



Protection Working Group

Meeting Details	
Date	<i>13 September 2023</i>
Time	<i>10.00 am – 12.00 am (online)</i>
Chair	<i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator</i> <i>Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugee Rights, Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair</i>
Reporting	<i>Sara Sivkova, Generic Affiliate in Protection, UNHCR</i>
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Agenda	



Welcome & Review of Agenda

1. Introductions/Review of Agenda (10:00-10:05)
2. Situational Updates (10:10 – 10:25)
3. Upcoming information sessions/trainings (10:25 – 10:35)
4. Updates (10:35-11:10)
 - a. RAC Consolidation
 - b. Temporary Protection
 - c. School enrolment of Ukrainian children
5. RRP 2024 planning (11:10-11:30)
6. Review of PWG 2023 Workplan (11:30 - 11:50)
7. AoB (11:50 - 12:00)



Participants			
Andrew Painter, UNHCR	Martina Gastaldello, OHCHR	Ina Rusu, ADRA	Fede Bagolin, WeWorld
Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR	Bianca Miccione, ACTED	Martin Kunze, Youth One World	Oleg Hincu, Palladium/D41 Project
Victor Morari, Ombudsperson Office	Sergei Zubco, IOM	Dmitri Surovtov, IsraAid	Victor Rotaras, Mercy Corps
Scarlett Hawkins, NRC Moldova	Irina Sirbu, IOM	Kudzai Tavarera, ActionAid	Peter Fenoy, HEKS Moldova
Jude Halaseh, NRC	Onyango Makogango, UN Women	Corina Tesu, IMPACT, REACH	Dilnoza Nicolescu, Caritas Moldova
Alina Sava, INTERSOS	Jana Nagnitschenko, UNFPA	Andrei Hincu, CARE & SERA	Romania
Svetlana Bebic, ICRC	Svetlana Jiora, CDA	Meric Balkanli, PIN	
Ines Arnautic, DRC			
Daniele Pedretti, HelpAge			



Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p>Agenda Point 1</p> <p>Welcome & Review of Agenda</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>The PWG co-chair welcomed participants, thanked them for their presence, and encouraged them to attend in person for future meetings, in order to have more engaging discussions. He presented the agenda, and no objections were raised.</p> <p>If any modifications are necessary to minutes of the PWG, please contact: sivkovas@unhcr.org</p>	<p>Agenda presented and agreed</p>



<p>Agenda Point 2 Situational Updates (CDA & INTERSOS)</p> <p><i>Svetlana Jiora, CDA/LCA</i> svetlana.jioara@cda.md</p> <p><i>Alina Sava, Protection Officer, INTERSOS</i> fieldoff.chisinau.moldova@intersos.org</p>	<p>CDA</p> <p>During the reporting period at Palanca BCP, there were 46 asylum seekers (AS), of which 14 crossed the green border illegally. In most instances, those who crossed illegally subsequently sought asylum and were later transported by IGM to Chisinau, where they were permitted to leave the country.</p> <p>There were 54 cases of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), all of which were referred to the Guardianship Authority (GA). CDA reported that in some cases, the GA approached regular bus drivers and authorized them to accompany children traveling within Moldova. However, it is unclear whether there was any follow-up with these bus drivers. A meeting is scheduled to be organized with the GA and UNHCR in Palanca to discuss this practice.</p> <p>The flow of cars in both directions was affected by the security situation in Odesa and surrounding regions, resulting in a medium to small pedestrian flow. As of September 1st, Amici del Bambini concluded their activities at the BCP. Regular buses continued to run without interruption, and seven (7) humanitarian buses organized by NGO Gloria and heading to Bucharest or Constanta, Romania, passed through without interruption.</p> <p>Some refugees were transported to the Maiaki checkpoint in service vehicles. Third-country nationals (TCNs) underwent rigorous checks, and those unable to prove the purpose of their travel to Moldova were not allowed to proceed on their journey. Several individuals arriving in Moldova were subjected to legal fines and stipulations before being allowed entry.</p>	
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At Otaci BCP, five individuals crossed the border illegally but were documented and permitted to continue their journey; only one claimed asylum.

Throughout the reporting period, only three (3) Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) were identified at the BCP. One case involved a 17-year-old child crossing alone during the night, with the guardianship authorities (GA) informed. The child was subsequently returned to Ukraine. A medium flow of cars in both directions and several pedestrians were observed traveling to Mogilev-Podolsk for grocery shopping. Intelligence services were not present during August. Regular buses operated without interruption. TCNs underwent additional checks. Arrivals to Moldova primarily originated from Vinnitsia, Vinnitsa region, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, and other regions of Ukraine.

INTERSOS provided additional updates on the situation at the Palanca Bus Hub. During the reporting period, there were limited refugee arrivals at Palanca Bus Hub, with some days recording no arrivals and generally fewer than 10 people per day. Several refugees arrived on NGO Gloria buses and continued their journey to Romania. Most refugees arrived from various regions of Ukraine, including Odesa, Sumy, Saratov, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Ismail, Kherson, Novgorod, and Kirovograd. The majority chose to stay in Moldova (Chisinau, Criuleni, Congaz, and Palanca), while a few continued to Romania, Germany, Austria, Ireland, the UK, or Poland. Only a few refugees remained in the tent camp for a few days to wait for buses to Romania. The majority of refugees were Ukrainians, with a small number arriving from Armenia and Tajikistan.



An increasing number of Ukrainians were observed returning to Ukraine in anticipation of the new school year to enroll their children in in-person classes. Vulnerable groups included women traveling with multiple children, adults and children with disabilities, adults with severe medical conditions, and the Roma community. Some refugees reported a lack of information about Temporary Protection (TP) and cash assistance in the Transnistrian region, and different refugees preferred to stay there due to lower living costs.

INTERSOS reported on the situation of arrivals from various cities in Ukraine: Arrivals from Odesa noted a more stable situation, with sirens sounding daily. Residents of Odesa relied on a mobile application to receive alerts about incoming danger, as the siren alarm system was not accurate.

Kherson arrivals reported increasing explosions and destruction, with the elderly left in the regions, residing in ruined houses due to limited financial means for reconstruction.

Arrivals from Sumy reported intensified bombings and explosions. Kharkiv arrivals informed about frequent airstrikes and bombings of residential areas, with the region facing significant destruction.

INTERSOS continued to provide information about Temporary Protection (TP) and EU Air Transfer.

Comments & Discussions:

UNHCR reassured that people coming to register for TP at IGM offices would not be fined for lacking legal status. UNHCR encouraged PWG members to motivate their beneficiaries without legal status to register. Additionally,



	<p>UNHCR informed PWG members that if their beneficiaries were fined in such a case, they should inform UNHCR or CDA officials.</p>	
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<p>Agenda Point 3</p> <p>Upcoming information sessions/training</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>The PWG Capacity Building sessions will resume in September. There will be an informative session on Explosive Ordnance Education (EORE) to be facilitated by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) on 22 September.</p> <p>The next session in October will be dedicated to the presentation of the newly appointed Children Ombudsperson and the mandate of their office, followed by the presentation by UNICEF on Access to Social Assistance for families with children who are owners of TP cards and later a session on anti-trafficking. The timing will be shared with the PWG members in the following weeks.</p>	<p>UNHCR to send invitations for the upcoming training sessions.</p>
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<p>Agenda Point 4</p> <p>Updates</p> <p><i>Consolidation of RACs</i></p> <p><i>Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR Co-Chair of Basic Needs Working Group</i></p> <p>cuisana@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>Temporary Protection</i></p> <p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p> <p><i>School Enrolment of Ukrainian Children</i></p> <p><i>Katherine Lampe, Child Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p><i>Co-Chair of the Child Protection Sub-Working Group</i></p>	<p>UNHCR provided updates for the PWG on the Consolidation of RACs</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) has launched the process of consolidating Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) due to the low number of residents and the high maintenance costs associated with their operation. Presently, there are 53 active RACs accommodating around 2500 refugees. The MLSP intends to close around 20 RACs at the end of 2023. The RACs are being closed based on the groups they were assigned to – groups A, B, C, D and E. Each group has two-month to relocate the residents to another location before the RAC is officially closed.</p> <p>UNHCR is currently coordinating the Multifunctional Team (MFT) visits that go to specific RACs to inform and assist residents during the consolidation process, offering options for relocation. In cooperation with the Basic Need Sub-Working Group (BSWG), the SOPs were created to provide guidance on how to conduct the RAC visits. The MFT includes existing partners at the location, such as the protection partner and the rental assistance partner. The MFT provides information on conditions and procedures for enrolling in the cash-for-rent program. Part of the team is an MHPSS partner who provides aid in relieving stress. The Roma Task Force and Age and Disability Task Force are supporting the MFTs with the case management and identification of alternative accommodation for beneficiaries with special needs.</p> <p>The development of the RAC Consolidation process is as follows: the RACs in Group A are closing and will enter the next phase, the decommissioning. The biggest RACs closing this year are the Patria LukOil, the Hotel Zarea (Chisinau), and Dumbrava Alba (Balti). The MFT are now in the process of visiting the RACs from group C and the Group D visits will start in October.</p>	
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<p>lampe@unhcr.org</p>	<p>In some RACs, there was confusion about the relocation to informal RACs due to MLSP not providing support in the relocation of refugees to informal RACs. In some RACs to be closed, a financial arrangement has been implemented, the residents are required to pay for a rent to remain in the RAC after its official closing.</p> <p>It was arranged with MLSP that the green line will not refer refugees to the RACs that are to be closed.</p> <p>Temporary Protection (TP)</p> <p>The Commission on Exceptional Situations on 4th September issued a decision that allows refugees to self-declare the proof of residence when registering for TP. This should significantly simplify the registration process for many refugees who had difficulties submitting the proof of residence documentation. Refugees can now use the self-declaration link available on the IGM website.</p> <p>As of now around 16500 TP cards have been issued. The IGM is sharing the latest statistics on the number of person with TP or any legal status in Moldova such as asylum, permanent residence permit or other type of protection on their Facebook page.</p> <p>UNHCR encourages the PWG members to share this new development with their beneficiaries.</p> <p>Last week the Commission on Coordination of Asylum and Migration, chaired by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, hosted a meeting to evaluate the last six months of implementation of TP. The key discussion points were about the latest decision that simplifies the TP registration process, followed by the discussion on penalties for those who fall out of status and re-entering Moldova. Another meeting will be held to discuss the penalties for those who fall out of status and their access to the territory.</p>	
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<p>School Enrolment</p> <p>The Ministry of Education launched new instructions on the procedures on the enrolment of Ukrainian children into Moldovan schools. The instruction unifies the enrolment procedure for all Ukrainian children in Moldova.</p> <p>The key points from the instruction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Ukrainian children regardless of their status can be enrolled in Moldovan schools• The required documents to enrol children in schools are: the official ID of the caregiver; the child’s ID or birth certificate; and the medical record of the child (which can be obtained by family doctor in Moldova)• If the child has no school record available, the schools will conduct placement tests to determine the grade (based on education level there is a specific criteria/testing)• Application form to enrol the child into the Moldovan school (available on the website of the Ministry)• Children who prefer to continue their studies online can use the Tech Labs (now around 100 Tech Labs in Moldova) or any room provided by the school with an internet connection. <p>UNHCR informed that currently, the enrolment number of Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools remains low.</p> <p>Children of other nationalities were not included in the instruction nonetheless; the Ministry is developing a separate document to encompass this group of children.</p> <p>Comments & Discussions</p> <p>CDA informed on the TP registration of separated children who come from mixed marriages where one parent is a Moldovan citizen. Such a group of</p>	
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	<p>children accompanied by their relatives can register for TP. The guardianship authorities can intervene if the child needs legal representation in Moldova to apply for TP.</p> <p>NRC inquired about the changes regarding the self-declaration of the residence as it is linked to criminal liability and if there were some cases of false statements. UNHCR informed that, so far no such cases have been encountered and that if the beneficiaries need to change their statement they can inform the IGM about the change in address.</p> <p>HelpAge representatives asked about the development of the NCUM monitoring tool focusing on the needs of refugees. UNHCR explained that there should be a follow-up meeting held to discuss progress on this tool.</p> <p>OHCHR query on TP card holders who travel outside Moldova over the limit of 45 days. UNHCR informed that only two such cases were encountered so far and were handled on an individual basis. IGM is in the process of reviewing the 45-day limit for the new launch of the TP renewal in March 2024.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 5 <i>RRP 2024 planning</i></p> <p><i>Diego Nardi, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer UNHCR</i></p> <p>nardid@unhcr.org</p>	<p>UNHCR inter-agency coordinator presentation on the Refugee Response Plan 2024</p> <p>UNHCR has a mandate to provide international protection to refugees and to support the efforts of host governments by seeking funding for and coordinating assistance provided by the many stakeholders outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).</p> <p>A Refugee Response Plan (RRP) is an inter-agency planning, coordination and fundraising tool which contributes to operationalizing the Refugee</p>	<p>UNHCR will share the invitation for the upcoming 2024 RRP Consultation.</p>



<p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i></p> <p>painter@unhcr.org</p>	<p>Coordination Model. It is designed to support host government responses to refugee situations through international solidarity.</p> <p>The RRP includes the response delivered by UN Agencies, civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the country. This goes from humanitarian assistance to medium-term responses focused on resilience and solutions.</p> <p>Budgets of all organizations providing assistance (appealing partners) to refugees and affected host community in the country should be included. Budget for inter-agency or agency activities on cross-cutting priorities should also be included. Funding Requirements by all partners are expected to decrease compared to the 2023 Refugee Response Plan.</p> <p>Who can appeal under the RRP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizations formally registered in Moldova• Organizations abiding to international humanitarian standards• Operational footprint and capacity• Organizations actively participating in RCF coordination forums. <p>2024 RRP Planning Parameters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refugees have effective access to legal status, protection, and rights in host countries• Refugees with specific needs and vulnerabilities have access to targeted support and assistance• Refugees' socio-economic inclusion in their host communities is strengthened and their self-reliance increased• The social cohesion between refugee and host communities is reinforced <p>2024 RRP Cross Cutting Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government ownership at national and municipal level.• Maintaining emergency capacities due to volatile situation in Ukraine.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation by local and national CSOs. • Age, Gender and Diversity considerations across the refugee response. • Accountability to Affected People (AAP). • Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. <p>The RCF Sectors will collaborate with Line Ministries to conduct sector workshops with partners. The aim is to jointly establish sector priorities, which will include defining outcomes, objectives, indicators, and planning figures. This process will facilitate the development of Sector Strategies, which will subsequently guide partners in the submission of their projects. The final draft of Moldova RRP 2024 should be introduced by the end of November.</p> <p>Comments & Discussions</p> <p>OHCHR inquired on the registration of the organization from the Transnistrian region if they are obliged to register on the right side of the bank to take part in the RRP Consultation. UHNCR informed that it mostly cooperates with the organizations from the right side of the bank. If an organization from the left side of the bank wishes to take part, it shall be discussed case by case.</p> <p>OHCHR asked about how the caseload of refugees is determined. UNHCR calculated the figures by taking into consideration the percentage of returnees to Ukraine and the stabilization of the overall situation.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 6 <i>Review of PWG 2023 Workplan</i></p>	<p>The PWG Work Plan includes activities of all members of the PWG in the humanitarian operational partners intervening in the protection sector, be they government, governmental organizations, or non-governmental organizations (including national and international).</p> <p>The PWG Work Plan 2023 includes the Work Plan Objectives such as:</p>	<p>UNHCR to re-circulate the Survey of interests in the topic and Contingency Planning.</p>



<p><i>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR</i> painter@unhcr.org</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enhance protection coordination and collaboration among protection partners, including within and across other Working Groups (WG), Sub-Working Groups (SWG) and Task Forces (TF) within the Refugees Coordination Forum framework.2. Advance thematic priorities for the protection sector3. Engage in advocacy efforts and strengthen support for key stakeholders, including government institutions, donor partners, and civil society organizations <p>The Work Plan 2023 includes key areas of work, planned results, specific activities and outputs, result timeframe (separated per Quarter) and focal point.</p> <p>The PWG Work Plan 2023 was shared last week with the PAG members for their edits and proposals. The recommendations were to put more attention to the promotion of social cohesion among refugee and host communities as well as strengthening the involvement of refugee-led organizations by inviting them to be members of the PAG. Another suggestion is to lead quarterly meetings with leads of PWG SWGs and TFs and to participate more in meetings of other WGs, SWGs and TFs. Another recommendation is to put more focus on monitoring progress towards sector indicators in RRP.</p> <p>On Advocacy activities, two Protection Briefs on Older Refugees and Persons with Disabilities created by the Age and Disability Task Force were disseminated among the PWG members. In the next phase, Protection Briefs on legal assistance, social cohesion, and Roma refugees will be prepared by the Task Forces.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 7 <i>AOB</i></p>	<p>The PWG members were informed about the upcoming People’s Advocate Office International Conference to be held on 27 and 28 October.</p>	



Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Information collection and relevant links

Moldova operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe: The Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive - Six Months On (October 2022)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/unhcr-regional-bureau-europe-implementation-temporary-protection-directive-six-months-october-2022>

If necessary, feel free to add extra rows in the matrix above.