

UNHCR Jordan Operation

Standard Operating Procedures for Managing Petitions and Complaints Boxes

Following the closure of the Petitions and Complaints Mailbox (Annex 1), Jordan Operation is piloting the new process for managing petitions and complaints boxes at Registration Centers. Aim of the new procedures is to enhance accountability and efficiency in a streamlined manner. The new approach will be piloted for six months starting 1 June 2022 to 30 November 2022, followed by a review and adjustment as needed.

Effective as of 01 June 2022, endorsed by Assistant Representative for Protection, Igor Ivančić

Date of review, 01 June 2022 endorsed by Senior RSD Officer, Edina Dziho

1. Framework

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) Operational Framework summarizes the key concepts for making programming at the field level more accountable to affected populations. The framework is designed to assist implementing agencies both individually and in groups to find practical entry points for improving accountability to affected populations.

Objective 2 of the Operational Framework specifies that Operations should systematically communicate with affected populations using relevant feedback and communication mechanisms, further specifying at the indicator level that affected populations should have opportunity to register complaints, provide feedback and to get a response, and that on the other side the Operation should document establishment feedback mechanisms and of complaints and response mechanisms, with evidence of responses provided¹. Ensuring means / resources to respond to feedback and to address complaints in a timely and effective manner, respecting the privacy of individuals and providing means for confidentiality when lodging complaints².

Objective 6 of the Operational Framework specifies that Operations should ensure that accountability to affected populations is effectively integrated throughout the implementation of projects. At the indicator level it specifies to inform about and implement complaints and response mechanism, and that at the operation should have the record of implementation and of received complaints. It further specifies that Operation should use feedback mechanisms to gather feedback on the quality and accountability of the response and to gather evidence of feedback including analysis of feedback and complaints (trends in number and type of complaints and feedback received over time).

2. Purpose

The purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures is to enhance accountability of Jordan operation in managing and referring the petitions and complaints made by affected population.

3. Scope

The Standard Operating Procedures by its scope aim to systematize the intake and referral of petitions and complaints and harmonize it against the obligations set by the AAP Operational Framework.

¹ HAP Standard Benchmark 5 - Handling complaints: The organization enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process

² HAP Standard Benchmark 4 and 5

4. Definitions

- **Complaint:** for the purposes of these Standard Operating Procedures complaints are understood to be written by the affected population against UNHCR staff or affiliated workforce, in relation to their conduct towards refugees, as defined by UNHCR Code of Conduct³.
- **Petition:** for the purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures “petitions” are understood to be written, by the affected population appealing UNHCR ‘s attention to their situation.

5. COVID 19 response

In April 2020, Jordan Operation piloted the process for managing petitions and complaints at Registration Centre at BO Amman to enhance accountability with PoCs due to Covid-19 situation as the Government of Jordan instructed all public sectors to minimize paper-based interactions with clients to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Following the review, adjustment and finalization of the SOPs; the new approach was rolled out across the operation; refugees were advised to write to joraminf@unhcr.org or call UNHCR *Helpline* on 06400 8000 instead of letters which were sent to the office through letter boxes available to refugees outside UNHCR Registration Centers. All petition boxes in registration centers were sealed. Nonetheless in Q1-2022, after comprehensive review and analysis of the petitions’ mailbox, it was decided that it will be closed ([Annex 1 - Petitions Complaints Recommendation for the Way Forward_30 JAN 2022](#)) provided that the boxes are open. This has been effective as of 1 April 2022.

6. Management of Petitions and Complaints Boxes

1. As per UNHCR experience regardless of whether the refugee is writing about cash assistance, or about exploitation and abuse the tendency is that refugee regard all letter boxes the same and use them for lodging complaints and petitions of any kind. Therefore, no distinction is made on the letter box on whether it should be used for complaints or petitions.
2. In total there are six (6) letter boxes in Registration Centre in Khalda. All letter boxes are blue in color and have a lock. To ensure accessibility, safety and privacy of letter boxes they are installed in the following locations: at the entry to Registration Centre (1 box), filtering area (2 boxes), next to the security deposit of the mobile phones (1 box), female toilets (1 box), PwDs toilets (1 box). Below are the number of boxes in the field offices and camps:

³ UNHCR Code of Conduct, June 2004, including obligations set by the Secretary General’s Bulletin on special measures from protection against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse [ST/SGB/2003/13]

- Irbid: 3 boxes
 - Mafrq: 4 boxes
 - Zaatari: 3 boxes
 - Azraq: 3 boxes
 - CSCs (*refer to SOPs for Feedback and Complaints with CSCs*)
3. Purpose of the letter boxes is clearly indicated on the boxes themselves in English and Arabic.
Please note that UNHCR is no longer receiving email petitions. We will act and follow up only on emails related to fraud allegations through joramafp@unhcr.org. For any other inquiries, please contact the Helpline on 064008000.
4. Keys of the letter boxes are held by the Head of Registration Unit at each office.

7. Intake and Processing of Petitions and Complaints

1. For BO Amman, the AF secretariats/team members oversee the opening of all petitions and complaint boxes every Thursday by the units' focal points that are on a rotation schedule (Refer to [Annex 2 – Focal Points List_ July 2022](#)). For Field offices and camps, opening of the boxes will be done every two weeks provided that the number and type of petitions are being monitored to do any needed adjustments on the frequency of opening the boxes.
2. Upon the opening of the letter boxes, all letters are placed in a plastic box with a lid.
3. Letters are then taken to the designated area at the registration center in the presence of the AF secretariats/team member, read and sorted thematically by the focal points from each unit.
4. All letters are opened and stamped with the date of opening the boxes. The letters received should then be distributed among the team supporting on that day.
5. The focal points then start working on the petitions. Sorting them should be done based on the guideline/criteria shared by all functional units (Refer to [Annex 3 - Petitions & Complaints Referral Criteria](#)).
6. Once done with sorting, the focal points will record receiving the letters on proGres database through the communications entity ([Annex 4 - ProGres Update_ Communication Entity](#))
7. On the one hand, in case there is no action to be done on the petition; reference to the guideline shared by units; the following comment will be recorded on ProGres *#no action needed* and the below SMS will be

sent on weekly basis by the anti-fraud secretariats/ team members: *“Thank you for writing to us. This is to confirm that UNHCR received your letter. Based on the review of your file, there is no action required now. We advise you to call the Helpline (064008000) for any other updates or queries.”*

The letters are then sent to the Filing Room where they are scanned and shredded.

On the other hand, the petitions that need unit’s action are being sent to the functional units by the focal points to do the required follow up.

8. The anti-fraud secretariats/team members will generate the report of the intake for the week and send the SMS message with the following text to the complainants: *“This is to confirm that UNHCR received your letter. Thank you for writing to us. We will contact you if we need further information”.*

For Protection Unit cases, no SMS will be sent, and the following comment will be recorded on ProGres **#Protection**

9. When sorting, if protection concerns are identified (CP/GBV), the petitions shall be put in an envelope and handed physically to the protection unit for their follow up.
10. Functional units are responsible to follow up on the received petitions and provide timely feedback to PoCs as per their own SOPs. They should also record their feedback on proGres or RAIS depending on the platform that they use. The units’ focal points then send the letters to the Filing Room upon after taking the necessary action.
11. The filing team scan and save all letters under individual case number on e-safe and can then shred the petition.
12. Anonymous complaints without needed details/data points will not be considered. However, hardcopies will be sent to the File Room for scanning.
13. Management of petitions and complaints at the CSCs (*refer to SOPs for Feedback and Complaints with CSCs*).

8. Intake of Petitions and Complaints Against Conducts of UNHCR staff, including AWF or Security Guards

1. All complaints against conducts of UNHCR staff, including AWF or security guards is immediately forwarded by email to the IGO, by AFFP. For confidentiality purposes proGres will not be updated, AFFP will keep the record of these allegations, in a separate restricted e-safe folder called IGO under the executive office folder.
2. Records of all performance related complaints against UNHCR staff, including AWF (e.g., quality of service, attitude and similar) are held by AFFP/PSEA FoPC in e-safe under executive management folder. Complaint, is shared with the relevant supervisor, requesting feedback within a week, which is then filed noted.
3. All allegations of sexual harassment and abuse will be forwarded to PSEA Focal Point for processing as per the relevant SOPs. For confidentiality purposes proGres will not be updated, PSEA FoP will keep the record of these allegations as per the relevant SOPs.
4. Originals of all letters, related to IGO and SEA allegations, will remain with AFFP/PSEA FoPC.
5. Anonymous complaints related to this matter, will follow the above process (Point 8).

9. Analysis of Petitions and Complaints

1. Monthly report showing figures, trends, etc. will be shared by the AF secretariats with AFFP and relevant units.
2. On bi-annual basis the AFFP will carry out an in-depth analysis of trends in number and type of complaints and petitions and feedback received over time. Biannual report will be summited to the Assistant Representative for Protection and other senior management members as needed.