

National Protection Cluster

Minutes of Meeting (14.10.21)

Chaired by: Claudia Nicoletti and Yannick Creoff

Locations: Webex

Agenda

1. **Review of Action Points from the meeting on 16 September**
2. **Strategic & Thematic Updates:**
 - a. **Strategic Update from Ninewa / KR-I PWGs (10 mins)**
 - b. **Strategic Update from C/S PWGs (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. **Updates from NPC – Update HNO/HRP process; Round 3 Protection Monitoring Findings; NPC Legal Analysis report**
3. **AOB**
 - **Presentation by REACH – Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment IX – Protection-related findings (30 mins)**

1. Review of Action Points from 16.09.21

n/a	n/a
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Minutes adopted without amendments.

2a. Strategic Update from KRI & Ninewa PWG

Elections: All PWGs met with IHEC before the elections to better understand the situation for IDPs and how many had been registered to vote. Overall, it seemed difficult for IDPs to vote in the elections due to different challenges described below.

Dohuk

IDP participation in the elections

- The DPWG, in coordination with CCCM, and UNHCR met with IHEC Duhok at the technical level to gather information on the participation of IDPs in the elections, especially related to access to voter registration, polling stations and information. Based on information received from IHEC, 31 polling stations were set up for 73,000 registered IDPs, who were set to vote on 8 October, including 21 in camps and 10 in urban locations. Access to voter registration cards was good in camps, as reported by IHEC and also observed through protection monitoring. Challenges were mainly foreseen in relation to IDPs' access to polling stations, who were registered to vote in the area of origin, as they may have not been able to cross governorates due to movement restrictions and security concerns. A general lack of understanding of the election process and limited awareness-raising was also reported by IHEC, especially in urban areas.
- The DPWG has not received any reports on election-related incidents so far.

Spontaneous returns of IDPs from Dohuk to Ninewa

- Spontaneous returns from Dohuk to Ninewa continued in August. IDP return data shared by the by Directorate of Migration and Crisis Response (DMCR) revealed that 40 families (136 individuals) returned from Duhok camps and urban areas to Ninewa in the reporting period, representing a 58% decrease compared to the previous month. This brings the total number of IDPs who have returned to Ninewa since July 2020 to 9,841 families (49,899 individuals).

Sulaymaniyah

IDP participation in the elections

- 11,000 IDPs were registered to vote as reported before the elections. Not clear how many were actually able to vote after the election day.
- On the morning of 8th of October, specific Assayish security personnel in Arbat camp told IDPs to vote for a specific candidate from a specific political party. The camps' main gates were closed on Friday and Saturday, and camp residents were put under restriction on movement. The restrictions were removed Sunday morning after advocacy with DCMR.
- Protection partners were informed that Assayish forces at a specific polling station in Piramagurn, Dukan district confiscated IDPs' voting cards. Protection partners intervened and the Assayish member was removed, confiscated voting cards and IDs were returned to IDPs and they managed to vote.
- An FGD for the IDP key leaders in Sulaymaniyah was conducted by legal partners on 6 October. The FGD was successfully conducted and was attended by all major IDP key leaders, COVs, Camp Managers, Sheiks, and key informants. A total of 13 invitees attended including 7 women and 6 men. The attendees raised a concern regarding IDPs candidates and voter cards; it turns out that most of the IDPs' voter cards are registered under Sulaymaniyah Voter Card, meaning that the IDPs will vote as Sulaymaniyah residents, thus they will not be able to vote on Special Elections day on October 8th; as a result IDPs will be force to vote on regular elections day on

October 10th and they will not be able to vote for the candidates from their place of origin since there will be different lists of candidates during those two different voting days. The reason behind this is unclear, why their voter cards had Sulaymaniyah and not their AoO on them.

Non-returns survey

- In early October, a "Non-Return Form" was shared with UNHCR that MoDM Sulaymaniyah plans to distribute to 150 IDP families (100 in Ashti and 50 in Arbat IDP) in coordination with the camp managements on Oct 5-6. The form/survey was targeted to female Yezidi IDPs, it is not an anonymous form since it required full name etc. UNHCR managed to put this process on halt to be able to understand better from MoDM the reason behind this form, if it has any legal standing/implications on the families that fill it out and if it means they cannot return to their area of origin. A meeting is to be conducted with MoDM next week.

Erbil

IDP participation in the elections

- According to IHEC 25,200 IDPs registered to vote in Erbil (including East Mosul camps). However, IHEC Erbil stated that they only received about 7,000 biometric cards from the areas of origin to distribute to the IDPs in Erbil. Of the 7,000 cards received, only around 2,000 have been distributed to the IDPs so far. Of those, about 300 were distributed in the IDP camps.
- On the 8th October 2021, protection teams visited Erbil, Debaga, and East Mosul camps (Hassansham U2, U3 and Khazir M1) to monitor the process of election, on the first day of its commencement targeting interest groups mainly IDPs and security forces in Iraq. A part of IDPs could participate in the elections, and the teams gathered the details below on how it went:
- According to camp management, 5,945 individuals had the right to vote in EMCs; however, only 1,828 individuals could vote as they had election cards in hand. The remaining IDPs could not cast their votes because they did not receive voter cards although most of them did apply for the voter cards. Out of the 1,828, some 530 persons were considered IDPs by IHEC (Independent High Electoral Commission) and could vote on the 8th October 2021 in Khabat. The IHEC provided buses for IDPs to travel and vote in Khabat and facilitated crossing checkpoints easily. The rest of the IDPs were expected to vote on general election day, which was on the 10th of October 2021. Most IDPs were advised to go to the areas specified on the election cards, most probably in their AoO. Through interviews with IDPs who voted on the first day in EMCs, there were no protection concerns raised during the day's process.
- According to camp management in Debaga camp, there were about 3,000 IDPs registered to vote, However, only 113 were out to participate in the day's election. The Deputy camp manager and the Mukhtars reported that until 11:30 AM, about 80 IDPs went with buses provided by the KRI governorate to Qushtapa to vote and returned to the camp. The camp management staff and Mukhtars were present on each bus.
- Protection teams interviewed 15 voters (12 males and 3 females) of different ages about the election process, they reported that they didn't face any challenges nor incidents, or concerns and the voting process was transparent. They indicated that they didn't see any threat, harassment, or attacks against IDPs. Only one IDP couldn't vote because he had no Civil ID and he was not allowed by the election officers to vote. According to the independent high electoral commission rule, voters must show their voting card and a Civil ID, to be able to vote.
- In Baharka camp, Independent High Electoral Commission Iraq (IHEC) provided eleven buses for the transportation of registered IDP voters to the polling centers. Buses arrived at 7:30 am to transport voters to their voting centers in Baharka sub-district. Meanwhile, other IDPs preferred using their own private means of transport to the voting centers, although they had to leave their residency cards (Iqama) in Assayesh's care.
- Out of 2,500 registered voters in Baharka camp, only 416 voters' names were out to participate in the election. In addition, IDPs whose names were not on the day's list of voters had been informed they would participate on Sunday, October 10th in their AoO. Some IDPs approached protection teams and reported that they were from Ba'aj and if they were to vote on Sunday, they would have to depart on Saturday and return on Monday 11/10/2021 given the fact that the movement across governorates was halted by the government. Whereas a community leader of Sinjar reported that he, along with 40 IDPs had their names out in different areas in Sinjar and Mosul, some election centers were not familiar to IDPs in these locations. Apparently, they had transportation issues as they didn't have the means of transportation and money to hire a vehicle to distant locations. Therefore some IDPs indicated that they would not participate in the elections due to a lack of cash to hire vehicles to their areas of origin.
- Also, a few IDPs approached protection teams and reported that their names were sent to an election center in Mosul while their spouse's name was in an election center in Ba'aj, hence making it difficult for them to participate in the election process. Meanwhile, some IDPs reported that their names weren't out to participate in the election and when they contacted IHEC, they were told that they (IHEC) didn't know the reason why.
- In the Harsham camp: out of 600 IDPs registered voters, only 25 voters' names participated in today's election. As observed, there weren't any buses available to transport voters to their election centers like in other camps. Therefore IDPs in this camp were using their own means or had to hire vehicles to transport them to the election centers within Baharka sub-district. Fortunately, IDPs interviewed after they had cast their votes noted that the process went very well with no concerns or challenges experienced during the voting process.

MOI mission

- The last MoI Ad Hoc Committee mission on civil documentation took place between 24 and 30 September in Erbil. The mission covered all six IDP camps and two days in the urban area, and it processed applications for civil IDs and nationality cards for IDPs originating from Ninewa. During the mission, 3,578 applications were processed, including 649 applications for civil ID and 2,929 for nationality cards. This also includes 808

applications from the urban area (206 for civil IDs and 602 for nationality cards). About 1,400 nationality cards have already been received for distribution, and we are awaiting the remainder of the nationality cards and the civil IDs. Furthermore, it's worth to note that about 1,500 other applications were rejected on the spot due to lack of required supporting documents and bad quality of copy of supporting documents provided. This includes many female headed households who could not present a curatorship or guardianship for their children. Therefore, the children were unable to obtain nationality certificate. It should also be noted that the CAD office would only process cases of IDPs that were from AoOs where the unified card was yet not implemented. If the CAD offices in their AoOs started replacing the Civil IDs with Unified cards the MoI mission could not issue civil IDs for them.

- Since November 2020, new arrivals to Erbil IDP camps (including Hassansham U2, U3 and Khazer M1) have been excluded from MoMD and WFP food assistance. However, World Vision – implementing partner of WFP – has now announced in camp CCCM meetings that they are registering all these IDP families in 6 IDP camps, and that they will be included in the distributions starting October. Erbil office and CCCM cluster are trying to confirm this information directly with WFP. As IDPs continued to report to use of harmful coping mechanisms due to the lack of food assistance, this would be a very positive development. To be confirmed.

Ninewa

IDP participation in the elections

- As of 13 October, 6,014 individuals are residing in Jeddah 5, no new arrivals since 6th September.
- According to IHEC 714 IDPs in Jeddah 5 had their voter cards and were eligible to vote on the 8th of October. Not clear how many voted.

2b. Strategic Update from Central-South PWG

Anbar:

- Protection actors are continuing to coordinate with the protection cluster and actors/clusters on the ground on the decided closure of the AAF camp (with initial consolidation plan scheduled for August 4). The closure decision came out on September 29, issued by the Anbar governor. Some 467 HH/2,162 individuals are to be affected. The decision states that IDPs from no return areas of Jurf Al Sakher and Al Ewsat will be able to remain at site. The KI interviews indicate that the IDPs who will not be willing/able to return to their areas of origin are intending to move to nearby locations (Bzebiz mainly). The protection actors are continuing to monitor the situation with activation of contingency planning as appropriate. Meantime, the Anbar Operations Command received the list of camp residents for the departure security clearance procedures (with the potential movements to be scheduled after the elections). The list includes the names of 1,921 individuals (421 HH) currently residing in the camp. The areas of origin/potential return of the concerned population include Anbar (394 HH), Baghdad (16 HH) and SAD (11 HH). The list excludes 46 HH/241 individuals from Babylon (from the 'no return' areas of Jurf Al Sakher). Alternative solutions are being explored for the above group in concern, including potential 'relocation' to nearby areas (Bzebiz). Meantime, the KI in the camp note that the MoMD decision might not materialize at all, assuming that the decision was made in view of the upcoming elections and for the purpose of 'gaining some popular votes'. KIs in Kilo 7 report a risk of potential eviction. The issues is being looked into by the protection actors with subsequent advocacy and related protection interventions as appropriate.

Salah al-Din:

- Humanitarian actors are continuing to monitor the potential reverse movement of IDPs early **forcibly relocated from Al-Eitha village north of Shirqat to Jedah 5 camp**. In total some 65 were relocated, of which 12 HH have already returned to Al-Eitha village. The movement/return of the remaining individuals is expected in the coming days/weeks as per the KI interviews conducted. The protection interviews conducted with the returnees indicate no critical protection issues in the return areas. The concerned people note that the community has welcomed them back. However, they are continuing to request the humanitarian actors for social cohesion and community dialogues to promote/ensure peaceful coexistence. Protection actors are continuing to monitor the situation for potential interventions as needed. The risk of eviction in Balad Train Station and three areas in Samarra (three schools) remains. Subsequent advocacy is to be undertaken locally by PWG/OCHA and at higher level by the NPC, including through the CPI note to be presented at HCT.

Diyala:

- Protection actors continue raising the issue of increased security incidents also in lieu with the elections. As per the KIs the situation might deteriorate after the elections (depending on the results). The deteriorating security situation is leading to secondary displacement of IDPs. Thus, some 30+ IDP households have relocated within Diyala for the noted security concerns.

Kirkuk

- IHEC reported that more than 6000 IDPs in Kirkuk participated in the special voting day of the election.
- IDP families from Riyadh sub-district of Kirkuk governorate reported inaccessibility to livelihood due to restrictions imposed on their green lands, the agricultural land in the villages of Riyadh is subject to security operations conducted by the ISF, therefore 50% of returned families are impacted by the security procedures taking place on their lands. Reportedly around 100 families ended up at secondary displacement due to security measures.

2c. Thematic Update from GBV Sub-Cluster

- **Rollout of GBVIMS+ for the Government** = Iraq is one of the countries selected for the pilot GBVIMS+ for the government, together with Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone. The GBV SC coordination team is working closely with the consultant supporting the rollout.

- **Ongoing consolidation of Q3 GBVIMS data from partners** = The narrative report will be shared at the end of Oct, beginning of Nov after analysis with relevant partners, including NPC members. The Mid-Year Report of 2021 was earlier shared with relevant stakeholders in English, Kurdish and Arabic.
- **Ongoing GBV Case Management Capacity Building Initiative in collaboration with UNICEF** = this one-year project (part of the regional initiative by UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and the GBV sub-cluster), titled “Equipping gender-based violence response services to meet the needs of women and girls within the COVID-19 outbreak” in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon” has three components:
 - i) GBV Case Management Capacity Building Initiative through strengthening the capacity of GBV service providers working on case management in order to respond to the needs of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and establishment of the national pool of trainers is established to train other service providers on GBV case management capacity.
 - ii) Rollout of Caring for Child survivors resource.
 - iii) Expansion of Primero/GBVIMS+
- **GBV SC in collaboration with Cash WG has established a Joint Task Force** composed of UN agencies, INGOs, and local organisation. Work Plan of the task force is developed in line with GBV SC priorities for GBV integration in cash assistance.

2d. Thematic Update from Child Protection Sub-Cluster

- **Structured PSS Evaluation and the way forward:** UNICEF conducted an evaluation study for the 5 Structured PSS Modules that CPSC partners use to evaluate the efficiency of the intervention. The outcome recommendations were reviewed in a workshop with partners and related stakeholders. The recommendations focus on contextualization of the modules, capacity building, linking the intervention with development actors. The recommendations have been planned on a timeline to be put into action through the PSS TF.
- **Community Engagement in Case Management initiative:** Due to logistic issues, the lead agency is not able to support the implementation of this initiative in Iraq. CPSC in an agreement with the consultant will plan for remote overview session for CM actors on the training package and recruitment process of community members later this year.
- **4th Pillar of CPMS: Integration of CP into Other Sectors:** The global Child Protection Minimum Standard WG is currently developing a training package on integration of CP into other sectors. Iraq CPSC is contributing to that package through engaging education and health actors in Iraq to participate in the development process of the package.

The lead position in Sulaymaniyah CPWG and co-lead position in Ninewa CPWG are currently vacant due to staff turnover. Expression of Interest for chairing/co-chairing Sulaymaniyah & Ninewa CPWGs will be shared with partners soon. NNGOs are encouraged and prioritized to contribute to CP coordination.

2e. Thematic Update from Mine Action Sub-Cluster

- **Findings of need analysis to 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview** = The MASC submitted its input to the HNO analysis based on data from (IMSMA, MCNA IV and other resources). The findings of the analysis showed the continued mine action needs to address in 2022 due to extent of contamination, reported incidents in the affected areas in 2021, the psychological impact of explosive ordnance and the risk taking behavior of populations particularly for breadwinners (fathers and their sons) in their livelihood activities who have no alternatives that resulted in more casualties from males.
- **MASC workshop on 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan** = The MASC will have a workshop next week to discuss the findings of the needs to identify response priorities to be integrated into the development of 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan. The workshop will bring together the humanitarian partners and the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA). The workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss the planning of activities in 2021 that covers mine action pillars in terms of clearance and survey, risk education, VA and the Gaps of locations coverage and challenges. This workshop objective is in line with the MASC localization plan where knowledge transfer through presenting the example of humanitarian response planning that can help in the planning of any future coordination platform.
- **Risk education messages inclusion in school curricula** = For Federal Iraq the efforts to include updated explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) messages in the school curricula are ongoing. A workshop with the Ministry of Education and DMA will take place beginning of November and the experience from KRI will be presented by Iraq Kurdistan Mine Action Agency.

2f. Thematic Update from HLP Sub-Cluster

Nothing to report.

2h. Updates from NPC

- **Update HNO/HRP process** = the Cluster submitted the final draft of the Humanitarian Needs Overview after revision by the SAG. Work on the Humanitarian Response Plan is underway; governorate level consultations with protection actors were conducted to discuss the PC response in 2022. More info in the ppt/meeting.
- **Round 3 Protection Monitoring Findings** = Round 3 of the PMS was conducted in July-August 2021. Main findings are below:
 - 14% of KIs report that safety and security incidents involving armed or security actors happen sometimes or frequently

- *Frequency of incidents reportedly the highest in Anbar (27%), Diyala (25%) and Ninewa (14%)*
- 12% of KIs report that violations of the right to life and physical integrity against civilians occur sometimes or frequently
 - *Frequency of rights-violations reportedly the highest in Anbar (28%), Diyala (19%) and Duhok (17%)*
- districts/21% of KIs report restrictions on freedom of movement to other governorates
 - *Severity of restrictions on movement reportedly the highest in Anbar (46%), Diyala (30%), Sulaymaniyah (22%)*
- 49% of KIs report that some or most people are facing issues to obtain or renew their civil documentation
 - *Prevalence of issues related to civil documentation reportedly the highest in Duhok (67%), Anbar (63%), Ninewa (59%),*
- 16% of KIs report that social tensions and conflicts occur sometimes or frequently
 - *Frequency of social tensions and conflicts reportedly the highest in Anbar (25%), Duhok (23%), Ninewa and Diyala (18%)*
- 48% of KIs report that people some or most people face HLP issues
 - *Prevalence of HLP issues reportedly the highest in Ninewa (57%), Anbar and Diyala (56%),*
- 23% of KIs assess the protection situation of women as negative
 - *Severity of protection issues affecting women and girls reportedly the highest in Anbar (45%), Diyala (35%), Ninewa (24%)*
- 30% of KIs assess the protection situation of children as negative
 - *Severity of protection issues affecting children reportedly the highest in Anbar (46%), Diyala (39%), Salah al-Din (36%)*

Round 4 is underway and will be concluded on 30 November 2021. Partners are encouraged to consult the online interactive [dashboard](https://data.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/situations/globalprotectioncluster/location/16040?secret=unhcrrestricted) here: <https://data.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/situations/globalprotectioncluster/location/16040?secret=unhcrrestricted>

- **NPC Legal Analysis report** = the Protection Cluster is finalizing a thematic report on access to civil documentation/legal assistance. The first draft was shared for comments with SAG members and other key advocacy organisations/legal partners. The report is expected to be launched at the end of October 2021.

3. AOB

- **REACH – Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment IX – Protection-related findings presentation** = REACH presented the protection and cross-cutting findings of the MCNA IX, 2021. Presentation available on NPC webpage. For further info, please contact Anne FLAKE anne.flake@reach-initiative.org .
- Next NPC meeting to be confirmed.