

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

In a context of high forced displacement, many people who are **survivors of violence, trafficking, smuggling or other serious protection risks** do not have clear information about the consequences of violence and how to access urgent care or other services. This situation is intensified when it comes to women, girls, boys, LGBTIQ+¹ persons, people with disabilities and individuals with other specific needs. For this reason, the MENA Community Protection Network is working to bring together and improve the services available to people with specific needs and individuals affected by serious human rights violations.

UNHCR, other UN agencies, local entities, community and grassroots organizations are currently engaged in regional efforts to strengthen **Community-Led Initiatives**, which provide outreach and protection services, targeting refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, and stateless persons, as well as other persons in need of international protection along the displacement cycle across the MENA region.²

The MENA Community Protection Network facilitates the disclosure and identification of international protection needs, specific needs, protection incidents, and serious human rights violations. It aims to ensure access to protection and multisectoral support to the most vulnerable populations by increasing outreach at any particular location, or through activities such as awareness-raising. Such provisions of services must be guaranteed in a manner that underscores the age, gender and diversity (AGD) policy, human rights and community-based approaches in order to foster an environment free of discrimination and persecution, and one that promotes inclusion and access to specialized protection as outlined in this document.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MENA COMMUNITY PROTECTION NETWORK

The MENA Community Protection Network aspires to:

- A. Identify organizations that exist in a geographic area that promote access to protection and support, including:

¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons (LGBTIQ+), or persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

² Community-Led Initiatives refer to organizations that are either entirely established and led by refugees/asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees, or others of concern to UNHCR, or have more than 50% of such populations in positions of leadership and decision making. A community-led organization (CLO) primarily provides advocacy, protection and assistance for communities affected by displacement and/or statelessness. Some, but not all CLOs are officially registered.

1. Protection referrals and case management for people with specific needs, including access to safety whether in shelters or through community-based solutions;
 2. Health care, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS);
 3. Legal assistance in order to access justice and other legal procedures;
 4. Outreach and advocacy, to and with both communities and service providers;
 5. General accommodation or lodging offered or available for displaced persons;
 6. Livelihoods and cash-based interventions;
 7. Other support services (e.g., family tracing and reunification).
- B. Implement services and activities that favor the disclosure and identification of specific needs, protection incidents and of human rights violations in forced displacement contexts, promoting an environment of safety and well-being.
- C. Support the empowerment and resilience of communities and the most vulnerable populations as a fundamental element of the recovery process through the reestablishment of community networks and access to support services
- D. Establish and maintain referral pathways in accordance with the principles of confidentiality and the respect for the wishes and needs of the affected populations. Through outreach, community empowerment, referral and care ensure access to predictable and better-quality services at local, national and transnational level.

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION NETWORK

1. Mapping of organizations and services, coordination of outreach and response to protection risks, with a focus on persons with specific needs.³
2. Increase protection outreach, disclosure of specific needs and case referrals across MENA countries.
3. Capacity building and horizontal learning, sharing policy guidelines, tools, and lessons learned.
4. Awareness raising and identification of protection trends in accordance with UNHCR's data protection policy and guidelines and other applicable protection standards.
5. Tracking of referrals through refugee information systems.
6. Other support activities identified by network members.

NETWORK PARTNERS

The Network consists of organizations providing services through physical spaces, virtual platforms, or mobile units, that:

³ UNHCR uses the term "persons with specific needs" to refer to individuals in an emergency who "face heightened protection risks because of their circumstances or the context" and who thus "face specific barriers due to discrimination, their identity, or other factors that prevent them from fully enjoying their rights or accessing services they need." UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Persons at heightened risk," <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/125333/identifying-persons-with-specific-needs-pwsn>.

1. Work with refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, or other persons in need of international protection.
2. Conduct outreach and/or provide protection and support services directly or through safe and confidential referrals to those services in accordance with a survivor-centered and age, gender and diversity approach.

To be considered for inclusion in the network, organizations must abide by respect for human rights and humanitarian principles, ensure safeguards, engage in community-based approaches, and work to implement measures for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the stages of network expansion across countries in the MENA region, the coordinators⁴ of the community protection network will consult with UNHCR country operations and verify that all inclusion criteria are met before formally inviting organizations to become network members.

ADVISORY GROUP

The Network will also form an advisory group comprised of individuals working with key organizations or stakeholder groups in the MENA region who can guide and inform the development of the network and its activities. The Advisory Group will nominate groups for inclusion in the network, review and advise on Network materials and activities, and assist with linking the MENA Community Protection Network to other relevant networks, services, and actors in the region.

Advisors will have deep contextual knowledge of the MENA region and/or expertise related to community-based protection, community-led initiatives and community networks, international protection, forced displacement in different contexts, trafficking and smuggling, or other relevant domains of experience. Advisors may be selected by network coordinators or nominated by network members.

⁴ Revised as of March 2023