



Meeting Minutes & Report			
Chair person	Elisabetta Brumat	Venue	UNHCR, LEA building
Co-chair person	MOSA	Date	23 April 2014
Minutes/report by	Toni Ayrouth / E. Brumat	Time	10:00AM - 12:30PM
Main Organisations attending	ALEF, CARE, CLMC, ECHO, HA, HI/Help Age, IOM, IRAP, IRC, IRD, MC, MAG, MOSA, NRC, LHIF, OCHA, Oxfam UK, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, URDA, SFCG, WVI, and WRF Details on Participants: (see annex A)		

Introduction / Administrative matters

- Minutes of 19th March PWG meeting previously circulated for comments amongst participants were approved.
- The TORs of the PWG at the national level, under discussion and open for comments since 19th February, were approved. They integrate the minor changes received from one actor of the DaOAWG by the last date for comments set on 28th March. ToRs can be changed over time if the PWG considers this appropriate. The Core Group structure was discussed and approved already in the March 19th meeting, with the possibility for rotation of members in six-month time.
- A snapshot on the progress for the PWGs in the field was provided. Due to the number of participants, PWGs have not opted for the creation of Core Groups. Co-lead solutions are largely foreseen on a rotational basis. DRC is currently co-leading the PWG in Zahle and NRC in Tyre. There have been initial expressions of interest in Qubayat (DRC and NRC) and Mount Lebanon (IRC and NRC) that still need to be confirmed in the next meetings. Numerous PWGs in the field have created technical groups amongst legal partners for more in-depth analysis on legal issues, discussion and coordination of field activities (e.g. coverage of legal awareness sessions).
- Activity Info currently sees the participation and inputs from 16 organizations reporting for protection activities. The disaggregation by gender has also improved. More efforts to report also on PWD /OP is required in the indicator on PWSN.

Update on the RRP6 revision process

- The chair recalled the information already disseminated to the Sector partners on processes and deadlines. Several organizations have already communicated their Focal Points that will liaise with the Sector coordinator for the submission revision. Guidelines and material has been sent. Key messages highlighted:
 - Agencies will only provide financial submissions for activities that are funded bilaterally. Activities implemented through arrangements with UN agencies will be included by the UN agency in its submission.
 - RRP6 agencies with no funding so far in 2014 are discouraged from increasing their budget/appeal. Any increase will need to be justified and taking into account the implementation capacity during July to December.
 - New partners can appeal only if within sector priorities, identified needs, activities not already implemented by other partners in the area.

Action For PWG national: appealing agencies who did not yet submit their Focal Points are encouraged to do it as soon as possible since the deadline for the revised submission is 9th May and earlier submissions are encouraged.

Topic of the Month: The Consequences of Limited Legal Status for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon	Presenter: Elsa Bousquet - NRC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a pilot exercise conducted in Arsal and Whadi Khaled in December 2013, NRC presented the main results from a recent study on the impact of the lack/expiration of legal stay permits for refugees in Lebanon. A presentation already occurred with a selected group of donors and protection actors in mid-April. The survey targeted some 1,256 refugees in the North and Bekaa regions and – to a lesser extent - in the South (largely due to procedural requirements by municipalities that might have affected the confidentiality of the survey). 471 respondents were considered for individual interviews, informing the quantitative analysis, while 829 participated in group discussions. 	

- The presentation included highlights from the report on:
 - Procedures for obtaining and renewing the stay-in visa, including for refugees that entered into Lebanon through irregular crossing;
 - findings on the % of refugees with expired permits (52.3% of respondents)
 - causes for non-renewal of residency permits (85% of respondents did not renew due to costs).
 - challenges faced in terms of enjoyment of rights, with specific reference to freedom of movement, highlighted as the biggest challenges with consequent impact on access to services; access to justice and civil documentation; and access to other services including registration.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO THE ATTACHED PRESENTATION

Main PWG discussion:

- PWG members recognized the critical issue of the legal stay permits and the importance of continuous advocacy. Several results of the survey are in line with other findings (e.g. results of thematic reports during registration).
- The data on irregular border crossing were discussed in light of the nation-wide UNHCR registration data findings (12.5% of refugees reported to enter through irregular crossing). Some participants attributed the difference to the geographical sampling (prevalence of interviews in North and East), although the geographical scope was expanded from the previous survey.
- PWG members agreed that freedom of movement is the key obstacles from where most of the limitation of enjoyment of rights stem from. The issue of self-restrain of movements, also in the absence of specific incidents personally affecting the respondents, was highlighted. It was however recognized that this has the same effects of freedom of movement and therefore the enjoyment of rights.
- The PWG recognized the importance to continue advocacy at all possible levels and share information on the results. High-level advocacy is already ongoing from refugee-mandated organizations such as UNHCR and UNRWA. The recent meeting with donors and protection actors, where the findings of the report were presented, also provided an opportunity to attract the attention of some of the major donors for parallel advocacy efforts.
- It was also recognized that a possible point for advocacy was the reduction of the fees to a nominal level, so as to put refugees in a condition to pay them and permit the regularization/renewal.

<p>Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy</p>	<p>For PWG national</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to use all possible channels, including the PWG co-chaired by MOSA to bring to the attention of the Government representatives the negative effects of the current regime for acquisition/ renewal of the legal stay permits. Possible development of joint UN/INGO advocacy ▪ Strengthen data collection and trend analysis on refugees freedom of movement (check points, arrest etc)
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1) Access to Territory (new arrivals, border monitoring)

<p>Follow up on previous action point</p>	
<p>New Issues & trends Action taken</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports from the PWGs in the field (Bekaa, Akkar and Tripoli) did not highlight significant changes in access to territory up to the day of the meeting, although the situation is monitored closely given recent signals from the Government. Bekaa PWG continues to report cases of refusal of access for damaged documents, lack of document (especially when children below 15 are not recorded on Passports, family booklets or family civil extracts) as well as cases of Syrian refugees returning to Lebanon and stopped due to lack/ loss of records from the GSOs. ▪ UNRWA continues to highlight the already more restrictive practice for PRS, limited to specific categories of individuals (with first degree family member in Lebanon; with embassy appointment, ticket and visa to onward destination; students; employees of companies /UN, with medical appointment in Lebanon) ▪ PWG Bekaa reports that earlier indications on the introduction of a new Syrian passport and the obligatory possession of this document to be allowed by the Syrian authorities to cross the

	border have not materialized.	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG s in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWG in the field to alert PWG Beirut on changes.
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In light of the evolving situation, PWG members to reinforce liaison with the field / presence at the order to signal restrictive changes.

2) Access to Registration (UNHCR, Municipalities, others)

Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elements highlighted by UNHCR on the registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 979,146 Syrian refugees registered; 47,480 are awaiting registration. - 62,081 appointments requested; waiting period 20 days - Continuous and increasing verification/renewal process, to confirm access to services and update data (including for 2013 emergency registration). 51,000 refugees verified in March. - Out of those, 2,000 HH reported to have hanged residence within Lebanon. The majority of incoming and outgoing movements is reported in the North, the least in the South. ▪ UNHCR continues to carry out periodical thematic questionnaires at registration Centers, to capitalize on the reach-out to vast and geographically varied samples of population. Some are conducted with newly registrants, other are conducted at the renewal/ verification stage. The Random Thematic Questionnaire with new registrants (1,527 Head of Households in March) continued to focus on registration aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58% 1 month or less to take an appointment with UNHCR 69% register to receive assistance 92% decided to register after arrival to Lebanon 88% did not face problems registering with UNHCR ▪ UNHCR Thematic questionnaire also included other protection aspects, such as movements and return as well as information on the situation of legal stay/ residency permits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Return to Syria</u>: 51% main applicants stated they and/or their family member(s) returned to Syria; 41% returned once. The main reason for return was to obtain documents (33%); to check on family (19%); to visit (15%) or for medical reasons (11%) - <u>Legal status in Lebanon</u>: 34% of the respondents held expired residency documentation, largely due to inability to pay the fees (62%). 16% cited other multiple reasons (i.e. unable to pay, afraid to approach GoL, unaware of procedures) ▪ PWG members continued the discussion on opportunities to strengthen information dissemination and reach out to unregistered. UNHCR highlighted recent new efforts such as the production of a handy “Business Card Registration Leaflet”; the recent efforts to collect data on non-registered refugees through the UNICEF Polio Campaign (April 10-15) targeted to Informal tented Settlements; the activation of Refugee Outreach Volunteers. ▪ The Inter-Agency referral form and Operating Procedure for non-registered refugees was briefly discussed, as field exercise. Protection partners in the field, including through protection monitoring and presence, can play an important role in this endeavour. ▪ Considering the numerous discussion on non-registered refugees, and the MSNA findings, the PWG discussed the opportunity for a “One-off” Desk Review of secondary and non-individualized data, <u>already</u> available with partners to assess their current knowledge and information on the size of the non-registered population and the main causes for non-registration. UNHCR Registration Unit proposed a form, with inputs from the sector coordinator. ▪ The importance to include information on registration in the newcomers program distributions was also highlighted. This will be highlighted with eh NFI/ Distribution sector.

Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWG partners' effort in the dissemination of information on registration through the respective field presence will continue. All available information material (including videos and leaflets on registration, renewal process and iris scanning) have been already distributed in the past months to all PWG partners. UNHCR is updating some of the material and another circulation to the PWG members will take place soon after. ▪ UNHCR Registration unit will share the recently produced small registration card to PWG members to test its usefulness in the field. ▪ UNHCR will look into the possibility to upload registration information/ awareness material on the web-portal. ▪ UNHCR for proposed for the "one-off" desk review on the estimated number of non-registered refugees to be distributed to PWG members for their contribution. ▪ UNHCR "Guidelines for Identification, Referral and Registration of unregistered Syrian refugees" and the form for data collection to be addressed to UNHCR Field Offices to be disseminated to the PWG.
	For PWG national level	

3) Civil status documentation (birth registration, statelessness, residency permit)

Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	See topic of the month.
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG
	For PWG national level

4) Freedom of Movement / Detention (curfew, check points, arbitrary detention)

Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNRWA informed the PWG members on increasing reported cases of arrest and detention of PRSs by LAF and ISF for the mere expired legal stay. Arrested PRS are generally detained for seven days, i.e. a longer period then the administrative detention of Syrian refugees; their criminal records are scanned; they are subsequently transported to the GSO Adlieh prison, where their records are again scanned by the GSO. To address the problem of PRS detention, UNRWA initiated to operate a hot line from 7 am to 7 pm on the number 76 882226. ▪ The request to provide official copies of document confiscated by the GSO until the legal stay permit fees are paid has not yet become a systematic practice. Additional advocacy is being done by UNRWA with GSO officials.
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG
	For PWG national level

5) Physical safety (treats violation, security incidents, minorities, exploitation, not covered under SGBV/Child Protection)

Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG
	For PWG national level

6) Sexual and Gender Based Violence (update form SGBV Task Force)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

7) Child Protection in Emergency (update from Child Protection in Emergency Working Group)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft CPiE 2014 work plan endorsed ▪ Discussion on forming a Core Group for the CPiE WG ▪ Discussion on national level needs assessment ▪ Discussion on the review of the Psychosocial Support Task Force 	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

8) House, land and property		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing trends of evictions, particularly from Informal tented Settlements, are reported, particularly in Tripoli/ T5 and in the Bekaa. Municipalities are increasingly complaining of limited space and strain placed by the Syrians on public services. On some occasions, the evictions are also involving law enforcement authorities and the LAF. ▪ Despite advocacy with the authorities, 33 households living in ITS in Kafer Halda, Batroun (Tripoli) were evicted on Monday 14 April. While some families found alternative shelter solutions, the most vulnerable were relocated to collective shelters through shelter actors' support. ▪ Another situation closely followed By Bekaa protection actors was the eviction in Qab Elias, where, despite a legally solid rental agreement with a landlord, advance payment of rental fees, the municipality evicted the residents as a result of a petition signed by the local community. ▪ PWG members observed that while in several cases evictions may be considered lawful (i.e. following the incapacity of the families to fulfill their payment obligations), they may be nonetheless carried out in an unlawful manner (i.e. no proper notification, no Court order). PWG members also highlighted the difficulty in addressing cases where the eviction threat or decision does not originate from the landlord following breach of contractual obligations, but rather from the public attitude influencing the municipal authorities or even higher levels. ▪ Eviction committees/ Working Groups, gathering protection and shelter actors in Bekaa and Tripoli, continue their work to monitor and following up through direct interventions with authorities and by arranging alternative shelter solutions for vulnerable families. ▪ The PWG discussed and recognized that, even if possible, legal action / litigation are sometimes difficult to pursue, considering the humanitarian consequences for the affected population in the area. Mediation and negotiation with the communities remain the most viable options, but possibly more support may come by targeting these municipalities with Social Cohesion interventions, including CSPs. ▪ UNHCR and UN Habitat will convene a workshop on 28 April to review the recent HLP study with a debate on findings and proposed recommendations. 	

Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eviction committees/ Working group such as in Tripoli and in the Bekaa, with joint participation of protection and shelter actors, to be considered as a modality of intervention by other PWGs where evictions trends are on the increase (possible sharing of ToRs).
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HLP study Invitation to the land and property assessment will be circulated and a half day workshop will be dedicated to review this assessment on 28 April 2014. Expand contacts with the Social Cohesion Sector to increase attention and interventions on communities where evictions are increasing.

9) Relation with host community

Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing problematic attitude of the municipalities vis a vis the growing numbers of refugees, reflecting especially on eviction trends. This seems to be evident particularly in the North (Tripoli and Akkar) but also in the Bekaa. Ongoing protection and inter-agency attempts for dialogue and sensitization between humanitarian actors and the municipalities (negotiations on evictions, training and sensitization). During a recent meeting between the Social Cohesion Coordinator and the Protection Coordinator, the latter recommended a presence during the PWG discussions in the field, were numerous discussion take place on relations with host communities. 	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PWG at national level will expand the dialogue with the Social Cohesion Sector to see where synergies between the two sectors can be strengthened.

10) Access to services and assistances (discriminatory practices, access information, PWSN)

Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

11) Refugee outreach / Mass Communication and Information

Follow up on previous action point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the very preliminary discussion on 29 January on Mass Communication/ Mass Information initiatives, the PWG discussed how to proceed at sector level with the finalization of the sector inputs to the Interagency Q&A on Humanitarian Assistance and services in Lebanon (INQAL) The objective of INQAL is to provide unified information to refugees and host communities on the current humanitarian response, i.e. an interagency tool to inform and help to avoid confusion when providing info to persons of concern. The INQAL template is divided into 2 parts: 1) a Q&A with the 30 Most Frequently Asked Questions by persons of concern and the respective answers; 2) Annexes with list of available services per area. It does not substitute existing information material/ leaflets, but may include information presented in this material. The INQAL is to be created and cleared entirely by each existing Sector WG (10 sectors, including CP and SGBV + Cash and Targeted Assistance = 12 chapters) Information included in INQAL will be disseminated to persons of concern through existing outreach mechanisms (e.g. ROVs, Community focal Points).
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	DISCUSSION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The PWG agreed on the importance to work with field PWGs for their inputs to the INQAL, to benefit from their direct contact with the refugees. The national PWG will then review and complement to produce the final version. ▪ Main themes will be likely linked to registration, civil documentation, legal assistance, including for detention cases. ▪ An important inclusion in the mass information activities of the Protection Sector will also be information related to the registration of Lebanese returnees and information on how to refer such cases. 	
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWGs in the field will be again encouraged to provide inputs to the preliminary draft of the Q&A Section.
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Once field inputs are gathered, the PWG Core Group will consult to finalize the Q&A draft. Suggestions are however welcomed from all PWG members.

12) Protection mainstreaming, capacity building, Assessments		
Follow up on previous action point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MSNA process is in its final stages. The MSNA workshop was held on 28 March and well attended by PWG members (Core group and others). 	
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWG Core Group approved a short summary sector section, including elements from the MSNA workshop that was then sent to the MSNA team for inclusion in the overall MSNA report. These summarized inputs further edited and summarized by the MSNA team. They will still inform the RRP6 revision in the original form. ▪ The MSNA Steering Committee (sector coordinators not included) is now providing comments to the overall MSNA report and could include further comments/ changes. ▪ As for the extended Protection Sector Chapter, a discussion took place in the Core group regarding its publication. Since a full consensus could not be reached after two meetings of the Core Group, the Group voted and the majority of the members of the PWG Core Group agreed to make the extended Protection Sector Chapter as a public document. ▪ The MSNA overall report is now finalized by the MSNA Steering Committee. 	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	