



## PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (PWG)

### Terms of Reference (TOR)

*Endorsed by the Protection Working Group - on 24 October 2020 (with amendments of 14 December 2020)*

#### Background

1. Given the current evolving situation and rapidly growing protection needs identified at local level among new arrivals, it is suggested to establish functioning coordination structure for harmonized, effective and timely response through available resources, and be prepared for increased engagement and quick mobilization of additional resources once the situation allows.
2. The Protection Working Group (the PWG)<sup>1</sup> is a participatory forum comprising UN agencies, other international organizations, government, national and international NGOs with protection expertise/mandate and operational protection experience in Armenia.
3. It is a forum through which the protection actors (i.e. related government institutions, agencies, international and national humanitarian organizations) coordinate protection activities at the national, regional and local levels, organize interventions, seek consensus on issues, create partnerships and linkages for better prioritization of available resources, and commit to the adopted protection standards in humanitarian action and recovery, with an overall goal of enhancing the protection of civilians in displacement situation in line with the Human Rights Based and Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Approaches.
4. The PWG in Armenia is a central element of the response and is linked to the Health, Food, NFI/Shelter, Early Recovery; and Child Protection and Education Sub-Working Groups, and other working/sub-working groups when established.

#### Geographic Scope, Population of Concern, and Goal of the PWG

5. The PWG is of national coverage, namely all marzes (provinces) of the Republic of Armenia and the capital Yerevan.
6. Persons of concern are those, who lived on the territory of Nagorno Karabakh (NK) conflict zone and had to spontaneously depart due to the recent escalation of the conflict on 27 September 2020, as well as those residents of NK, who, due to various personal reasons, shortly travelled outside NK prior 27 September 2020 and now are not able to go back home due to the conflict there.
7. The main goal of the PWG is to strengthen and coordinate assessments of the protection, risks and needs of new arrivals/ persons of concern and response mechanisms in order to provide structured, harmonized, comprehensive, and gender-responsive assistance and support.
8. Aiming at the above goal, the PWG shall give due consideration to the needs of host and receiving communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for definition of "protection".

## Objectives of the PWG

9. To ensure the effective and timely implementation of activities, the PWG agrees to:
  - 1) work towards a harmonized approach to provide a coordinated protection response to emergency, mid-term and long-term needs of persons of concern in Armenia;
  - 2) work in partnership to ensure that all persons of concern have equal, effective and timely access to quality protection services;
  - 3) coordinate needs assessments, with age-, sex- and diversity-disaggregated data, to ensure evidence-based actions, focused on addressing protection gaps, and guide prioritization of resources where necessary with primary attention to the most vulnerable population during the humanitarian response and recovery period;
  - 4) enhance accountable, predictable and effective emergency, mid-term and long-term responses to protection needs and risks of persons of concern;
  - 5) identify core protection concerns for joint advocacy interventions by developing key messages on specific topics and using available networks and mechanisms for broader advocacy initiatives;
  - 6) identify and address core protection information needs and assist other WGs to review protection and other information shared with persons of concern and host communities; and
  - 7) work with other WGs (and protection actors such as the Gender Theme Group and the PSEA Focal Points Networks) to ensure that protection considerations guide all aspects of the protection response

## Modalities of the PWG

10. Coordination meetings of the PWG:
  - 10.1 The Coordination Meeting is the primary platform for PWG Members to:
    - 1) provide oversight to the protection work overall, including the Health, Shelter/NFI, Early Recovery Working Groups and the Child Protection Sub-Working Group, and other working/sub-working groups when established;
    - 2) support mainstreaming of Protection in other working groups;
    - 3) keep abreast of developments of the conflict, situation of the persons of concern and implemented response;
    - 4) be updated on the status of key events and activities in the PWG;
    - 5) be informed of relevant events and activities from other working groups and sub-groups;
    - 6) share information between PWG Members;
    - 7) make collective decisions on behalf of the PWG, as to strategy and other issues as required;
    - 8) discuss and review relevant project proposals by PWG Members and other actors engaged in protection activities in Armenia to ensure consistency and coherence among activities of PWG Members; and
    - 9) discuss and review drafts of relevant reports as required.
  - 10.2 Depending on issues and developments, the duration of the Working Group Meeting shall be no longer than one hour and half. Due to the COVID-19 situation in Armenia, it will take place virtually (via MS Teams) every Monday from 14:00, unless otherwise indicated. Ad-hoc meetings may be called at short notice in case of specific issues and/or purposes (e.g. finalization of documents for upcoming events etc.).

10.3 Minutes of the meetings will be circulated among all Members in a timely manner.

11. 5W (Who does What, Where, When and for Whom) Protection Activities Matrix:

11.1 The Protection Activities Matrix is a tool used for information sharing and planning purposes. It includes information on Who, is doing What, Where, When and for Whom (5W) in relation to protection of persons of concern in Armenia.

11.2 A secondary purpose of the 5W Protection Activities Matrix is to facilitate effective referrals among PWG Members and other partners.

11.3 PWG Members are tasked with maintaining their agency's entry for recent protection activities into the 5W Protection Activities Matrix.

11.4 The Protection Activities Matrix may be compiled in coordination with the Health, Shelter/NFI and Early Recovery Working Groups and the Child Protection Sub-Working Group, and other working/sub-working groups when established.

12. Protection Working Group Strategy:

PWG Members are responsible to contribute to the development of the Protection Working Group Strategy taking into consideration the needs of the populations of concern (including gender and age differentiated needs) and host communities.

13. Coordinated Assessment Mechanisms:

13.1 PWG Members undertake to ensure that any assessments they conduct are presented to the Working Group

- 1) in the planning phases;
- 2) immediately following the data collection phase to share - and seek validation of - initial findings, and
- 3) following the first draft report.

13.2 The PWG will discuss and review assessments proposed by Members and other actors at the Working Group Meeting or by email, as appropriate.

13.3 The PWG shall also coordinate incorporation of protection concerns into relevant assessments of other working groups.

14. Technical review:

The PWG will, collectively, respond to requests for technical review, input or advice. These may include funding proposals to other organizations or institutions and planned projects.

### Lead and Co-Lead of the PWG

15. UNHCR shall act as Lead of the PWG.

16. A co-Lead may be elected by the PWG by agreement of its Members.

17. The PWG Lead and Co-Lead shall agree between themselves the division of labour relating to the Working Group Leadership. Tasks include, but not limited to:

- 1) Ensuring regular meetings as long as there is a need;

- 2) Ensuring age, gender and other diversity sensitive needs assessments, analysis and reporting.

## Membership and Structure

18. The PWG is open to all UN agencies, other international organizations, international and local NGOs or entities involved in ensuring respect for human rights and contributing to the establishment of a favourable protection environment for persons of concern in Armenia.

19. Representatives of national, regional, local authorities and other stakeholders, such as donors can be invited to participate in the PWG as agreed upon by the Members.

20. Membership of the PWG requires:

- 1) Regular participation;
- 2) Completion and regular update of the 5W matrix;
- 3) Participation in responsive and/or preventive activities, and capacity building, advocacy or awareness raising activities;
- 4) Adherence to the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and the humanitarian principle of “do not harm”.

21. The PWG shall, through the Lead and Co-Lead, report to the Coordination Steering Group (and thereby to the UN Resident Coordinator).

## Guidance

22. The following approaches form the basis and the foundation of protection and its modalities in service delivery (guided by the 2007 Principles of Partnership,<sup>2</sup> namely):

- 1) equality among partners in consultation and decision making;
- 2) transparency among partners;
- 3) the primacy of a result-oriented approach to humanitarian action;
- 4) responsibility between partners to accomplish undertaken tasks;
- 5) complementarity between the capacity and activities of local and international actors.

23. The activities of the Members of the PWG shall be guided by the Protection Principles contained in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response,<sup>3</sup> namely:

- 1) avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions;
- 2) ensure people’s access to impartial assistance – in proportion to need and without discrimination;
- 3) protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion;
- 4) assist people to claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse.

## Application and Review of TOR

24. These Terms of Reference govern the meetings, activities and publications by or on behalf of the PWG or any other related activities. They are subject to review in six months following their endorsement by the PWG Members, or upon the need, by agreement of the Members.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Principles of Partnership: A Statement of Commitment’, endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007: <http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/pop.html#pop>.

<sup>3</sup> Protection Principles in the Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (2018), available at: <https://bit.ly/3jMX1ZF>.

## Annex 1

### Definition of Protection

Protection involves “*all actions aimed at ensuring the equal access to and enjoyment of the rights of women, men, girls and boys of concern to UNHCR, in accordance with the relevant bodies of law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law*”. National legal standards are also applied where relevant. Special attention is given to the specific rights and needs of women, girls and boys, the elderly, minority groups and persons with disabilities.

Given that the Government bears the primary responsibility to protect the human rights of people on their territory, effective and close cooperation and work with relevant authorities should be ensured.

Protection involves all advocacy efforts, assistance programs designed to promote the rights, safety and dignity of persons of concern to UNHCR. It may involve response actions aiming to stop, prevent or alleviate the worst effects of abuses; remedial action to help people recover; and environment building actions to consolidate economic, social, cultural and institutional norms conducive to protection.

While states and mandated authorities are important duty-bearers in the area of protection, people are always key actors in their own protection. Human rights and humanitarian norms are most readily respected, protected and fulfilled when people are powerful enough to assert and claim their rights. The principle of supporting and empowering communities that are actively working for their own protection is a core strategy of in protection work.

Multiple programme areas are included in the definition of protection, including (but not limited to): legal assistance and advocacy, sexual and gender-based violence protection, child protection, assistance and protection of persons with disabilities, community development, outreach, and livelihoods.