision-making processes in host communities. Through this programme, communities benefit from multiple capacity building activities with a focus on advocacy and communication skills, project proposal development, and community mobilization.

In 2021, a coalition of 20 communities (officially registered as NGO) continues advocacy on housing issues, assisting local authorities in applying for subventions from central budget for housing solutions. The programme also resulted in the participation of IDPs as candidates in local elections, and the creation of local IDP councils at the municipal level. UNHCR Partner Right to Protection also help territorial communities to apply for funds available at central level to support housing programmes locally.



UNHCR Philippines, through its UNHCR Regional Centre for Emergency Preparedness (eCentre), conducted a 3-day Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Emergency Preparedness and Response Workshop in December 2019 for representatives of the regional government and local government units of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

PHILIPPINES

Four-pronged approach to emergency preparedness in Mindanao

The Philippines is one of the countries most prone to natural disasters and its people face significant displacement risk due to the annual parade of typhoons and occasional seismic events that hit the archipelagic nation. This is in addition to those forcibly displaced due to conflict and violence.

In 2020 alone, an estimated 4.4 million people were forced to flee their homes due to natural calamities, including two of the strongest storms to make landfall that year, as well as the eruption of Taal Volcano. In the southern region of Mindanao, such disasters exacerbate vulnerabilities in areas already beset by armed conflict and other forms of violence.

While each and every emergency has posed a challenge to duty-bearers in providing protection, relief and recovery assistance, the Philippines long history and experience with both calamities and conflict has led to the development of sophisticated emergency preparedness measures to minimize the loss of life and livelihood and maximize the use of resources for humanitarian assistance.

Building on this collective expertise and the High Commissioner's policies on emergency preparedness, UNHCR Philippines utilizes a four-pronged approach to preparing for conflict or disaster-induced displacement.

First, a critical component of this approach is the establishment of a functional protection coordination platform even during peace times to ensure a steady avenue that strengthens the collaboration of various protection actors who advocate and uphold the rights of the IDPs. The Mindanao Virtual Protection Cluster Platform has been successful in mainstreaming protection principles in humanitarian responses and in promoting solutions-oriented programmes and services amid the pandemic.

The second component of the operation's approach is a focus on protection information management. This entails various data preparedness measures through community-based approaches to ensure the readiness of the State and humanitarian community in responding to emergencies such as collection and analysis of secondary data to facilitate vulnerability mapping of the affected population. The resulting information products support all stakeholders including local authorities to make informed decisions that facilitate effective delivery of responses when disaster hits the country.

Third, UNHCR also provides continuous support to strengthen the local government's capacity to respond to humanitarian needs in a timely manner by pre-positioning of core relief items. In close coordination with various project partners and local government units, distribution of assistance prioritizes the most vulnerable displaced population especially those in isolated and hard-to-reach areas. UNHCR also maintains its role as advocate to ensure adherence to protection principles, including non-discrimination in the provision of aid for Government-led responses.

UNHCR Philippines has been capacitating duty-bearers on disaster preparedness and highlights the centrality of protection in all phases of the emergency and the importance of the Cluster approach during emergency response. The recent involvement of UNHCR Philippines to the UN-led Anticipatory Approach where UNHCR shares its protection expertise in the framework for development form parts of the capacity building and development support by UNHCR to the State.

These emergency preparedness approaches among other initiatives of UNHCR Philippines are among the concrete activities that operationalize UNHCR's commitments toward decisive and predictable engagement with internal displacement in the Philippines.

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