

THE PROTECTION CLUSTER INCLUDES SUB-CLUSTERS ON CHILD PROTECTION, GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, MINE-ACTION AND HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY TASK FORCE



UNHCR and partner Watan Social and Technical Services Association (WSTA) hold a focus group discussion with a group of 19 elders from the internally displaced community from Chardara, Aliabad and urban areas of northern Kunduz province. © UNHCR / S.Rich

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Internal displacement:** From 1 January to 31 May 2018, some 120,000 individuals fled their homes due to conflict. 29 out of 34 provinces had recorded some level of forced displacement, while another 32 provinces are hosting IDPs. Fifty six per cent IDPs are children, facing additional risks due to the flight and plight of the displacement, including child recruitment, child labour and increased GBV risks. According to OCHA, 18% IDPs are displaced in hard to reach areas. Top hosting provinces are: Kunduz (18,788 ind.), Faryab (17,997 ind.), Kunar (9,540 ind), Badakhshan (9, 527ind) and Laghman (7,364 ind.)¹.
- **Return to Afghanistan:** UNHCR resumed voluntary repatriation on the 1 March after a winter pause: 7,144 refugee returnees have returned and were assisted (as of 31 May 2018)². 14,860 undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan and 299,158 undocumented Afghans returned from Iran from 1 January to 26 May 2018. 95% undocumented returnees from Iran and only 5% from Pakistan were assisted by IOM³.
- **ProCap** deployee, Senior Protection Advisor, who joined the Afghanistan operation in order to draft the HCT Protection Strategy, submitted a draft to the HCT, following the workshop with the participation of the HCT members, for further endorsement.

2018 1st Quarter at glance

120k	newly displaced persons during the 1 st quarter of year
2.2k	civilian casualties recorded by UNAMA
1.8k	vulnerable conflict- and natural disaster affected girls and boys assisted with direct child protection support activities
2.1k	female and male GBV-survivors, including girls and boys, assisted with direct protection support services focused on specialized healthcare, psycho-social support, legal, and protection
22.5k	IDPs assisted with legal counselling, civil documentation issues, and acquiring, maintaining or restoring Housing, Land, and Property rights
52%	of population in prioritized areas contaminated by mine/ERW have been provided with Mine Risk Education

2018

1.5M	acute humanitarian need
2.5M	chronic needs of children
28%	psychologically distressed due to conflict
46%	of IDPs lack land documentation
1.1M	people targeted
USD 67M	required

¹ Source: Conflict induced displacement in Afghanistan, OCHA. Available at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>. Accessed on 31 May 2018

² UNHCR Encashment Centre monitoring as of 31 May 2018

³ Source: Weekly Situation Report "Return of undocumented Afghans". Available at: https://afghanistan.iom.int/sites/default/files/Reports/iom_afghanistan-return_of_undocumented_afghans-situation_report-20_-26_may_2018-nb.pdf. Accessed on 26 May 2018

KEY PROTECTION CONCERNS

Protection risks at glance

- 37% of IDP HHs that were displaced within the last 6 months encountered armed fighting during their displacement, while 28% non-recent IDP HHs encountered armed fighting during displacement. (REACH PACAP)
- 26% IDPs and 18% returnees report having a child under 14 years of age working (UNHCR protection monitoring)
- While 29% of female-headed HHs state 'harassment or bullying' as the main concern of women in the HH, 22% of male-headed households note 'harassment or bullying' as the main concern of women
- 62% of HHs fear imminent eviction (REACH JENA)
- Child Bread winners (REACH PACAP): On average, 16% of female-headed HHs rely on breadwinners under the age of 16, compared with 10% of male-headed HHs
- Protracted IDPs fear forced recruitment (25.6%) more than recent IDPs (9.4%) or returnees (17.5%) (REACH JENA)

Increase in civilian casualties.

Civilians continued to suffer the effects of armed conflict in Afghanistan throughout 2018. Between 1 January and 31 March, 2018, UNAMA documented 2,258 civilian casualties (763 deaths and 1,495 injured), an increase of four per cent compared to 2017 at the same first quarter. While the number of civilian deaths increased by seven per cent from 2017 first quarter and the number of civilians injured increased by two per cent, the overall continuation of high numbers of civilian casualties underscores the enormous human cost of the ongoing armed conflict. Between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2017, the armed conflict in Afghanistan claimed the lives of 28,291 civilians and injured 52,366 others.

Adherence to the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution in the conduct of hostilities are often not respected by parties to the conflict. Further, practice of issuing advanced warnings to the civilian population as a precautionary measure is not regular and consistent by the parties to the conflict: warnings should leave adequate timeframe for all populations to voluntarily leave the areas where operations are to be conducted, although they do not rescind the obligation of the parties to the conflict from the absolute prohibition

UNHCR released **Returnee and IDP monitoring report**, based on the findings of the post-return monitoring of refugee returnees that have returned to Afghanistan in 2016 and 2017, as well as IDPs and general population, for comparison purposes.

For more details, [see report](#).

PROTECTION CLUSTER 2018 INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN EVIDENCE

Protection Incident Monitoring System (APC in-house)

Revision of the Protection Monitoring (UNHCR)

Nation-wide Protection Assessment for Afghanistan (REACH)

Support to the Whole of Afghanistan Assessment

Strengthening GBV IMS;

Continuation of MRM (child protection) and IMS MA (mine action)

to run military operations in areas populated by civilians and to target civilian objects in the area. Severe impact of the conflict on children is especially noticeable: UNAMA documented 583 child casualties (155 deaths and 428 injured) as a result of the armed conflict in the first three months of 2018, an overall decrease of 23 per cent compared to the same period in 2017. Children also suffered heavily from explosive remnants of war and IEDs. Contrary to overall trends, children increasingly suffered from pressure-plate improvised explosive devices (IEDs), emphasizing the extreme harm posed by these indiscriminate, victim-activated devices. UNAMA recorded decreases in child casualties from ground engagements and explosive remnants of war, and an increase in child casualties from aerial operations, in line with overall trends for these incident types.

Secondary displacement and lack of solutions for the urban displacement: 70% of IDPs reside in urban areas, like Kabul, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad. With limited job opportunities, no social protection nets and poor shelter conditions, displaced persons not only face increased protection risks in their daily life, but are also forced into secondary displacement and negative coping strategies, like child labour, early marriage, reducing quantity and quality of food etc. Humanitarian actors have limited resources to conduct interventions at the scale that urban context requires. Hence, development interventions are required together with integrated programs that include host communities and displaced population groups. Humanitarian actors are capable of playing an advisory role in designing programs and applying knowledge of the situation.

Solutions for prolonged IDPs and returnees therefore remains a key challenge. Protection Cluster and UNHCR have been continuously advocating to include prolonged IDPs and returnees in the development programs, like Citizen's Charter and others that aim at bringing sustainable solutions to the population in need.

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