



Protection Working Group

Meeting Details	
Date	07.09.2022- Next meeting on 21.09.2022
Time	10.00 am
Chair	Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator; Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugee Rights, Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair
Reporting	Olga Bitca, Protection Associate, UNHCR
Email	painter@unhcr.org , carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md
Agenda	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome & Review of Agenda• Situational update (CDA & INTERSOS)• Updates<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Temporary Protection (UNHCR)○ PAG (UNHCR)○ ICRC update on restoring family links (ICRC)• Presentations<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Child Protection (UNICEF & UNHCR)• Discussion<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Winterization• AOB• Close	



Participants			
<i>Tatiana Rotaru, Joint Management Crisis Center Ombudsperson Office Ministry of Internal Affairs Louis Mazel, US Embassy Tatiana Lungu USAID OSCE mission Moldova Martine Castaldello, OHCHR, Dawood Khan, UNICEF Andrew Painter, Olga Bitca, UNHCR Olesia Cazacu, UNDP</i>	<i>Svetlana Jioara, CDA/LCA Victoria Tipordei, CDA/LCA Stavros Zotos, Plan International Stefane Martello, ACTED Manuel Guzman, NRC Michele Livoni, DRC Hana Badando, MSF Moldova Laura Canali, Medical Corps, Panagiota Siafaka, IsraAID Anatol Donu, Caritas Czech Republic,</i>	<i>Maria Nazarenko, People in Need Adel Sasvari, Oxfam Diakonie, DKH Samuel Fensterheim, ICRC Aleksandra Andjelic, IRC Tatiana Pusca, CRS Oleg Hincu, Palladium Greta Heller, ADRA Nelly Sembiring Word Vision Anca Soldubanu, Clear Global Nicolas Karadjian, EPER</i>	<i>Tatiana Zalo, Terre des Hommes Andrei Lutenco, Moldova for Peace Nicolae Ciocan, Keystone Wolfgang Wedan, Jugend Eine Welt Women Rights Center Gabriela Ojog, Foundation for Advancement Elena Sirbu, Coalition Roma Voice</i>

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p>Agenda Point 1 Welcome & Review of Agenda Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator; Carolina Cazaciuc, Coordinator on Refugees Rights,</p>	<p>The PWG chair welcomed participants, thanked them for their presence and encouraged participants to attend in person for future meetings in order to have more engaging discussions. He presented the agenda of the meeting and asked the participants if there were any suggestions.</p> <p>If any modifications necessary to minutes of the PWG, to contact: bitca@unhcr.org</p>	<p>Agenda revised and agreed</p>



<p>Ombudsperson Office, Co-Chair. painter@unhcr.org, carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md</p>		
<p>Agenda Point 2 Situational Update Svetlana Jioara, Program Director, CDA/LCA svetlana.jioara@cda.md</p> <p>Ottavia Sanvito, South Protection, INTERSOS protection.south.moldova@intersos.org</p>	<p>The CDA Program Director, Svetlana Jioara, presented the latest developments for the 24.08-07.09.2022 period, at border crossing points (BCPs) (Palanca, Otaci, airport) and in the RACs.</p> <p>Palanca: Six individuals claimed asylum during at the BCP reporting period. There were also men who illegally crossed the border to avoid conscription in Ukraine and who requested asylum. The flow of people from Ukraine at BCP was medium, higher in the morning and later in the afternoon, with people moving in both directions.</p> <p>There were issues with no specialized medical assistance at Palanca. A man was in need of emergency medical help and emergency service was called. Food is provided by NGO Amici dei Bambini (daily) and a religious organization (not daily). The food is usually gone by 1:00 pm.</p> <p>Some students, especially heading to Poland and other EU countries, are allowed to cross by the Ukrainian authorities. Students who are not allowed to enter end up claiming asylum. The CDA/LCA representative noted a trend of refugees heading to the Transnistrian region, given lower cost of living or presence of relatives.</p> <p>Eight (8) UASC were observed traveling in both directions, all over 16 years, with guardianship authorities intervening.</p>	<p>Invitation for partners operational in Palanca to join the local coordination meeting; and for partners to join AAP Task Force meetings.</p>



Otaci: Movements in both directions, due to the simplified custom regime there. Movements also observed for the cash assistance registration and for cash withdrawal at ATMs. The main movement was of trucks. No requests noted for asylum or shelter. Entry of third Country nationals observed who previously had had legal residence in Ukraine. No UASC children observed.

Giurgiulesti: noticed an influx of returning persons, with some checking on their homes.

Costesti: concerning refugees coming via Transnistrian region, they are allowed to cross the border and exit the country, only after registration of their entry. There were reports of some people having to pay bribes of up to 2000 USD on the Ukrainian side to cross the border, the size of the bribes are between 500-2000 USD.

Airport: especially concerning arrivals from Otaci, persons are stopped if undocumented. These cases are referred to CDA, which is present at the airport. Third country nationals are usually claiming asylum or seeking contact with the Ukrainian Consulate.

RACs: Causeni and Vadul lui Voda are the most populated rayons with refugees. CDA counsellors visit them daily or once every three weeks. More requests for asylum or for other legal stay procedures are being reported, but still not that many overall. Many do not wish to apply for asylum because they do not want to surrender their identity and travel documents to the Bureau of Migration and Asylum in there is military action in Moldova.

The number of children enrolling in school to schools is increasing, but for full enrollment (not as auditors) it is necessary to claim asylum.

The **INTERSOS** representative, Ottavia Sanvito, agreed with CDA on the Palanca monitoring observations. She added that the coordination mechanism in Palanca at present is strong, with arrivals and services being coordinated. Most of the arrivals are from Odessa region, Nikolaev, but also Donetsk and Kiev. A small quantity of third country



	<p>nationals are also arriving, especially from Azerbaijan. The main destinations of the persons of concern are Romania, Germany, but also Austria, Czech Republic.</p> <p>Concerning vulnerabilities, there are elderly persons, but most of them are accompanied by their relatives, as well as persons with disabilities, in particular mental disabilities.</p> <p>Some arrivals have documentation issues, especially persons with former Soviet Union passports, mothers with children, Roma community.</p> <p>OXFAM representative, Adel Sasvari, expressed her concern about the food shortage at Palanca. She explained the content of food kits by OXFAM and asked if there is a need to scale up in order to meet the needs of persons of concern. A discussion engaged and the UNHCR chair of the meeting kindly suggested to interested partners operating in Palanca to attend Palanca coordination meetings.</p> <p>People in Need representative, Maria Nazarenko, asked about access to information for persons of concern and the confusion around multiple available hotlines. The CDA representative noted the particular interest in information for people living in RACs and host communities. The preference is to distribute written information in the form of leaflets, visits cards or handwritten. On providing information, CDA is also collaborating with Promo-LEX and the Red Cross on family reunifications.</p> <p>The UNHCR chair of the meeting noted the work of the AAP Task Force to rationalize and simply the different hotlines and suggested that interested partners attend AAP meetings.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 3 Update on the Temporary Protection</p>	<p>The UNHCR representative, Andrew Painter, provided an update on local coordination structures, the Protection Advisory Group (PAG) and Temporary Protection:</p>	<p>Invitation for local representatives of the PWG members to join local coordination structures if</p>



<p>Andrew Painter, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Sector Coordinator painter@unhcr.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local coordination structures are now in place in Otaci, Palanca, Cahul, Comrat, Balti, and Donduseni. PWG members who are operational in those areas are encouraged to join. A number of PWG members had expressed interest in being a member of the PAG. The deadline for submission of expressions of interest has been to this Friday, 9 September. Organizations requesting to participate will be asked to submit a short paragraph explaining their interest. Temporary Protection is expected to be activated by the Government. This is a positive step toward a more stable legal status, hopefully increasing school enrolment and employment opportunities. The current emergency laws will expire in early October. The PWG will coordinate inputs/comments on the draft TP Decision if/when it is published for comment. 	<p>operationally present in those regions.</p> <p>PWG members that expressed an interest in joining the PAG will be asked to submit a short paragraph describing their interest to the selection committee to review.</p> <p>PWG members are invited to participate in consultations on the Temporary Protection draft Decision, as soon as available.</p>
<p>Agenda Point 4 ICRC update on restoring family links</p> <p>Samuel Fensterheim, Protection Team Leader, ICRC</p>	<p>The ICRC representative, Samuel Fensterheim, explained ICRC’s restoring family links services. The ICRC and the different Red Cross and Red Crescent offices around the world continue to work in support of families who are looking for a missing family member as a result of conflict, migration or natural disasters, operating wherever they can. If persons of interest have lost contact with a family member and were not able to restore contact through their own means, please reach out for ICRC assistance.</p> <p>Red Cross is in a unique position to locate people who are missing and due to its neutrality and impartiality, can access people and locations that others can’t. The Restoring Family Links service is also one of ICRC’s most traditional activities and is linked to ICRC’s role in contributing to families’ “right to know” about the situation of a missing family members, especially when linked to a conflict situation.</p>	<p>Invitation to use the service of the restoring family links</p>



	<p>This service is free of charge, confidential and available to anyone in Moldova, Ukraine, Russia or Europe. ICRC can open a case and work with counterparts overseas to follow up on enquiries at: CHS_RFL_services@icrc.org, +373 68 012 733.</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 5</p> <p>Dawood Khan, Child Protection in Emergency Specialist UNICEF, CP SWG Co-chair dkhan@unicef.org</p> <p>Katherine Lampe, CP Officer, UNHCR and CP SWG Co-chair lampe@unhcr.org</p>	<p>UNICEF representative, Dawood Khan, shared the latest developments of the Child Protection Subworking Group, including updates and consultations on the winterization plan which were coordinated and shared with the Interagency forum.</p> <p>The CP SWG’s main targets are four (4) categories of children: UASC, undocumented children, children with disabilities, and children of families with low income and without appropriate heating. The planned winterization support includes the distribution of essential items and clothes and access to spaces with appropriate heating.</p> <p>Regarding the localization child protection referral pathways, a task force has been established to update the document, essentially on the basis of the 5Ws. The CP SWG intends to reach out to potential organizations for the mapping, divided in several regions. UNICEF invited interested PWG participants to join the CP SWG meetings.</p> <p>UNHCR representative, Katherine Lamp, presented that recently some questions and confusions had arisen regarding the ability of UASC children, especially between 16-18 years, to enter Moldova. This was mainly because of the difference between Ukrainian and Moldovan regulations. She reminded that the 1st protection screening is operated at the border:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no child is denied access to the territory, but authorities have in place child protection procedures on the Moldovan side. If a power of attorney is available for a separated child and no other concerns are raised, the family is allowed to proceed. 2. according to Ukrainian regulations, children of 16 years are allowed to travel alone and to cross the border without any caregiver or document. 	<p>Invitation to attend CPSWG meetings and to contribute to the update of the referral pathways. To continue the dialogue with the authorities on the UASC children.</p>



3. concerning separated children, the power of attorney if verified by the authorities and if no concerns, the Guardianship Authority will operate supplementary verification, for example, verification of the relationship between the adult and the child, and may contact the parents. If no documents available, Best Interest procedures will be activated.
4. concerning unaccompanied children, the child may not leave the border area without any adult. In a range of cases an adult might be waiting or approach the border with the appropriate legal documentation and pick up the child. If no adult is available, the Guardianship Authority will assume temporary guardianship of the child and will place him/her in foster care or a child placement center. There was a lot of confusion during the summer holidays on this, as Ukrainian tourism companies were booking trips for children over 16 years without a parent or guardian.

Another protection screening is operated as part of the cash assistance procedures. If any protection risks are identified, for example of trafficking, the case is referred to the Guardianship Authority and child protection partners which conduct case follow-up.

The **UNHCR chair** of the meeting suggested that the localization of child protection referral pathways be raised as well with the local coordination forums. He also encouraged collaboration among the PWG, SWGs and TFs on joint products/analyses, for example on children with disabilities.

The **UNHCR chair** also raised the question of available statistics on UASC refugee children in Moldova. A discussion engaged, **CDA representative** answered that there are no official statistics available, and that local public authorities and guardianship authorities might have better statistics than central authorities. **UNICEF** representative added that Blue-Dots have also some information, **Plan International** representative stated that they have tried to get this information and that Ave Copii NGO is gathering data. The **UNHCR chair** of the meeting encouraged continued dialogue with the authorities.



	<p>The IRC representative expressed his concern about the referral pathways and the OXFAM representative on the illiteracy of many refugees and that many do not have access to electronic devices.</p> <p>The UNHCR chair of the meeting reminded PWG members to join the AAP meetings on the subject of information provided to persons of concern and that the CP and GBV updated referral pathways will be circulated, the present one being on the Interagency Sharepoint: https://unhcr365.sharepoint.com/sites/RBE-RCM/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FRBE%2DRCM%2FShared%20Documents%2FCoordination%20Meetings%20in%20Moldova%2FSectoral%20Coordination%20Meetings%2FProtection%2FProtection%20%28overall%29%2FReferral%20Pathways&viewid=1cb2b04d%2D5c3b%2D45c6%2D915c%2Dac47cc027cba</p>	
<p>Agenda Point 6 Discussion on winterization</p>	<p>The PWG Sector Coordinator opened the discussion on winterization from a protection perspective.</p> <p>The People in Need representative stated that rising prices are raising many concerns and the refugee population is presenting multiple vulnerabilities. The risks are that closed RACs during summertime will be opened closer to the winter and that costs of the winterization will be on the local public authorities, but it is not clear they will be able to cover them. MoldExpo is being closed as costs of gas heating are high. They have asked to transfer the refugees to a location connected to centralized heating.</p> <p>The UNICEF representative answered that clothing for children and energy costs are of a particular concern. Access of children to heated area and provision of assistance for energy are priority measures.</p>	<p>PWG members and sector leads to send winterization inputs to Andrew Painter and Carolina Cazaciuc: painter@unhcr.org, carolina.cazaciuc@ombudsman.md</p>



A **UNHCR** representative noted that Local Public Authorities are very worried and are considering alternative methods of heating and humanitarian assistance from partners. The **UNHCR cochair of the CP SWG** commented that a move to on-line education is being considered by the authorities, as some schools will be not able to be heated. There is also the risk of increased vulnerability of children due, for example, to reduced access to heated meals.

The **ACTED** representative expressed her concerns about the costs of heating imposed on private families in the case of such measures as on-line education. Shoes and clothing is highly needed. The opening of heated community centers should be considered. There are also concerns about the tent camp and conditions during the winter especially at Palanca BCP.

Plan International representative noted that it is unknown if cash assistance will continue, and expressed concern about whether refugees will be aware on the winterization plan, isolation risks, trafficking risks.

UNHCR representative answered on the isolation that focus on mobile teams properly equipped for snowy roads should be considered might be a solution.

The **OXFAM representative** expressed her worries about the costs of heating and the possibility of evictions because of them. Some refugees are living in old houses which were inhabited for many years, and which use un safe sources of heating. One of the solutions might be scaling up the mobile outreach.

The **UNHCR chair** concluded that protection monitoring activities should be adjusted to take into consideration winter issues and to inform refugees of winterization services. He also noted that some partners may need to increase capacities to meet winter needs. This can be discussed at the winterization workshop next week, where each sector will present the proposals for the winterization strategy and plan.



Information collection and relevant links

Moldova operational data portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

Referral pathways:

<https://unhcr365.sharepoint.com/sites/RBE-RCM/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FRBE%2DRCM%2FShared%20Documents%2FCoordination%20Meetings%20in%20Moldova%2FSectoral%20Coordination%20Meetings%2FProtection%2FProtection%20%28overall%29%2FReferral%20Pathways&viewid=1cb2b04d%2D5c3b%2D45c6%2D915c%2Dac47cc027cba>

If necessary, feel free to add extra rows in the matrix above.