

Moldova Protection Working Group Task Force on Trafficking in Persons

Terms of Reference

I. Background

In line with the Refugee Response Plan to the Ukraine Situation, the Protection WG in Moldova, chaired by UNHCR, and composed of UN and other international organizations and other stakeholders involved in the response, ensures efficient situational information management and supports country efforts in close collaboration and consultation with the relevant governmental counterparts. Furthermore, at the country level, thematic sub working-groups/task forces have been established to address critical issues (e.g. child protection, gender-based violence, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers etc.), with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of responses and avoiding gaps and duplication.

It is widely acknowledged that trafficking in persons (TiP) has been an existing protection concern in refugees contexts. In Moldova, the heightened risks of trafficking and exploitation for refugees and third country nationals fleeing Ukraine are connected, among other things, to the majority of these individuals being women and children, to family separations, limited access to existing protective mechanisms, and limited capacity of existing mechanisms to respond to increased needs. Coordinated anti-trafficking measures, therefore, must be developed and/or strengthened and the capacity of governmental authorities and service providers, as well as UN agencies, NGOs, and other frontline humanitarian stakeholders reinforced to ensure protection-sensitive mechanisms to effectively reduce these risks. Establishment of a TiP Task Force (TF), operating under the Protection Working Group, is proposed to support coordinated action to address these risks, ensure respect for victims' rights, and provide protection and assistance for victims throughout the response, following a do no harm and survivor centred approach.

The Secretariat of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Persons within the Human Rights and Social Dialogue Coordination Directorate of the State Chancellery, UNHCR, and IOM as co-chairs will coordinate the Task Force operation, ensuring coordination of interagency activities and regular information sharing; supporting existing national systems to increase capacity and available services, including through capacity development; developing a joint work plan; and contributing to awareness raising and risk assessment on trafficking in cooperation with the governmental authorities). The co-chairs will ensure inclusive and safe participation in the TiP TF, in particular of government actors working on anti-TiP, local civil society anti-TiP actors (with a particular focus on women led organizations and organizations working in child protection), humanitarian frontline Protection services, among other actors.

II. Objectives of the Task Force (TF) on TiP

- a. To facilitate the **compilation and dissemination of situational information and evidence** on risks of trafficking among the refugee and third-country nationals (TCN) population. Such information may be shared with other partners for the purpose of informing and supporting government-led efforts to combat TiP and ensure accountability and respect for the rights of survivors/victims and people at risk, at country and regional level.
- b. To **support effective and coordinated action** of partners involved in anti-trafficking responses at country, and, where relevant, regional, level. This may include, but not limited to, work among TF participants on coordinated gaps and needs assessments, joint advocacy, coordinated and/or joint awareness-raising, capacity development, technical assistance, and operational responses.

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- c. To **provide practical recommendations and advice at the operational level** to inform responses to identify, prevent, address, and respond to risks and incidents of TiP, with a focus on ensuring respect for the rights of survivors and people at risk. This may also include supporting non-protection actors' efforts in addressing vulnerability to exploitation.

III. Main tasks and responsibilities

The participants will be jointly responsible and accountable for achieving the objectives of the TF. Each participant will seek to share relevant information in a timely fashion and contribute actively to the collective work of the TF, bringing to its attention areas of need, opportunities, and other developments that could strengthen the effectiveness and coordinated nature of action to address TiP and related risks.

In close coordination and cooperation with other members, the co-chairs of the TF will be tasked with:

- Preparing TF meeting agenda, convening and co-chairing meetings, and ensuring secretariat support;
- Facilitating protection planning and strategy development/ refinement with respect to setting anti-trafficking priority interventions, targets, and indicators, taking into account existing frameworks and capacities, and in line with national and regional refugee response coordination.
- Encouraging active participation of all TF members and supporting ongoing information sharing and analysis of trends, needs, and gaps related to TiP.
- Monitoring responses to address TiP-related issues, leading on the drafting of situational and data updates, and ensuring their timely dissemination and sharing of lessons learned.
- Regularly liaising with and informing the Protection Working Group.
- Representing the TF in its interaction with external responders, together with other TF participants, as relevant.
- Monitoring the implementation of the TF objectives and tasks, ensuring that anti-trafficking priorities and targets set in the protection strategy are met, and reporting to the Protection Working Group on progress and achievements.
- Promoting core Protection principles across all anti-TiP activities and frameworks, including do no harm, non-discrimination, self-determination and participation of victims, accountability to affected populations, and an age, gender and diversity sensitive approach.

IV. Meeting schedule

In its initial phase of work, the TF meets once every two weeks, moving towards monthly meetings at a later stage (to be agreed among its members). In case of urgent matters, additional meetings may be convened by the co-chairs or upon request from a TF member.

V. Chairing

The TF will be co-chaired by the Secretariat of the National Committee on Combatting Trafficking in Persons within the Human Rights and Social Dialogue Coordination Directorate of the State Chancellery, UNHCR, and IOM.

VI. Membership

The TF will comprise agencies with expertise and/or operational capacity involved in the anti-trafficking response. It will be open to UN System Organisations and NGO networks working on TiP. Flexible options for participation will be provided, such as regular attendance and contribution, ad-hoc participation to contribute expertise or knowledge, debriefing opportunities.