



# Protection Working Group Meeting - Minutes

Meeting			
<b>Name</b>	Protection Working Group	<b>Meeting Date</b>	22 May 2013
<b>Meeting Location</b>	Beirut	<b>Meeting Time</b>	10:00
<b>Chair person</b>	Samuel Cheung	<b>Meeting Duration</b>	2 hours
<b>Minutes Prepared by</b>	Samuel Cheung		
<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>	Protection Working Group Meeting		

**Participants:** UNHCR (chair), MOSA, ActionAid, CLMC, DFID, DRC, Handicap International, HelpAge, ICRC (observer), International Alert, InterSOS, IRAP, IRC, Islamic Relief, Makhzoumi Foundation, Mercy Corps, NRC, OHCHR, Oxfam, ProCap, Search for Common Ground, Solidarites, UNICEF, UNRWA, WVL, WRF

## Summary of discussions and action points

### 1. General Sector Updates

#### A. Introduction/Administrative Matters

- All comments received on the Draft Terms of Reference for the PWG at the national level have been incorporated. Some final amendments are pending after which the TORs will be shared with the group with a view to possible presentation and endorsement at the next PWG meeting.
- Following the invitation at the last PWG meeting, a PWG Steering Group has been established, comprising the leads and co-leads of the PWG, UNRWA, CPiEWG and SGBV Task Force as well as interested protection partners. Membership in the Steering Group is not selective and those organizations interested in meeting more frequently and following up on issues are welcome to join.
- The previous two PWG attendance lists will be used to re-fresh the PWG member list and email distribution.
- The Group discussed and agreed to adopt Chatham House Rules for the PWG whereby participants (and recorded minutes) are free to use the information shared, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s) may be revealed.
- **ACTION POINT:**
  - Draft PWG TORs will be distributed in due course with a view to endorsement at next PWG meeting
  - 3/4W Mapping of Protection Activities will be initiated with the support of the newly arrived OCHA deployee

#### B. Palestinian Refugees from Syria Update (see powerpoint for more details)

- UNRWA Protection will launch a GBV/Child Protection Mapping in the camps in coordination with the SGBV and CPiE working groups.
- Data Sharing Protocol: UNRWA continues to share the lists with humanitarian organizations (3 to date)
- Reports from Masnaa Crossing

- Access issues for those without proper documentation
- Reports that parents are prevented from returning to Syria so if they do not return with everyone on their entry card (i.e. their children). They should be able to go to SG and separate the parents from the cards (for a fee, i.e. the cost of the entry visa). There have been some reports of the SG refusing to do this. MRO will raise awareness of this at the border so to put the children on a separate entry card
- Reasons returning to Syria identified at Masnaa include: schools exams and visiting family members (mostly elderly/disabled, or have children in military service)
- Children Not Attending School
  - 65% of PRS children are not attending school due to a combination of factors: expense (travel to and from school), child labour, lack of integration into camp environment/ self perception as “strangers”, not sure of how long staying in Lebanon, psychological status of families in general, concerned for children’s wellbeing reluctance to release them into school, and lack of official registration for exams
  - Possible Solutions: outreach on benefits of education, sensitivity training to UNRWA staff

### C. Child Protection Update

- Activity Mapping of CPIE members
- Completion of Regional Remote Syria Child Protection Needs Assessment
  - Participation of 7 agencies; 235 respondents; 45% female vs 55% male
  - Next Steps – Interpretation workshop in June in Amman; Report drafted by end-July
- Initiated process to harmonise and strengthen case management tools
- Compilation of Children at Risk data from SR registration points - higher proportion of separated children, child spouses, child labour, children with severe disabilities
- **ACTION POINTS:**
  - Ongoing identification of referral pathways per field hub
  - Capacity Building Workshop on Child Friendly Spaces and Psychosocial Support - May 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>

### D. SGBV Update

- The team from the SGBV Task Force comprised of MOSA, Abaad, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA attended a strategic SGBV regional workshop along with other countries affected by the Syria crisis (Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq) in order to share promising practice in addressing common challenges (i.e. information management and data collection, prevention of child/forced marriage) and to develop a regional approach.
- The SGBV Task Force organized a working lunch at the Hotel le Commodore with Head of Agencies on 30 April, other sectors and key donors to share new initiatives, priorities and challenges on prevention of and response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in the current emergency, and to trigger additional collaboration and support. Feedback from the participants was really encouraging as they mentioned being more comfortable to speak up on the issue and donor agencies also invited member organizations and the Coordinator to provide them with additional briefings in the future.
- Members of the SGBV TF developed key messages to alert women and girls that they do not need to pay anything in return or do any favors to obtain humanitarian assistance. Those messages were tested with groups of women to make sure language was appropriate and understood. Associated visuals will be finalized in June. The SGBV Task Force also developed standard guidelines to harmonize content and distribution of ‘dignity kits’ to women and girls.

### E. Situation / Operational Updates

### **Registration & Access to Territory (see powerpoint for more details)**

- The Group reviewed current registration trends, noting a decrease in waiting periods across the country, particularly in the South. A chart was displayed indicating a trend of steady and continual increases in rented hosting conditions versus steady and continual decreases in hosting by the community.
- The Group discussed the modalities of mobile registration and noted a possible information gap regarding registration of Syrians who lack documentation. The Group also discussed the need to increase information leaflets on available services at UNHCR registration centers.
- Local border monitoring sources reported the Syrian border authorities are not allowing male individuals to return to Syria if they do not complete a period of three months of their legal stay in Lebanon. In addition, some Syrian families were reportedly not allowed to exit Syria from the legal crossing point. Unconfirmed reports were made regarding ongoing construction of a 4m-high sand barrier separating Lebanon and Syria.
- Partners continue to pay close attention to the intensification of conflict in Qusayr, Syria. After the arrival of some 700+ families in early May, no significant increase was seen following more recent reports of the town having ‘fallen’ to regime forces supported by Hezbollah. The majority of new arrivals from Qusayr transited from Arsal and are now in Wadi Khalid. Some 70% reportedly entered unofficially and are in an irregular status. Some 20–40,000 civilians are believed to be residing in Qusayr and surrounding villages.
- **ACTION POINTS:**
  - Syrians lacking civil status documentation should still be referred to UNHCR for registration but be advised to provide information or other documentation confirming their Syrian nationality.
  - Partners were requested to increase information leaflets on available services at UNHCR registration centers.
  - Coordination is ongoing with field-based PWGs to assess the reasons and dynamics behind Syrians unwilling or unable to be registered.
  - Caritas is preparing for its border presence at Masnaa.
  - Partners in Bekaa and the North are closely examining early warning systems for possible influx.

### **Legal Status, Freedom of Movement and Physical Safety (see powerpoint for more details)**

- Among some 385 Syrians in detention referred to UNHCR since January 2013, only 16% were charged solely with illegal entry/stay.
- The Group reviewed current statistics on official and unofficial border crossings and note the higher concentrations in Bekaa (14% unofficial) and North Lebanon (15% unofficial). The estimated number affected was some 50,000 persons and increasing. The Group discussed advocacy strategies as it was noted that the current policies “force Syrians to become illegal (irregular).” The Group also discussed related concerns, such as confiscation of IDs after arrest and concerns over possible selective targeting of irregular persons based on political or sectarian reasons.
- In Bekaa, ongoing security concerns in Masharih al-Qaa area, including reported eviction threats to residents. On 2 May, reportedly more than 130 Lebanese and Syrian families left the Masharih al-Qaa area after receiving threats from armed elements if they remained in the area.
- In the South, tensions with the host community have flared in certain villages following the burial of a Lebanese Hezbollah member killed in Syria, leading to a Syrian reportedly being physically assaulted and local mosques issuing warnings against Syrians.
- **ACTION POINTS:**
  - A meeting will be held to consolidate inputs to an advocacy note on regularization, including further involvement of MOSA.
  - A Legal Assessment on the Consequences faced by Syrian Refugees who have limited legal status in Lebanon will soon be conducted by NRC to understand the short and long-term consequences of those lacking documentation or in an irregular situation as well as the underlying reasons.

- The mapping of current restrictions on freedom of movement, curfews and instances of confiscation of documents is ongoing and is being coordinated through field-based PWGs.

### Community Outreach, Access to Services & Specific Needs

- The Group discussed the current status of community centers and the deployment of additional social workers at SDCs.

## 2. Identified Gaps or Issues

### A. Targeted Assistance

- The Group discussed gaps and needs, particularly in the mass information aspects of the shift across agencies to more targeted assistance. With the upcoming Ramadan, it was noted that timing was extremely urgent to prepare beneficiary families for possible changes in assistance. A task force has been organized to prepare messaging.
- The Group discussed operational changes in health assistance already in place but noted concerns regarding the availability of detailed information on locations, eligibility and discounts on primary and secondary services. Posters and brochures are under development (translated and ready for printing). Concerns will be referred to the Health Working Group.

### B. Protection in Informal Tented Settlements

- All partners were reminded of the need for inclusive mapping of informal tented settlements and to refer identified settlements to the Shelter Sector which is consolidated GPS mapping.
- The questionnaire for the rapid assessment of informal tented settlements was under development and will be used country-wide but will complement local initiatives.
- **ACTION POINT:**
  - ITS questionnaire to be re-circulated to PWG Steering Group for last comments.

3.	Agreed Action Points :			
	Issue	Deadline	Responsible	Comment
	Distribution, review / comment and finalization of PWG TORs	19 June	UNHCR + all	
	Initiation of 3/4W Mapping	19 June	UNHCR + OCHA	
	Field-based Analysis of Populations Not Willing to be Registered	19 June	PWG Steering + Field-based PWGs	
	Mapping of Curfews, Confiscation of Documents	19 June	Field-based PWGs	
	Regularization Advocacy Note + Assessment of Consequences	Ongoing	UNHCR + NRC	

### Attachments

Document	Location
PWG Meeting 22 May, Powerpoint Presentation	
UNRWA Presentation, 17 May, Powerpoint Presentation	

