



National Protection Cluster

Minutes of Meeting (16 May 2019)

Locations: UNHCR Baghdad, NCCI Erbil, plus Webex

Chaired by: Claudia Nicoletti (NPC Co-Coordinator)

1. Review of Action Points from 18 April meeting – (MOM here attached - 5 mins)
2. Strategic & Thematic Updates:
 - a. Strategic Update from Ninewa / KR-I PWGs (10 mins)
 - b. Strategic Update from C/S PWG (10 mins)
 - c. Thematic Update from GBV Sub-Cluster (10 mins)
 - d. Thematic Update from Child Protection Sub-Cluster (10 mins)
 - e. Thematic Update from Mine Action Sub-Cluster (10 mins)
 - f. Thematic Update from HLP Sub-Cluster (10 mins)
 - g. Strategic Update from CwC Task Force (10 mins)
 - h. Update from NPC – Update on “Protection & Solutions for Vulnerable IDPs/Returnees” next steps, Update on Service Advisor Platform workshops (10 mins)
 - i. Update from RPA mechanism (10 mins)
3. AOB - Presentation by Social Inquiry on the “Mental Health: psychosocial dimensions of displacement” study (15 mins)

1. Review of Action Points from 18 April meeting

<p>NPC members to start preparing their services based on the template that will be circulated in preparation for trainings and data entry; NPC members to assign Service Advisor focal points that will be responsible to manage the entry of the services.</p>	<p>Completed. Service Advisory Platform trainings to be organised soon.</p>
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Minutes adopted without amendments.

2a. Strategic Update from KRI & Ninewa PWG

Ninewa

- Protection partners in camp continue to identify violations of the civilian character of camps, discriminatory practices of distribution (as well as some incidents of aid diversion). IDPs without documentation also continue to report movement restrictions due to the fear of detentions, unjustified delays and harassment at checkpoints. This is often associated with individuals’ previous experiences or reference to experiences of relatives and friends.
- Authorities in Ninewa governorate continue to pressure humanitarian organizations and IDPs to share IDP individual data, contrary to the principles of proportionality and purpose limitation governing data protection in humanitarian action. Formal requests related mostly to biodata of IDP camp residents, overall details of camp population, displacement trends (in some instances targeting individuals from outside Ninewa governorate), and information on persons without legal documentation. In addition, camp management and protection actors reported incidents where non-humanitarian actors instructed IDPs in camps to collect information about their fellow residents without due consideration of data protection principles or respect for the right to privacy. Last incidents reported included request in particular camps to share the number of people not originally from Ninewa governorate, and explain the reasons for (i) not segregating families with perceived affiliation to extremists, (ii) not forcibly returning families from outside Ninewa to their governorates of origin, and (iii) for not denying access to camps for individuals secondarily displaced. The incident was also accompanied by officials spreading misinformation (namely that humanitarian assistance will no longer be free) among camp residents. On 25 April, community leaders from some camps reported being requested to share lists of empty tents in their respective camp sectors. Overall, pressured individuals expressed discomfort in gathering this information and fear relating to non-compliance of requests.

KRI

- IDPs continue to arrive across KR in small numbers (51 families, 162 individuals in Dohuk; 10 families, 80 individuals in Erbil in the last month), with exception of camps in Sulaymaniyah. Small numbers across Erbil and Dohuk are closely linked to the lack of plots available in camps, and waiting lists are in place in some camps. In Sulaymaniyah, only one family was registered as new arrivals over the past three months. Protection and CCCM Clusters are working with colleagues on the ground to understand the reasons for no arrivals. The lack of new arrivals comes following the suspension of a previous decision issued by JCC Sulaymaniyah not to allow new arrival in camps. Protection partners are invited to share with the Sulaymaniyah PWG or KRI PWG and/or NPC Coordinators any information that they have and deem appropriate to better understand the situation. In Sulaymaniyah, the Government has also announced the closure of Surdesh camp (which currently hosts 67 families). CCCM and Protection actors are working to ensure that the closure is done in an appropriate manner and without exacerbating protection risks. Challenges to date have identified have related mainly to sectoral divisions among populations.
- We continue to identify new arrivals of Yazidi families in Dohuk (in May, 15 arrived to camps). Main protection needs identified on the ground related to MHPSS and medical assistance. Partners are working to assess the situation of returnees in urban areas.
- Access to documentation remains a primary concern in KRI Governorates. In Dohuk, recent surveys conducted in Bersive I and II shows an average of 30 per cent of IDPs are missing and/or in need of some type of civil documentation, including civil ID, PDS card, birth certificate. Mobile visits by the Ninewa Civil Affairs Directorates to IDP camps in Duhok are continuing; however on an ad hoc basis. A holistic approach (with a need for institutionalization and sustainability considerations) is required.

2b. Strategic Update from C/S PWG

- **Anbar – *displacement trends*:** Secondary displacement continued in Anbar during the reporting period. It is reported that three families, originally from Al-Qaim, moved from Baghdad and Ramadi to Habbaniya Turistic City (HTC) and Bzebiz camp in Anbar, because of the inability to pay the rent and lack of livelihood opportunities in their areas of origin. ***Returns*:** During the reporting period, 31 IDP families voluntarily returned to Erbil from Amiriyat Al Fallujha camp, Jazerat area in Ramadi district, Al-Karma city in Falluja district, and Jazerat Heet. MoMD and the ISF facilitated the return of these families. On 9 May, the ISF forcibly relocated seven families (29 individuals, of which 27 women and children) to HTC camp; allegedly, the justification used by the ISF to arrest forcibly relocate the families to HTC camp was that their houses were located near the area where an IED explosion occurred (in Nu'yamia town, south of Fallujah city). ISF informed families that this action was punishment for not sharing enough information about individuals responsible for planting the IED, and that they deserved to live in camps. Advocacy by humanitarian partners resulted in the ability of the families to return to their homes. Humanitarian actors are expecting higher numbers of families that will decide to return to their areas of origin after the academic year ends (end of May/beginning of June 2019).
***Protection Concerns*:** Security incidents took place during the reporting period in Rutba where the ISF conducted military search operation. The ISF jointly with PMF and tribe fighters conducted a military search operation along 230 km of the Iraqi-Syrian border targeting extremist elements. The security incidents in the area resulted in increased security measures, which impact IDPs' capacity to return to their areas of origin and also raise concerns related to instances of collective punishments against families with perceived affiliation. Local authorities and tribe leaders of Karma and Fallujah are planning to establish reconciliation activities in both districts to encourage IDPs of AAF and HTC to return. The local authorities of Fallujah started a preparation step by disseminated forms on the IDPs of AAF to collect detailed information about the families, areas of origin and reasons of remaining in displacement. Reportedly, the local authorities and tribe leaders want to obtain more details about the IDPs and main reasons of not returning to AoO.
As reported by Anbar legal partners, individuals wishing to apply for the Unified Card (civil IDs, residency card, and citizenship certificate) are applying through private offices due to slow internet service, as well as limited registration slots per day. The overall cost is between IQD 5,000-30,000 IQD per person. Anbar legal partners confirmed that the procedure remains free of charge in other governorates and the Jencya departments in West Anbar also emphasized that the procedures will be free of charge once is activated in the respective districts. UNHCR, IRC and DRC advocated with the Nationality Directorate of Anbar who advised bringing this issue to a higher level of General Directorate of Civil Affairs, Passports and Residency in Baghdad to solve this issue.
Reportedly, on 2 May, the spokesperson of the Council of Representatives held a meeting with officials and tribe leaders of Anbar to discuss ways of facilitating the return of IDPs to their areas of origin. The discussions also included facilitating the return of North Babil IDPs (Jurf Alsakhar and Al-Ewysat areas) who are currently displaced in Anbar.

Reportedly, the head of the Security Committee of Anbar stated that the government is working to solve the issues related to people with perceived affiliation, and to facilitate the return of IDPs to their areas of origin. He also referred to the risks that people with perceived affiliation face when returning to AoO (if conflict with the community is not properly addressed).

The representative of the Security Committee of the Anbar confirmed that there is a lack of accurate information on more than 4,500 civilians who were missing since extremists controlled some areas in the governorate (3,000 individuals are from west Anbar districts). He also referred to the vulnerable situation of families of missing persons urging the authorities to pay more attention to this issue.

During a visit to Kilo 7 IDPs settlement, IDPs originally from Al-Saghra village of Anah district reported concerns related to the presence of IEDs, as well as the high level of house destruction in their village. The families are frequently conducting go-and-see visits to their area of origin.

MoMD Branch of Al-Qaim confirmed that the return grant (IQD 1.5 million) will be disbursed a few days around Eid al-Fitr through via Qi cards offices in all areas of the Anbar.

- **Kerbala, Najaf, Babil, and Wassit** - The workshop on "Protection & Solutions for Vulnerable IDPs/Returnees" was conducted in Kerbala; participants represented humanitarian actors from different sectors in the areas of Kerbala, Najaf, Babil and Wassit. Cases of scabies and leishmaniasis have been recorded in Najaf governorate among the host community and IDP in different areas. Worth to mention that this is the second outbreak in Najaf after the outbreak of 2017 (main causes are contaminated water). Returns: in the reporting period, considerable number of families returned to their areas of origin or moved to other governorates; some others, decided to stay in the place of habitual (current governorates) considering that inability to return due to destroyed housing, lack of services and the unstable security situation. Many IDP families continue to face eviction and threat of eviction, because of the inability to afford the rent due to unemployment. Access to services and assistance provided: majority of the IDP families are able to access to the public services, like health and education, however because of the lack of financial resources they cannot cover the school expenses or expense for medical cases not covered by the primary health care centres; issues of school drop-out and child labour have been reported.
- **Salah al-Din**: Return: during the reporting period, 15 families returned to Baiji, 26 Families to Senya and 13 families to Balad area; Complex/Informal Sites updates: increased presence of SWAT and Iraqi security forces in Qadissya Complex; the Government of Iraq is "encouraging" all IDPs to leave the site in order to close them; humanitarian actors in the area continue to remind armed security officials about the minimum standard principles they should follow in case of eviction. Security situation: extremist groups continues to carry out attacks in retaken areas in Salah al-Din governorate, jeopardizing the safety of returnees and affecting the sustainability of returns. Security is deteriorating in villages in Yathrib sub-district; as a result returns are affected. One attack was recorded on 8 May 2019 against a returnee family in in Al-Marzari village, Yathrib sub district, and three fatalities and four casualties were reported. Restrictions on movement have also been reported in the area.
- Informal complexes: Al Qadessya complex is expected to witness evictions at the end of school year (according to Al Qadissya complex management and the families, they are concerns about the expected forced eviction that will happen at the end of the study year). During field visits to these areas, the families expressed their fears that the security forces would force them to return to their AoO, which are still underserved in terms of access to basic services and heavily destroyed with no suitable shelter.
- According to the SAD MoDM, it has been agreed among the High Commission of Human Rights, the MODM, the local government and Deputy Governor (following a visit to Al Karama camp and intention surveys with IDPs currently residing in the camp), that IDPs wishing to go back to their areas of origin can do so, as long as they can take their tents with them. The majority of the IDPs residing in Al Karama camp are from Baiji and Al Seniyah areas. So far, nine families from Baiji and Al Seniyah have left Al Karama camp and return to their AoO with their tents. The SAD MoDM issued a request letter to the MoDM in Baghdad requesting provision of new tents for IDPs residing in the camp. IDPs were given until the end of the school year to take their tents and return to AoO, if they wish to do so.
- **Kirkuk** - UNHCR Kirkuk visited Tal-Al Thahab village in Amerli sub district, Tuz/Salah al-Din in order to assess the needs of newly returned families to the area. The village is located on the main road to Baghdad, the total population is 150 families among them 129 IDP families have received security clearances. In total %95 of houses were damaged. The damages included primary health centre, primary school and the mosque.
- In total and during the reporting period, 7 families (28 individuals) moved from the camps to unknown destination.
- Destruction of houses and properties, and security incidents restrict the return of IDPs to AoO. During the reporting period, protection partner interviewed around 100 displaced families from different parts of Iraq who

stated that their return to the places of origin cannot be achieved without enabling conditions for voluntary return and reintegration programme.

2c. Thematic Update from GBV Sub-Cluster

- **In Central South**, the GBV Working Group trained MOLSA staff in NAJAF on basic communication skills, referral mechanism and the UNSCR 1325; conducted capacity building for Anbar and Baghdad women's committees; expanded GBV services to Al-Taakhi complex and IMC started piloting the implementation of Economic and Social Empowerment (EAŞE) activities.
- **In Diyala** due to the flood crisis, the women's community centers in Baquba established emergency GBV team in each center to coordinate GBV activities. A total of 320 dignity kits were distributed to the villages affected by flood in Baquba (Khirnabat, Al-Hiwedir, Al-Dazkiya, Khan Al liwalwa, Al-Sabtiya villages, and Al-Mustafa neighborhood); Tajdeed and UIMS closed Women Community center managed by Tajdeed and Al-Awj NGOs (Anamil Al-Khai, WCCin Al-Khalis District) and the handover of the RH clinic in Saad Camp – Baquba to Diyala DOH will be in May 2019.
- In Dohuk, the service mapping and referral pathways have been updated and shared with all actors.
- In Ninewa, the GBV WG coordinated with GBV partners regarding the response plan to Iraqi returnees from Syria and NCA, IOM, Al-Mesalla and WRO showed their interest and readiness to respond with GBV activities.
- **GBV Mainstreaming Stocktaking Workshop:** The GBVSC, WASH, Shelter/NFI and CCCM cluster Coordinators are participating in the stocktaking workshop on GBV risk mitigation in Bangkok from May 15th – 17th. Organized by UNICEF, IOM and GBVAOR, the workshop have participants from Iraq, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, covering lessons on promoting health, safety, dignity and privacy in humanitarian action.
- **The GPC/GBVAOR annual conference** taking place in Bangkok from May 20th -24th will be attended by the GBVSC Coordinator/Co-coordinator, among other Protection Sub/Cluster Coordinators.
- **NEEDS/GAPS** - Limited services, including health services for GBV survivors and in some cases they are required to pay for the services in Central South; lack of cash assistance and Legal assistance to access the civil documentation and other legal services for some GBV survivors. Restricted movement for GBV beneficiaries especially in Central South and this limits them from accessing all the services they need. Harassment of IDPS in camps (AAF, AL Alam, HTC) by health staff was reported and Central south GBVWG will be following up on this. In Dohuk, there is lack of training for Activity Info and protocol of the PSEA protocol needs to be rolled out.

2d. Thematic Update from Child Protection Sub-Cluster

- PSS TF marked one year anniversary since it started. Members reviewed the results of pre-post tests for 5 endorsed modules, and discussed the way forward to improve the PSS program for children.
- CPIMS+ will “go live” in Dohuk this week. Currently 85 users including 45 government case workers will start using the online case management platform.
- Unaccompanied and Separated Children TF has been revived in order to support the family tracing, alternative care and reunification of children from Northeast Syria. TF will be a technical reference group working on contextualizing forms, guidance and support in capacity building, while the response will be coordinated from CPSC. Due to the existing caseload of UASC coordinated between cross border actors in NES and Iraq, and the need to trace families/children regardless of the population movement plans, this coordination/preparation from CPSC is taking place.
- CPSC had the first Strategic Advisory Group Meeting with new members: 3 National NGO members (BROB, PAO and Mercy Hands) and 3 INGO members (IRC, SCI and War Child) and 2 UN agencies (UNICEF & UNHCR). The group discussed on Partner Perception survey results, transition of clusters and HNO indicator review.
- CCCM cluster and CPSC is working on short Standard Operation Procedures on major child protection issues for camp management actors. The SOP will be finalized before Eid holiday, and will be rolled out through CCCM and CPSC.
- Cash WG and CPSC is working on a short guide for child safeguarding in Cash distribution. Each WG/cluster nominated few members to contribute in drafting process.

2e. Thematic Update from Mine Action Sub-Cluster

- MASC members continue operations in affected areas with particular focus on Ninewa Governorate. Reports of explosive incidents involving civilians in Anbar upon the return to their homes or in residential areas were received. At the moment no partner is present in those locations, however one of the partners should be deploying in June or July depending on funding available. Note that mine action partners are not authorized to do clearance of private residences and that the sector is advocating to update the legal framework to enable mine action partners to clear houses.

- Reports of the non-functioning of the civil defense and directorate of mine action hotline. The MASC will commence discussion with both entities to improve the response rate from the hotline.
- MASC members continue to collaborate with other clusters and sectors, i.e. education to deliver jointly services, notably on risk education.
- HLP-MA guidance note has been adopted by the MASC and shared to the NPC.

2f. Thematic Update from HLP Sub-Cluster

- HLP SC recently has released the Arabic version of the Advocacy Note on Property Compensation. We expect that the Arabic version will help national partners and Compensation Sub-committees to better understand the challenges related to property compensation related issues. We already asked HLP partners to present the document also to governorate Compensation Sub-committees and see the possibilities where our partners could help them to address these challenges and support them accordingly.
- HLP actors reported that in different governorates they already started to meet with Compensation Sub-committees trying to help committees to increase capacity to register and better manage compensation claims.
- In coordination with HLP SC, some of the partners planning to organize workshops with Compensation Sub-committees in conflict affected governorates aiming to advocate for property compensation related issues and to discuss how partners can support further the committees.
- HLP SC we will be testing a monthly “practitioner reflection note” where we aim through this note to reflect group cases that partners came a cross during their program implementation and discuss all obstacles, challenges related to provision of HLP services and if necessary to develop response tools, training materials and operational guidance. It is expected that HLP partners to contribute to this note also.

2g. Strategic Update from CwC Task Force

- **Awareness Raising Materials** - The “Repairing of shelters damaged by war” messaging which was prepared by Shelter Cluster, HLP and CwC has been finalised and it’s been sent for graphic design and print.
- **Capacity Building** - No capacity building activities took place during the reporting period.
- **Coordination** - CwC taskforce took part of the Cash Working Group Taskforce working to harmonise messaging and referral pathways related to Cash Based Intervention. The taskforce member have contributed to the National Protection Cluster, Operational Plan for Iraqis returning from Al Hol camp northeast Syria by drafting the CwC operational plan, which is currently being reviewed by NPC.

2h. Update from NPC

- **Update on “Protection & Solutions for Vulnerable IDPs/Returnees” next steps** - The NPC carried out workshop across eight governorates with over 120 participants from most of the clusters. The objective of the workshop was to provide the theoretical ground on the civilian and humanitarian character of camps, and key fundamental rights that should be protected of vulnerable IDPs, including people with perceived affiliation. The workshop also introduced the Rights Violations Tracking Matrix for People with Perceived Affiliation and included practice reporting on this kobo-based tool as well as the “Civil Character of Camp Incident Matrix”. This is complementary to the guidance produced and shared by NPC: “Recommendations for the Way Forward: Protection Concerns and Proposed Solutions for Iraqi Citizens with Perceived Affiliations”. Partners are encouraged to approach the governorate-level PWG (non-protection partners to reach out to their respective clusters) for training and further information about the tools and reporting.
- **Update on Service Advisor Platform workshops** – the NPC has shared with partners the schedule of trainings/workshops on the use of the Service Advisor Platform. Several trainings are being organised in the month of May in governorates across Iraq. Further details on the Platform can be asked to NPC IMO Ghassan Shehadeh shehadeg@unhcr.org.

2i. Updates from RPA mechanism

No RPA conducted in the past month.

3. AOB - Presentation by Social Inquiry on the “Mental Health: psychosocial dimensions of displacement” study –

Social Inquiry presented their study on the PSYCHOSOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF DISPLACEMENT: MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG IDPS IN IRAQ AND RELATED DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, AND CONFLICT-RELATED STRESSORS. Main takeaways are the following:

- a. Women heads of household in this sample are particularly vulnerable in terms of mental health and tend to have become heads of household due to violence and conflict. They are predominantly found in Anbar camps and displaced in Kirkuk and Salah al-Din.

- b. Men seem to underreport symptoms but that does not mean they are not vulnerable. Their experiences of trauma are relatively similar to women's. Compared to similar studies in other contexts, their symptoms are lower indicating the need for further examination of this.
- c. Mental health services and outreach need to be extended or enhanced toward out-of-camp populations. In doing this, such services need to be better available to host community members as well as they may not have the care they need either. Related to this, study of the mental health of the Iraq-wide population would also be warranted, not only to understand the rate of need of care but to better put IDP prevalence into perspective.
- d. Economic and housing insecurity remain critical priorities to address among IDPs in Iraq. Addressing lack of occupation among both camp and non-camp populations would potentially help in alleviating a stressor negatively influencing mental health. Furthermore, policies or practices forcing IDPs out of their housing, whether people are evicted or face the risk of it, are also detrimental to mental health outcomes. This must be taken into account in planning of camp closure and included in any plans for relocating IDPs. With respect to non-camp IDPs, an important aspect is to identify potential protection issues among those who rent housing.
- e. Collective blame and negative labelling and judgement felt by some IDPs is also particularly detrimental to mental health. The general narrative and perception of IDPs, particularly those from central governorates, needs to shift. This can take place at a more local level through specific social cohesion or reconciliation arrangements to help families resolve their displacement, but also must come from the wider-state itself.
- f. Connected to the above, forced separation of family members is a significant hurdle for IDPs to deal with, both materially and emotionally. In particular, lack of information as to the whereabouts of a family member, when or if they will ever come home, and/or what happened to them make it difficult to gain closure and move on from such a traumatic loss. It also obscures a more public reckoning with what happened during and after conflict to ensure such events do not happen again. This must extend to all victims across displacement locations.

Additional info can we requested to Nadia Siddiqui nadia@social-inquiry.org .

- The next NPC meeting will be on 13 June from 11am to 1pm.