

## National PWG Meeting Minutes

**Theme:** Protection Mainstreaming

**Time & Location:** Tuesday, 25 August 2020 / WebEx

**Chair:** Lara Özügergin – Assistant Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

**Participants:** AAR Japan, ASAM, CARE International, Charity and Solidarity Foundation, COGEL, Concern Worldwide, DRC, Expertise France, FAO, GOAL, Göçmen Dayanışma Derneği, Hope Revival, HRDF, IBC, IDA, IFRC, IGAM, IOM, JCCP, KADAV, KAOS GL, Mavi Kalem, MSYD, MSYDD, MUDEM, Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği, Pozitif Yaşam Derneği, Refugee Rights Turkey, Small Projects Istanbul, STL, TIAFI, TRC, Uluslararası Göçmen Kadınlarla Dayanışma Derneği, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WALD, WATAN, WHH, Yeryüzü Doktorları Derneği.

### Meeting Agenda:

- I. Introduction and Updates
- II. Updates by UNHCR PDU: Border Trends and Social Tension Incidents
- III. Discussion on Protection Mainstreaming
- IV. AoB

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### Agenda Item #1: Introduction and Updates

- **3RP Planning 2021-2022:** Planning timeline and parameters to be finalized by Syria Response Group (SRG). Subsequent to SRG endorsement, there will be a dedicated Syria Task Force (STF) meeting which will start the planning process as of early September. Inter-sectoral and sectoral consultations (both national and field) will start mid-September and will wrap up early October. First Planning Workshop with the Government will be held mid-October, after which partners will submit their proposals and log frames. By early November, submissions will be made to the regional office and the plan will be presented in November to the Government of Turkey for final endorsement. The modalities of planning events, including consultations, will depend on COVID developments and updates will be shared with the PWG.
- **Protection Sector Needs Assessment:** The finalized report for Round 1 of the rapid needs assessment was shared with sector members along with a dashboard inclusive of the dataset. The analysis report captures a detailed analysis of existing data. Round 2 of the needs assessment will hopefully start early September. IA/IM will be reaching out to the same agencies engaged in the first round to see interest, however other partners are also highly encouraged to support the process via conducting interviews. The questionnaire will be revised per feedback received through Round 1, following which sampling will be determined.
- **UNHCR SGBV Key Messages:** UNHCR is developing SGBV key messages for refugee communities, for which a draft document was also shared with the PWG for feedback. Partner inputs were relayed to UNHCR and the document has been finalized. Community consultations on the messages are ongoing in the field, and once these are finalized a UNHCR protection

colleague will join the PWG to introduce the process. PWG sector partners' support in dissemination of these messages is highly important and will be greatly appreciated.

- **Ongoing efforts of the Legal Counsellors Group (LCG):** Based in Gaziantep, the LCG is a coordination platform under the Southeast PWG. Members include lawyers and legal counsellors within I/NGOs. The LCG is currently finalizing guidance on the Data Protection Law in Turkey. The guidance will include a standardized consent form as well as information on how to obtain informed consent during COVID-19, as many organizations continue to deliver services through virtual platforms.
  - **Action Point:** Once the LCG finalized guidance on the Data Protection Law in Turkey, they will be kindly requested to present an overview in an upcoming PWG meeting.
- **UNHCR Country Origin Information (COI) Bulletins:** UNHCR has been preparing periodic and thematic COI bulletins as part of efforts to support the national RSD procedures for fair and quality decisions. Information is available for 13 countries and is gathered a comprehensive research via several publicly available and reliable sources.
  - **Action Point:** Protection Coordinator to share brief survey on UNHCR's COI bulletins to identify focal points from organizations interested in receiving the periodic and thematic bulletins.
- **WHH** is extending the rental support provided in Gaziantep to Kilis and Mardin. Emergency cash assistance programme was started one month ago. Winterization activities are also planned to target 2-3 thousand families.
  - **Action Point:** Once available, WHH to share additional information on rental support, emergency cash assistance and winterization programmes, including target groups, intake/eligibility criteria, referral pathways with PWG via Protection Coordinator.
- **ICMC** has started gradual and flexible return to office. Resettlement to US and select EU countries has resumed, so they are receiving refugees in the office.

## Agenda Item #2: Updates by UNHCR PDU on Border Trends and Social Tension

UNHCR Policy Development Unit (PDU) delivered a presentation on border updates and social/criminal incidents. Details are shared through the PowerPoint, and highlights are outlined below:

### Border Trends

- In the Western sea borders, in July a slight decrease of apprehensions was observed in comparison to June. At the sea borders of Turkey, there has been a 28% decrease in overall numbers in 2020 as of 31<sup>st</sup> July, in comparison to the same period in 2020.
- Highest number of apprehensions were composed of Afghans, followed by Syrians, Congolese and Somalis in 2020. In July there was a change in nationality breakdown, with Syrians ranking the most common nationality with a 177% increase, followed by Afghans. In July the significant decrease in number of Afghans of 62% decrease, mainly due to the weather conditions in Çanakkale – which is the most preferred route.
- The interception numbers are significantly lower when compared to 2019.

- Izmir represents the highest number of apprehensions at sea.
- Sea arrivals to Greece also showed a significant decrease when compared to the same period in 2019. Decreasing trends in arrivals to Greece has been the case for some months now due to the COVID situation and border control measures implemented by Greek authorities .
- In the Western land borders, apprehensions have remained quite low, and significantly lower compared to last year. The same decrease is observed for land arrivals to Greece.
- According to TCG official statements on push back incidents, there has been a decrease in July compared to the previous month. Push backs followed by UNHCR through partners have recorded physical harm and confiscation of personal belongings.
- Overall trends in July demonstrate strict border controls by Greece and Bulgaria as well as push backs as a deterrent factor.
- Apprehensions across country of irregular migrants have shown a 62% decrease compared to the previous year. The nationality breakdown is similar with Afghans being the majority followed by Syrians.
- At the Syrian border, apprehensions have dropped significantly as of April 2020.

### Social Tension

- Social tension incidents have accumulated in February and March 2020, following the Pazarkule incidents (17 out of 19 recorded incidents). The incidents were also seen in provinces that usually such incidents are not reported frequently during February-March period. Incidents included attacks against businesses and houses as well as random attacks in public areas, mostly towards Syrians. Governorates banned gatherings and warned of judicial action against perpetrators in order to mitigate risks of social tension in this specific period.
- The situation has significantly calmed down following March due to limited interaction between refugees and host communities with the COVID pandemic. A significant increase of social tensions has been observed when compared to 2019.
- Initial months of the pandemic demonstrated positive coverage on refugees in media and social media. However negative sentiments on refugees spreading the pandemic were also recorded.
- PDU continues monitoring the media, as well as communicating with partners and field offices on trends in social tension. Socio-economic challenges experienced by refugees and host community as a result of pandemic may influence tensions.
- [The National Strategy on Harmonization and Action Plan](#) has been published on DGMM's website.

### Q&A

- **How are social tension incidents categorized?** PDU classifies incidents as social tensions as those involving two groups at large, with the main reasons and motivation being fear, hatred, threats (e.g. attacks by entire neighbours to Syrian businesses at larger scale) towards the “other group and criminal incidents as individual. There is not a criteria necessarily on the scale of social

tension incidents which would allow such categorization, rather, the circumstances of each incidents and motivations behind is looked into.

- **Are readmissions taking place in 2020 after Pazarkule and COVID-19?** Returns within the scope of 18 March Statement between EU and Turkey have stopped due to measures taken on COVID. Situation is still the same and since March 2020, no new returns were recorded from Greece.
- **What happens to individuals apprehended at the Turkey-Syria border?** Access to persons apprehended at the Turkey-Syria border is very difficult by all stakeholders. However procedurally, apprehended individuals by law enforcement are referred to PDMMs for further processing.
- **What is the situation at Eastern Borders?** Apprehension figures by Turkish Land Forces (TLF) at the Iranian border is quite low since the beginning of the year. According to TLF statistics, 103 persons were apprehended between 1 January-24 August 2020 at this border. Despite low official figures, UNHCR’s monitoring suggests that there is higher mobility in this area, yet the scale is not known.
- **Is there any information on quarantine practices at various removal centers?** Removal centers continue to implement measures as announced by the Government of Turkey during the COVID-19 period.
- **For social tension incidents, what mitigation measures are taken by local actors and humanitarian workers?** Mitigation measures differs between actors and provinces, based on the nature of the incidents and levels of tension between communities. However, in general, UNHCR continues to work closely with authorities towards prevention as well as remedial actions for those who are affected.
- UNHCR PDU highlighted the importance of receiving timely information from field colleagues in relation to social tension incidents as well as border incidents. PWG was informed that IA/IM is currently working on a Protection Situation Tracking Tool that aims to capture verified information in a systematic and structured manner, in relation to thematic issues (including but not limited to continuous registration, access to civil documentation, border incidents, access to services etc.). The tool will aim to inform advocacy efforts of national and local level stakeholders on challenges and barriers faced by refugee communities.
  - **Action Point:** Once IA/IM finalize the Protection Situation Tracking Tool, it will be presented to the PWG for feedback. Once feedback is collected, the tool will be finalized and rolled-out in the sector.

### Agenda Item #3: Discussion on Protection Mainstreaming

Protection Coordinator delivered a presentation on protection mainstreaming efforts. The presentation included an overview on why protection mainstreaming is prioritized for the PWG, tentative proposals on activities and deliverables as identified by the Protection Coordination team, information on the protection mainstreaming training and package. Details are available through the PowerPoint shared via email.

- Participants suggest that the protection mainstreaming trainings be held in different languages.

- Food Security and Agriculture Coordinator validated the need for such efforts and suggested that guidance on incorporating protection principles and considerations in the programme cycle management should be prioritized. This was echoed by other participants who suggested that per sector, risk identification (on the programmatic level) can be carried out.
- Protection-sensitive referrals by non-protection actors to protection partners should be prioritized.
- During the training or as part of the mainstreaming package, guidance on the national legal framework in Turkey should be included.

## AoB

- The next meeting will focus on 3RP planning for which date will be shared by the coordinator once the 3RP timeline is finalized. The PWG meeting will take place tentatively in mid-September.

## Action Points

- Once the LCG finalized guidance on the Data Protection Law in Turkey, they will be kindly requested to present an overview in an upcoming PWG meeting.
- Protection Coordinator to share brief survey on UNHCR's COI bulletins to identify focal points from organizations interested in receiving the periodic and thematic bulletins.
- Once available, WHH to share additional information on rental support, emergency cash assistance and winterization programmes, including target groups, intake/eligibility criteria, referral pathways with PWG via Protection Coordinator.
- Once IA/IM finalize the Protection Situation Tracking Tool, it will be presented to the PWG for feedback. Once feedback is collected, the tool will be finalized and rolled-out in the sector.