

National Protection Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Time & Location: Monday, 20 June 2022, 11.00-12.30 hrs / Zoom

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

Participants: AID, CARE, CONCERN, DDD, DRC, Eksi-25 Association, Expertise France, GIZ, GOAL, HIHFAD, HRDF, IBC, ICMPD, IGAM, IKGV/HRDF, IOM, JCCP-REALS, KADAV, KAOS GL, Leader Woman Association, LEAP, MAAN, Mavi Kalem, Migrant Solidarity Association, Migration Health Center, MSYD, MUDEM, Refugee Rights Turkey, SEVKAR, SGDD-ASAM, SPI, STL, TRC, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, Van İşitme Engelliler ve Aileleri Derneği, Violet Organization, WALD, WATAN, WHH, World Vision

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Introduction and Announcements
- II. Syrian Registration Address Verification

Agenda Item #1: Introduction and Announcements

- Following the recent developments related to address verification exercise and the new registration procedure for Syrians administered by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), an ad hoc National Protection Working Group meeting is convened on June 20, where UNHCR will be briefing National PWG members on these developments, followed by a discussion on potential impact for communities.
- 3RP Protection and Livelihoods Sectors have planned, per the request of the sector partners, a series of joint meetings to take place with an aim of having in-depth discussions around the issues of protection mainstreaming in the livelihoods sector, strengthening referral mechanisms and overall collaboration between the two sectors. The first joint meeting of the series was held on April 28, 2022. The second meeting of the series, as previously announced, will be held as an in-person full-day Workshop in Ankara on June 30. The registration process for the Workshop is finalized as of today. Following the Workshop, a detailed report including an overview of discussions from the Workshop will be published and shared widely with PwG members and other relevant stakeholders such as the Syria Task Force and donors.

Agenda Item #2: Syrian Registration Address Verification

- UNHCR Policy Development Unit delivered a presentation focused on the overview of the new policy released by PMM on Syrian registration and general updates on address verification, which will be made available via email.
- The new policy is in effect across the country as of 6 June 2022 and the PMM has sent instructions to 81 governorates on June 3. The legal basis of this new policy is the Temporary Protection Regulation and detailed information can be found in article 17 (entering Turkey and



referral centers for those enter Turkey and looking for temporary protection); article 23 (regulation of the temporary accommodation centers); article 24 (exceptions for residing in provinces in exceptional cases); article 33 (obligations of the persons).

- In summary, registration will take place at the 'referral centers' / TACs. Subject to exceptions, newcomers or unregistered Syrians will be referred to TACs and will be required to stay at the TACS until their security checks are completed. TP ID cards will be issued only for those whose security checks are completed positively.
- Syrians who have been detected recently by law enforcement without any ID documents, registration, and residence permit documentation have been/will be referred to the TACs for registration and will stay at the TACs. There is no available information on the length of the stay at the TACs at the moment. Depending on the scale of referrals to TACs (noting the limited capacity of the TACs), possible referrals of individuals who are staying at the TACs to the provinces can take place; however, no information is available on this procedure.
- Registration by PDMMs (including the neighborhoods that are closed for registration) will be possible only for the exceptional categories which are stated below:
 - Newborns, children, dependent children over the age of 18, and spouses who can furnish an official marriage certificate of foreigners under temporary protection (those already residing in the provinces),
 - Those for whom there is a medical impediment to travel and those who are not able to perform self-care,
 - Spouses, who can furnish a civil marriage certificate, children, dependent children over the age of 18 of Turkish nationals, and foreign nationals who are residing in Turkey with a residence permit, work permit, or under international protection,
 - Those who are deemed not suitable to be accommodated in a temporary accommodation center due to their special needs and their spouses, dependent children who have attained maturity, and children under the age of 18,
 - Those deemed appropriate by the Presidency of Migration Management to be granted temporary protection and permission to reside in provinces.
- If a Syrian national approaches PDMM after the 6th of June, unless the individual does not fall under the exceptional category, PDMM will only take/check the fingerprint of the individual and notify PMM. Travel permit will be issued by PMM and referral of the individual to the TACs will be realized accordingly via accompaniment of law enforcement (noting that the referral may be done without the accompaniment of the law enforcement according to articles 17 and 24).
- At the TACs, the pre-registration procedure will be commenced. If the person was not referred by PDMMs, fingerprints will be taken. A registration document will be issued (valid until the



security check process is resolved), and the security check process will be initiated following the fingerprinting. Individuals will be notified of the compulsory stay at the TACs. Once the security check is completed, TP ID Card will be issued if the security check is resolved positively. Even though the individuals are issued with TP ID Card, at the moment, they will be required to stay at the TACs unless a compelling or exceptional issue is identified.

- Syrians whose IDs were deactivated after address verification (due to not being found at the declared address, failed to approach PDMM upon several calls) are not subject to this implementation. They will continue to approach to PDMMs for re-activation of their ID cards upon successful submission of required documents.
- The initial referrals will be done to the 4 TACs in Adana, Kilis, Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye.
- Persons with specific needs, including persons with a disability of forty percent or more; individuals who may require care from others for a disease such as SMA, ALS, or cancer; who have mental health conditions such as schizophrenia (as they may need treatment or have special needs) will not be referred to TACs. In the case of referrals of persons with specific needs to the TACs and later identification in the TACs, the PMM will take a decision on the next steps.
- UNHCR strongly emphasized the importance of informing individuals on these recent developments to avoid any possible confusion and misinformation.
- With regards to the address verification exercise, a timeline of the process/overview was provided during the presentation, which is accessible in the presentation on slide number 6.
- Reactivation continues across PDMMs and individuals whose IDs have been deactivated can still approach to PDMMs. There has been no announcement with regards to the deadline for reactivating the ID cards.
- The required documents for reactivation of the ID are listed as follows: lease agreement and/or utility bills. Notarized versions are not required other than in exceptional cases such as where the person cannot submit utility bills/ lease agreements. Some PDMMs may accept a statement by the landlord or the neighbors which then needs to be notarized.
- Registration of address in the closed neighborhoods – if the person can submit the lease agreement/ utility bills showing the residence in the closed neighborhood before the closure (February 2022), they can register the address in this neighborhood.
- Prioritization of some groups for reactivation (noting that this may not be a regular practice) is noted as ESSN beneficiaries, persons with special needs.

Discussion Points:

- Before the new policy introduced on June 6th, the registration document of newcomers were valid for 30 days and security checks were conducted in parallel. Regardless of the results of



security checks, individuals received a TP ID card at the end of 30 days. However, accordingly, with the new policy issued by PMM, the registration documents do not have 30 days of validity and it will be valid until the security check procedure is completed. If the security check results positively, then the individuals will be issued with a TP ID card.

- Since ESSN beneficiaries have a risk of losing their ESSN (in the case of not showing a valid address), they are being prioritized by PDMMs for the ID reactivation process.
- With regards to the exceptional cases, especially on “visible disability” and persons with specific needs, individuals who do not have a medical report (due to the lack of individual documentation as they are unregistered and cannot access services, including medical documentation), may be referred to the TACs. However, once they acquire a medical report stating their disability or special needs, their situation will be re-evaluated. UNHCR, for these types of cases, is strongly advocating with PMM for protection desks to become operational in the TACs and activated as soon as possible to monitor the situation and take action on such needs that may arise.
- Individuals who have been residing in Turkey for some time, individuals who are not registered, those who applied to PDMM for registration for whom interview processes are ongoing may also be considered under this new policy.
- Even if the individuals are issued with TP IDs following the positive security checks, they are expected to reside in the TACs at the moment. Noting the total capacity of available TACs (around 50.000), the occupancy rate will be quite high depending on the scale of referrals. PMM will decide how to manage the capacity of TACs and/or some individuals may be referred to provinces based on an assessment. However, this is not still determined by PMM.
- Concerns have been raised with regards to the reactivation of the IDs, especially in the closed neighborhoods for registration. If there is a constant rejection by PDMMs, relevant NGOs need to follow up on the issue closely so as to bring to the attention of PDMMs. If the problem remains unresolved, partners are encouraged to reach out to Protection Coordinators for further advocacy (at the field and national levels) of UNHCR to bring the attention of PMM to possible individual cases and specific needs.
- Concerns have been raised with regards to the family reunification processes as individuals, in some cases, are not granted travel permission either from e-devlet or from PDMM. UNHCR emphasized the importance of collecting data and information on such cases and compiling it under the categories to further advocate with PMM.
- In some press statements, there was a speech about refusing to issue a TP for those new coming from Damascus and southern areas since they are considered economic migrants. After confirming with PMM, there is no special policy implemented for individuals who arrive from Damascus. They will be also referred to TACs for registration if they are currently not registered with PDMMs.
- Public information notes for communities, at the moment, has not been published by PMM.



- **Action Point:** A guidance note, similar to the one prepared for the Address Verification exercise, can be prepared by UNHCR based on observations in the field, and widely circulated to PwG members.
- **Action Point:** Observations from the field with regards to the challenges faced in practice and how this new policy affects different groups will be relayed to several inter-sectoral working groups including the senior management for further advocacy with the authorities. PwG members are kindly asked to relay their observations to the PwG chair.
- For unaccompanied children (who are also included under the persons with specific needs category), if identified, the regular practice of referring them to PDoFSS will be carried out. For separated children, since there is no definition of it by law and they are not included under the persons with specific needs category per se) identification and kinship of the family member should be done in a careful manner and referral of those children may happen to the TACs. The situation of separated children should be monitored closely.
 - **Action Point:** If there are any counter-observations in the case of unaccompanied children being referred to the TACs instead of PDoFSS, please do share such observations with the PwG chair.
- Suspension of granting permission for Eid-visits will continue.

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- If there are any counter-observations in the case of unaccompanied children being referred to the TACs instead of PDoFSS, please do share such observations with the PwG chair.
