



National Protection Working Group Meeting – Meeting Minutes

Time & Location	27 February 2019, / UNHCR Country Office, Turkey
Chaired by	Sander van Niekerk - Senior Inter-Agency Protection Coordination Officer
Participants	UNHCR, WFP, Goc-Der, ASAM, UNFPA, Kaos GL, IFRC, TRC, MUDEM/RSC, Red Umbrella, IOM, UNICEF, Positive Living Association
Aim of the Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Protection Update from the Marmara Region - UNHCR Resettlement Presentation - Presentation on Istanbul LGBTI - South East Update on LGBTI - General Discussion
Agenda Point	Discussion Points
Protection Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief update from the UNHCR Istanbul office: the team covers 11 cities of the Marmara region including Canakkale, Balikesir, Edirne, Kirlareli, as well as a sea border with Greece and a land border with Bulgaria. • Although the apprehension rates remain high, there is a slight reduction in apprehensions at the border during winter. In 2018, Edirne had the highest number of apprehensions, followed by Canakkale and Balikesir. So far in 2019 data shows that Edirne continues to have the highest number of apprehensions, remaining a flash-point in terms of border crossings, followed by Canakkale and Balikesir. UNHCR Istanbul also follows up on allegations of pushbacks, as border authorities claim that almost half of the total number of apprehensions are pushback incidents. • Top nationalities are Afghan, Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Somalis, Yemenis, Ugandan, Central African and Congolese individuals.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The protection sector works with a variety of border authorities including Turkish land forces, gendarmarie and PDMs to ensure necessary provision of humanitarian assistance in the region.• ASAM and UNHCR are in the process of establishing an outreach team in order to strengthen vulnerable identification and response.• Under the Union of Turkish Bar Associations project, UNHCR engages in capacity development with the Bar Associations in Edirne to strengthen access to legal aid. In the same vein, ASAM and the Edirne Bar Association agreed to establish a referral line for access to legal aid, especially from removal centers
UNHCR Resettlement Presentation	<p><i>See relevant presentation for further details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resettlement used as both as a durable solution and a protection tool.• Total submission received in 2018 is 16,042 refugees to resettle in 19 countries.• The number of resettlement countries is 19 which is much higher than most states.• Total departures in 2018 is 8,979 refugees resettled. Waiting period of 6 months dragged up to 1 year recently.• 2019 quota targets are as followed: 20,000 as being 15,000 Syrians and 5,000 other nationalities. Further support in advocacy is needed to increase the quotas.• Complementary pathways are important to create durable solutions alternatives to resettlement. Possibilities are: (1) humanitarian visa and private sponsorship, (2) academic scholarship, and (3) family reunification.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Humanitarian visa requires private sponsorship and is commonly used by NGOs. Caritas for example works on a humanitarian corridor programme. The programme is relatively small but the significance of this programme is that a non-state actor is taking action to provide sponsorship to refugees and thus proactively creates complementary pathways for refugees.2. A Japanese initiative on academic scholarship is notable as being a long-term solution with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Syrian refugee children and also their parents can benefit from this programme.3. Family reunification: IOM have an ongoing programme with Germany. Even though it continues to be a successful pathway, some barriers still remain such as requirement of documentation, cost and strict limitations related to who can be considered• More information dissemination on academic scholarships is beneficial for protection organisations.• Exploring alternative protection solutions in a forward-looking manner is important due to low resettlement quotas.• UNHCR was requested to provide public information materials for protection organisations to provide broad-brush overarching explanations of the resettlement process and elaborate on the criteria.• UNHCR remarked that cases should be managed and referred as protection cases, not as resettlement cases, as resettlement is a solution for a highly limited group while processes are complex and take extended time.



Istanbul Presentation on
LGBTI

See relevant presentation for further details.

- LGBTI are included within the scope of Key Refugee Group (KRG). KRG are refugees who have limited or no access to services due to various barriers as a result of their sexual identities, jobs or health status. The term is used to highlight the linkages between concerns of LGBTI refugees and other aggravated vulnerabilities due to various dynamics potentially affecting them. Moreover, many refugees, both LGBTI and cisgender are exposed to gender-based violence related health issues and marginalization/stigmatization as a result of which they may engage in sex work and may end up living with HIV and other STIs. UNFPA therefore developed the term KRG in order to apply a more holistic approach to respond to the needs of a larger group of refugees whom are not limited to LGBTI.
- General Overview of Challenges:
 - Exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (physical, emotional, psychological, financial etc.); difficulties in documenting violence
 - Hampered access to registration and protection mechanisms
 - Inconsistent access to justice and legal remedies; especially transgender individuals have difficulties to access police stations;
 - Unresolvable complex cases, as most of the individuals' needs are chronic with no protection solutions available through public services as LGBTI are not recognized as a vulnerable group in need of protection;
 - Lack of specialized service provision; esp. on HIV and gender transition counseling; number of service providers is limited. For example, only 1 NGO in Yalova (where a large KRG community resides) providing specialized services.
 - Limited rent assistance programmes and safe shelter options, potentially leading to adoption of negative coping strategies;
 - Restricted and non-standardized access to social assistance and livelihoods;
 - Social tension between communities;
 - Inaccessibility of feedback and complaint mechanisms;
 - Resettlement deemed to be only viable durable solution but hampered processes due to non-standardized establishment of vulnerability assessment commissions through which LGBTI would be able to undergo assessment towards resettlement. In 2016, UNHCR Istanbul and ASAM established a referral mechanism to the commission in PDMM Istanbul, specifically for LGBTI individuals. Approximately 200 individuals have been referred to date.
- PDMM also refers individual cases for third country resettlement via protection desks established through the verification exercise.
- It is observed that LGBTI individuals are frequently unable to meet ESN criteria which elevates the risk of adoption of negative coping strategies. Other social assistance mechanisms, especially via public institutions, remain unavailable to the community.
- General Overview of Activities:
 - Space for advocacy is not the same across provinces or institutions, however it is found that some authorities do recognize LGBTI and Key KRGs in general as a community with specific protection needs and are willing to deliver services accordingly. UNFPA has organized twolarge scale advocacy workshops that targeted public officials in Istanbul and Esekisehirin October 2018 (with participation of 100 public officials from PDoFLSS, PDoH, PDMM, universities and UN agencies). In summary, it is observed that there is a need to advocate on behalf



- of LGBTI & KRGs to ensure access to protection, rights and services, including throughout legal proceedings (i.e. law enforcement, judiciary);
- Thematic coordination platform focusing on LGBTI & KRG was established in July 2018 in order to address LGBTI & KRG related protection risks and identify protection solutions in a targeted manner. ;
 - Partnerships have been actively sought both by UNHCR and UNFPA. UNHCR has an ongoing partnership with KAOS GL and ASAM specific to LGBTI. UNFPA has the ongoing KRGs project with ongoing partnership with Positive Living Association (PLA) and Red Umbrella through which specialized services are provided not only for LGBTI but also for sex workers and PLHIV. Services also include HIV and gender transition counselling.
 - Cash for protection: Support for transgender and intersex persons as well as SGBV survivors (not exclusively women).
 - Community capacity development: information dissemination, raising awareness (based on requests, identified needs and gaps), training / workshops.
 - Communication with Communities: Regular communication with communities to identify needs, community capacities and proposed solutions to address gaps.
 - Ad hoc basic needs support: Mapping of distribution of the kits, coordination is needed
- 2019 Plans:
 - Development of a standardized training module targeting social workers, based on existing material
 - Identification & documentation of good practices;
 - Development of a work plan for KRGs;
 - Need to shift focus to supporting community-based activities;
 - Potential for social cohesion, through engagement of LGBTI & KRG individuals from local and refugee communities;;
 - Need for strengthened engagement with grassroots organizations, private sector, and development actors.
 - Recommendations:
 - Establishment of structured communication line between field and national level on topic of LGBTI;
 - Development of standardized training modules for interpreters and support staff;
 - Facilitation of regular, country-wide exchanges on good practices and information;
 - Support LGBTI-specific resource and funding mobilization;
 - Increased engagement with private sector, development actors and IFIs;
 - Support activity-level mapping through expansion of Services Advisor;
 - Development of a guideline for interpreters;
 - Support evidence-based programming through strengthened data management and IM;
 - Strengthened advocacy for protective legal framework specific to LGBTI.



SET Presentation on LGBTI

- General overview of situation of LGBTI individuals in South East:
 - Large refugee population in the South East, but very limited number of LGBTI cases known. No no hard figures and limited understanding of prevalent dynamics results in a sub-optimal response to LGBTI specific needs. This is concerning as there are indications of large numbers of LGBTI present in the South East, including in rural areas, and circa 50% of organisations that participated in the SET PWG meeting indicated they have experience with cases involving LGBTI;
- Many local NGOs indicate they not have (enough) experience/knowledge to work adequately with LGBTI individuals;
 - Lack of adequate protection in Turkish law and inconsistent implementation of applicable laws;
 - Lack of cultural acceptance and many protection risks included exploitation in the labour market, reported discrimination in accessing services, while responses are complicated due to limited self-identification;;-Isolation from community which causes a lack of awareness of crucial information and has negative consequences for wellbeing;
 - Transgender individuals comparatively at higher risks of street violence;
 - Difficulties in approaching legal services both due to fear of discrimination and stigma as well as lack of awareness of the sector members in working with law-enforcement on LGBTI.
- Gaps and challenges:
 - Lack of systematized information on LGBTI individuals and their concerns;
 - Challenges in identification of LGBTI individuals;
 - Lack of knowledge among civil society and state actors and limited skills;
 - Difficulties on accessing services especially for LGBTI individuals who lives in rural area;
 - Limited LGBTI specific advocacy organizations;
- Recommendations:
 - Advocate with DGMM to enable LGBTI individuals to relocate to more metropolitan provinces with increased diversity and more services available
 - Advocate with Education Sector / MoNE to increase awareness raising and psychosocial support activities in schools, targeting students, teachers, and parents to mitigate risks of violence and improve (mental) wellbeing of LGBTI children
 - Proactively seek out LGBTI organisations for the sector, aiming to enhance the design and implementation of sector initiatives (ie. a reference group) and strengthen programmatic response through support to specialized activities;
 - increase structured engagement with LGBTI individuals to identify concerns and barriers;
 - Facilitate engagement between LGBTI individuals and state institutions to strengthen dialogue and collectively identify concerns and barriers;
 - Delegate sector member(s) to engage in capacity development of protection actors at institutional and staff level, targeting both management and field staff, including interpreters;



	<p>-Work with donors to include LGBTI mainstreaming / sensitive programming in calls for proposals and ensure accountability; ensure LGBTI non-exclusion clauses are included;</p> <p>-Develop tailored / context-specific notes for sector members on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o good practices of communicating with state actors on topics concerning LGBTI individuals' rights, challenges, and concerns;o on do's and don'ts in working with LGBTI individuals for civil society / humanitarian partners.
<p>1. General Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puzzle Model Training offered as an alternative way to Standardized Training Module.• The programme on cash for protection in transgender persons is running. It also supports SGBV survivors, the programme is not only women only.• Approximately 200 cases in Istanbul which mostly identify as gay men and trans men. There are difficulties to identify especially lesbian and intersex individuals. Identification is an important point and both awareness raising and empowerment activities will further encourage the communities to identify themselves. Support needed on further activities.• Lack of information is deemed to be the main cause of the lack of self-identification within the communities.• Coordination platform can be establish engage with UN Gender Result Groups to share developed guidelines and specialized training documents. It is important to involvement of in-depth thematic meetings and trainings such as the training provided to DGMM on LGBTI recently.• Food-hygiene packages, the most needed packages by LGBTI refugees in Istanbul, is the identified gap at regional level by some municipalities especially in winter time. Food-hygiene packages will be distributed and any contribution is welcomed.• Access to legal services; Ankara Bar Association have specific list for lawyers who have taken the specialized trainings on LGBTI based cases and LGBTI refugee cases only assigned that lawyers who are in the list.• The KRG mapping study of Red Umbrella covering 15 cities reveals that LGBTI individuals are members of refugee communities across Turkey. This contravenes the general idea that they are living only in the metropolitan areas. This is made clear through analysis of the hot line calls. Movement between the cities is reportedly quite low and a high number of SGBV cases has been reported. Limited access to public services is one of the main issues that LGBTI individuals emphasize. With the help of ASAM and MUDEM, Red Umbrella is trying to address the needs of LGBTI refugees in the field.<ul style="list-style-type: none">o One of the major challenges is related to registration: LGBTI refugees face a dilemma whether to share their sexual orientation or not with PDMM and what the effects of sharing that information will be. This is reportedly prevalent since PDMM took over registration activities.o Another challenge is the lack of information. Rumours spread easily, for example on deportation, and can lead to harmful coping strategies such as hesitation to register/approach services.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a known incident of an HIV affected individual being deported, reportedly the HIV positive status was a factor in discussions surrounding the deportation. This is concerning and should be further looked into. It is also concerning as it feeds rumours within communities.• Lack of network/ communication between the lawyers who focusing on LGBTI is causing challenges in legal assistance activities and coordination.
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Action Points

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1.	UNHCR to provide public information materials to provide broad-brush overarching explanations of the resettlement process.
2.	Discussion to be organized to formulate responses to controversial case decisions.
3.	Public contact list will be shared to enhance communication among PWG partners.
4.	PWG Coordinator will produce a thematic dashboard on working with LGBTI individuals.
5.	PWG to develop context-specific practical notes for sector member organisations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) good practices of communicating with state actors on topics concerning LGBTI individuals' rights, challenges, and concerns;b) on do's and don'ts in working with LGBTI individuals for civil society / humanitarian partners.