



Guidance Note on Protection Considerations for Flood Response South Sudan 2019

Background

1. Seasonal rains across various parts of South Sudan have resulted in near-unprecedented floods with a significant impact on the population. Affected areas include the Jonglei plateau, wider River Nile area and the Lol Basin in Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile States respectively. As a result of this natural disaster, areas within these regions, including those recording high returnee influxes, have seen vulnerability reach worrying levels. Access to basic services has been hampered by the floods leaving approximately 900,000 persons of concern, including both refugees and South Sudanese nationals, affected. The increased presence of mixed populations such as returnees and IDPs has exerted pressure on the few services available in these locations, increasing the need for further interventions and exacerbating protection risks. Continued presence of high water in affected locations has hampered humanitarian access and response.

2. As efforts are made to gain an accurate picture of the needs on the ground and humanitarian partners begin responding, this guidance document is intended to provide general protection-related guidance both on key protection concerns and protection considerations for purposes of ICWG flood response.

Key protection concerns, vulnerabilities, and response

3. The floods will have exacerbated the vulnerability of many communities and individuals already significantly negatively impacted by conflict. A lack of access to basic services and both the act of and conditions during displacement, even if only over a relatively short distance, expose individuals to additional protection risks beyond those already being experienced as a result of the armed conflict. Similarly, loss of shelter and overcrowded living conditions in settlement sites would further create exposure to additional protection risks. Key groups potentially with specific needs include female-headed households, child-headed households, older persons, persons with disabilities, members of minority groups, and others.

4. Key protection risks potentially include, but are not limited to, psychosocial distress as a consequence of the shock and disruption in daily routines; breakdown of social fabric and cohesion; separation of children from families or caregivers; increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence; loss of dignity from loss of key clothing items with the potential to lead to restricted mobility for key groups such as women; criminality and violence among or between community members relating to availability of resources and other issues; loss of or damage to civil documentation; unfamiliarity with the terrain creating risks for physical safety and security including from explosive hazards; and flooding creating the potential for exposure of explosive hazards.

5. In addition, loss or continued lack of livelihoods as a consequence of the flooding can lead to negative coping strategies such as the worst forms of child labour; discrimination in food allocation within the family; and child marriage, among others. Housing, land, and property-related issues also have the potential to arise in any situation of displacement, including as a consequence of natural disaster and even if the displacement does not occur over a great distance.

6. Key protection interventions likely to be needed include increased family tracing and reunification; psychosocial support; protective NFIs including solar lamps and dignity kits; comprehensive case management and referrals with specialised services including for GBV and for children; and mine action interventions when waters recede and physical access is restored to affected areas. Registration and documentation for identification and targeting of



persons with specific needs, protection monitoring, best interests determinations, and civil documentation support where relevant will all be considered as part of the protection response.

Protection considerations for non-protection actors

7. In addition to the need for standalone protection interventions, protection mainstreaming within all sectors' flood response will be critical. The four key basic protection mainstreaming principles include ***safety, dignity, and do no harm; meaningful access; accountability; participation and empowerment.***

8. While this document does not aim to provide comprehensive sector-specific guidance on protection mainstreaming, key points which can be taken into consideration by all sectors, together with early recovery and preparedness actors, to support increased attention to protection principles are below.¹

Overarching principles and emergency phase

9. Core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence should be observed at all times.

10. The State has the main role and responsibility to protect and provide humanitarian assistance to natural disaster affected populations. In the event that the capacity of the national government is limited or overwhelmed, however, or for other reasons the Government is unwilling or unable to respond, upon the request of the government the international community can support with provision of humanitarian assistance. In this regard, efforts should be made to strengthen national disaster response mechanisms wherever possible, rather than create parallel mechanisms / processes.

11. It is critical to provide the affected population with accurate, timely, and appropriate information on the available services before and during the emergency phase of flooding and beyond. Make sure information strategies on the relief process target: (1) groups that are difficult to reach, using (2) a variety of media, in (3) all relevant local languages. Make door-to-door calls and employ media used by those with impaired hearing and vision.

12. Consistently and regularly involve and consult the affected population including all relevant groups with consideration to the context-specific vulnerabilities and consider age, gender, and diversity in the planning and response process.

13. It is critical to ensure linkages with and training on the relevant referral pathways/specialised protection partners in any area, to ensure the appropriate attention to protection issues identified by non-protection actors. All actors can be trained in psychological first aid and on the proper approach to ensuring safe referrals. However, ensuring referral of protection issues to specialised protection partners in line with existing guidelines is critical to ensure a do-no-harm approach.

14. All sectors should ensure GBV disclosures are referred to specialised GBV partners in a location in line with the Guidelines and GBV Guiding Principles.²

¹ Source: Global Protection Cluster, Strengthening Protection in Natural Disaster Response Quick Reference Sheet, available in <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/tools-and-guidance/essential-protection-guidance-and-tools/protection-in-natural-disasters-essential-guidance-and-tools/>, at 2-3.

² See GBV Pocket Guide and IASC, Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Action, 2015, available in https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/guidelines_for_integrating_gender_based_violence_interventions_in_humanitarian_action.pdf, at 45.



15. Ensure all implementing agencies and implementing partners involved in distributions have identified the most marginalised groups in the community, the power relations, and the existing specific needs of any group according to age/gender, in order to avoid assistance exacerbating vulnerability. In addition, ensure the consideration of host communities' vulnerabilities and possible needs, including as part of a conflict-sensitive approach.

16. Ensure that distribution mechanisms and modalities for in-kind assistance: (1) respect local customs; (2) supply materials where relevant in easily carried packages; (3) facilitate access by people with limited mobility (by direct delivery, separate distribution points, mobile services); and (4) promote safety and dignity (for example, prevent excessive queuing and overcrowding). Ensure that households headed by women and children, among others, are taken into account in distribution.

17. Ensure safety and confidentiality of spaces for provision of key services and facilities, with gender separation where relevant, and ensure cultural appropriateness of the facilities. Ensure that locations are accessible to all members of the community, taking into account vulnerabilities. Consult with affected community members, in particular women, on the location of the facilities.

18. Consider alternative means of identity verification other than civil documentation where relevant, to ensure increased access to assistance for highly vulnerable community members potentially without documentation.

19. Consider possible land tenure issues and other housing, land, and property concerns, especially those potentially leading to violence, community disputes, or further displacement, when determining locations for shelters, evacuation sites or settlements, and any static facilities.

Early recovery

20. Develop vocational training and micro-credit programmes that target female-headed households and persons with disabilities; facilitate their self-sufficiency and employment.

21. Ensure that livelihood and support programmes (cash- and food-for-work, etc.) include women, persons with disabilities and older persons and address their constraints (by providing part-time, flexible and home-based work where relevant, etc.).

22. Address the causes of child labour (such as loss or lack of livelihoods), for example by offering return-to-school incentives, reducing family indebtedness, or promoting employment of adult family members, providing building skills, etc.

Preparedness/DRR

23. Assess potential emergency shelter sites for physical and social risk, employing multi-sectoral teams and providing support to communities to self-identify safe locations and safe zones based on local understanding. Choose sites on grounds of safety, proximity to potentially affected areas, and access to livelihoods.



24. Ensure that legislation adequately covers all the issues that may arise after a natural disaster.
25. Safeguard birth registration data and HLP records, where relevant (e.g., integrate local data in a central database, update and back up records).
26. Preposition key supplies to provide services that ensure protection of flood-affected populations (such as tents for Women Girls Friendly Spaces, dignity kits, solar lanterns etc.) and develop capacity of front-line service providers to provide psycho-social first aid to flood affected populations.
27. Establish systems to prevent family separation during displacement/evacuation.
28. Conduct gender and vulnerability analysis in flood prone counties as part of preparedness.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

29. While this document does not aim to provide comprehensive guidance on PSEA, in order to reinforce the importance of PSEA planning in any humanitarian setting, a few key points are below.
30. The risk of SEA may come not only from humanitarian staff but also from community members who are supporting victims, especially women and girls.
31. As part of accountability to affected populations, it is critical to establish and reinforce codes of conduct that prohibit staff (and staff of partner agencies and contractors employed by the agencies) from engaging in, promoting, or facilitating any form of sexual exploitation or abuse, and apply strict monitoring, reporting, investigation, and sanction rules.
32. Train all staff and volunteers working in camps on the code of conduct, and ensure staff can be clearly identified.
33. Clear, safe, dignified, and confidential reporting mechanisms must be developed and information on these mechanisms disseminated, including in ways which are accessible for all affected community members.

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