



Protection Working Group Meeting - Minutes

Meeting			
Name	Protection Working Group	Meeting Date	19 June 2013
Meeting Location	Beirut	Meeting Time	10:00
Chair person	Samuel Cheung	Meeting Duration	2 hours
Minutes Prepared by	Samuel Cheung		
Purpose of Meeting	Protection Working Group Meeting		

Participants: UNHCR (chair), CLMC, DRC, FPSC, Handicap International, HelpAge, ICRC (observer), IRC, InterSOS, IOM, Makhzoumi Foundation, Mercy Corps, NRC, OCHA, OHCHR, Oxfam, Search for Common Ground, Solidarites, UNRWA WVI, WRF

Summary of discussions and action points

1. General Sector Updates

A. Introduction/Administrative Matters

- The Terms of Reference for the PWG at the national level were reviewed for endorsement and approved by the Group in principle on a no objection basis.
- A workshop will be held to consolidate and draft a document outlining the National Protection Strategy on Friday, 5 July at the Holiday Inn Dunes – Verdun, Beirut.
- The previous three PWG attendance lists (and others indicating a wish to be included) will be used to refresh the PWG member list and email distribution. The PWG member list will then be shared with members.
- Acknowledging that 4W mapping is in progress in some field locations and the CPIEWG and SGBV Task Force, a draft 5W matrix was shared for initial comment. The Group discussed the different objectives of reporting against the RRP5 and providing a practical mapping of service providers at field levels.
- **ACTION POINTS:**
 - PWG TORs will be shared with the minutes and if no objections are received within 1 week the TORs will be considered final.
 - Workshop on National Protection Strategy to be held on 5 July. RSVP to Samuel Cheung at cheung@unhcr.org by 28 June.
 - The draft 5W Matrix will be shared and comments to be given to Wali Ahedi at ahedi@unhcr.org

B. Palestinian Refugees from Syria Update

- The current number of PRS has reached 62,000, an increase potentially linked to assistance/distributions and unconfirmed reports of Palestinian camps being closed in Syria.
- The increasing arrivals of PRS at Masnaa has led to the opening of 2 additional lines.
- A GSO Circular was issued confirming that PRS will need to pay the regularization extension fees.

C. Child Protection Update

- Series of trainings to build the capacity of social workers on case management and PSS - to be expanded
- Birth registration - the Personal Status Departments are now accepting the family booklet as proof of identity of the parents and of marriage for the purposes of birth registration.
- The SRSB on Children and Armed Conflict in Syria will visit the region including Lebanon in July – the agenda under finalization

D. SGBV Update

- SGBV SOPs were validated in Akkar, validation workshop for the South (Tyr) will take place on 27 June.
- First SGBV working group was held in T5 (a separate group from the Qobayat field WG was established in order to better involve Lebanese civil society organizations)
- Monthly meeting of the SGBV Task Force focussed on engagement with media. Members are highly solicited by various international and national media to provide information on survival sex, child marriage and trafficking and too often key messages provided by SGBV TF members are not reflected in the final product and portrayed a negative image of Syrian refugees. The SGBV TF membership developed media guidelines and will draft a specific Q&A to harmonize messages as well as will engage with human rights media organizations that may be more sensitive to the topic and foster a better collaboration between media and humanitarian workers.
- The use of the Gender-based Violence Information Management System will be expanded to Tripoli and Bekaa (to complement the pilot in Akkar by UNHCR/DRC and IRC and in Tyr by UNRWA). A support mission from the GBVIMS Global Steering Committee will come first 2 weeks of July.

E. Situation / Operational Updates

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

- The Group reviewed current registration trends, noting a reduction of those pending registration from a high of 147,000 in April to approximately 75,000 now. As a result, the Rapid Registration Initiative is now concluding and a return to full registration.
- More than 90% of registered refugees are Sunni. Christian minorities represent less than 2% of total registered refugees each month across Lebanon, despite consistent outreach campaigns encouraging them to approach UNHCR. Christian refugees appear more at ease registering in Beirut/Mt. Lebanon, where they represent 4.5% of the total registered population, compared to field locations. More than 42% of refugees registered each month arrived in Lebanon in the 3 months preceding their registration. Less than 10% of refugees who register arrived in Lebanon more than a year before their registration date
- At Masnaa border point, Caritas has established a UNHCR-supported info desk presence. Initial observations include that many new arrivals did not know where they would settle in Lebanon.
- At Arida, Aboudiyah and Baqaiaa border points, recent visits indicate civil and commercial movements at a low, likely related to the consolidation of Syrian Army presence on the other side of the border. An unconfirmed source reported Syrian tanks to have crossed into Akkar and returned to Syria.
- The DRC new arrivals programme reported an increase by some 100 families in arrivals into Bekaa in the last week compared to the previous week. Efforts are being made on harmonizing the standard newcomer household assessment form, including English and Arabic translation of guidance on specific needs as well as information sharing. The Group discussed incorporation of UNRWA information for PRS as well as potential changes due to the VASyR.
- **ACTION POINTS:**
 - A separate meeting will be called for to discuss specific Strategies for Minorities

- A training on protection was proposed for new arrivals monitoring teams

Legal, Documentation & Security

- The Group discussed the Qusayr to Arsal displacement, noting the new arrival of more than 450 households families / 2,100 persons. Patterns of displacement covered some 120km, much of it on foot taking 2-6 days. Primary risks during displacement include direct targeting of civilians, especially between Hussia and Qarah and numerous checkpoints between Qusayr and Qalamoun districts, as well as shelling at various locations. Many families from Qusayr who arrive in Arsal move on to Tripoli and Akkar.
- The Group discussed concerns over bus drivers exploiting the situation to raise prices, especially for persons without documentation. It was reported some bus drivers facilitated movement for persons without documentation although Chadra checkpoint was the most difficult.
- The Group raised concerns over undocumented refugees being forced to register births under the documents of other documented persons, which would lead to serious complications for the children later. It was also noted that UNHCR registration would be critical and this concern would affect unregistered populations.
- Curfews were increasingly reported, possibly related to the heightened security posture given recent tensions. Several locations, including in Koura, Zgharta, Akkar and districts in the south have reported curfew policies being instituted by some municipalities, usually around 2100 hours until morning. Some Syrians reported being advised not to go out for their own safety and some curfew violators reportedly were fined, detained or suffered physical mistreatment by members of the host community.
- Checkpoints are also reportedly becoming increasingly strict on undocumented or irregular Syrians. In recent weeks more than 25 cases of arrest have been reported, including one refugee outreach volunteer. In some cases, those arrested were released on payment of a fine and issuance of a self-deportation order.
- Differing practices involving the confiscation of documents were reported in certain municipalities, including in the North and Bekaa. In some cases Sy were only able to retrieve their IDs by pretending they were returning to Syria.
- There continue to be heightened tensions between Syrians and host community, particularly around funerals for martyrs and clashes were reported in parts of the Bekaa and the South.
- Increasing numbers of evictions have been reported, particularly in Akkar, related both to issues of payment of rent and personal disputes with the community.
- **ACTION POINTS:**
 - A joint meeting will be called for with the Shelter Working Group regarding strategies on evictions and security of tenure.
 - The NRC Legal Assessment on the Consequences faced by Syrian Refugees who have limited legal status in Lebanon is ongoing.
 - 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

- See discussion below

2. Identified Gaps or Issues

A. Engaging Refugee Community Capacities (see powerpoint for more details)

- The Group discussed the issue of engaging refugee community capacities. Updates were provided on community centers and on efforts in community outreach. The discussion focused on provoking further collaboration around three main questions:
 - **How to engage refugees in the response?**

- What concrete roles could refugees play in addressing gaps in current response?
- What role could local communities play in the response?

3.	Agreed Action Points :			
	Issue	Deadline	Responsible	Comment
	No objection endorsement of PWG TORs	7 July	All members	
	Workshop on National Protection Strategy	5 July	All members	
	Comments to proposed 5W Matrix	17 July	OCHA + All members	
	Strategic Meeting on Minorities	17 July	PWG Steering	
	Joint Meeting with Shelter WG on Eviction Strategies	TBC	PWG and SWG	

Attachments

Document	Location
PWG Meeting 19 June, Powerpoint Presentation	