National Protection Cluster

Minutes of Meeting (09.07.20)

Locations: Webex

Agenda

1. Review of Action Points from 11.06.20
2. Strategic & Thematic Updates:
   a. Strategic Update from Ninewa / KR-I PWGs
   b. Strategic Update from C/S PWG
   c. Thematic Update from GBV Sub-Cluster
   d. Thematic Update from Child Protection Sub-Cluster
   e. Thematic Update from Mine Action Sub-Cluster
   f. Thematic Update from HLP Sub-Cluster
   h. Update from NPC – Update on HNO/HRP 2021; Development of the Protection monitoring; Update on Services Advisor
3. AOB

1. Review of Action Points from 11.06.20

Minutes adopted without amendments.

2a. Strategic Update from KRI & Ninewa PWG

Ninewa

- Jeddah: Security screening in Jeddah continue to be the source of protection concerns, with at least 16 arrests being conducted since May, including of 5 minors. Protection and legal aid actors are following-up on the detention cases. The return committee established by camp management and MOMD is facilitating returns through an harmonized process whereby camp management issues the departure letter and then informs the Qayara Mayor and MoMD about the planned returns so that they can provide transportation, issue security clearances and facilitate future transit through checkpoints. In recent weeks 83 HHs (420 individuals) returned to Ba’aj, Qayrawan, Badoush and Kisk. Camp management is planning to conduct a verification exercise to update information about the camp population, which will be closely monitored by protection actors. A quarantine area has been opened following suspected COVID-19 infection among security personnel. Arrangements are being made to ensure that protection partners and other actors have access to the quarantine area to provide PSS support, food and other type of assistance.

- Lock down measures in camps: On 4 July, DoH confirmed that a camp resident in HAA was transferred to a hospital and tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, the camp was put under full lockdown with only Health and WASH partners permitted entry. Five persons closely connected to the patient were also transferred to a hospital for testing. Members of the patient’s household and block residents were transferred to the quarantine area (in HAA Transit site) where they will remain for 14 days. Sector A is currently off limits for the rest of the camp. Initial contact tracing by health partners points to a source of transmission from inside HAA camp. On 2 July, a resident of Salamiyah camp reported having COVID-19 symptoms and was referred to a hospital after examination at the camp health clinic. A full lockdown was imposed in the camp until confirmation that the individual’s test was negative on 5 July.

Returns from Duhok to Ninewa

- As of 3rd July, close to 3,000 IDPs had departed from Sumel and 1,800 from Zakho district, Duhok (DTM data). It has been reported that an additional 115 have also returned in the 1st week of July. Almost 70% of these IDPs were living in various camps, compared to 30% in out-of-camp locations. One of the main reason explaining the increase in departure is the restriction on cross-border movements as a result of COVID-19, which resulted in many IDPs no longer being able to move back and forth to access their livelihoods and return to see their families. Protection partners are monitoring the situation to ensure that the process is voluntary and that IDPS
have access to sufficient information. So far, no incidents of forced returns have been reported. However, IDPs report that the administrative process to obtain security clearance and return authorization letter is complex and cumbersome as it involves multiple requests and layers of approval involving camp management, the Mayor’s office and JCCC, Asayish, MoMD etc. The main areas of return include Al Baaj (Al-Qahtanyak sub-district) and Sinjar (Al Shamal, Markaz Sinjar and Qayrawan sub-districts). Returnees face challenges when crossing the checkpoints, with some having to cross as many as 20-30 checkpoints. Returnees have not been provided medical PPE upon departure, thus leaving them exposed to the risk of COVID-19 contamination. Returnees in Sinjar face dire conditions characterized by the widespread destruction of homes and public infrastructures and the lack of access to basic services (health, water, livelihoods etc.). There are also protection issues related to the secondary occupation of homes as well as social tensions between returnees and host communities in some locations. Therefore, many returnees are not living in dignified and sustainable conditions and are exposed to the risk of secondary displacement.

Duhok

- **Small-scale displacement:** On 23rd June, 21 families have been displaced from Kashan Village, Balifa sub-district, Zakho district as a result of Turkish airstrikes on PKK locations in the area. One civilian casualty was also reported by civilian authorities. The displaced families were part of the host community and had not been previously displaced. The now displaced families have moved to various locations in Bartifa Sub district, Balifa sub district and Zakho center. No shelter issues were reported as people were hosted by relatives or other community members. The mayor or local authorities are reportedly providing sufficient assistance although access to water and loss of livelihoods were reported as issues.

Erbil

- **IDPs stranded at checkpoints:** In the 1rst week of July, it was reported that 10-15 families had been stranded at Sherawa checkpoint outside of Erbil city due to government imposed movement restrictions in response to COVID-19. The families are IDPs originating from other governorates, notably Kirkuk, who usually live in Erbil but had left the city to visit relatives in their areas of origin or for a diversity of reasons. They were blocked from re-entering Erbil and have been stranded for 15 days in dire conditions, i.e. with no proper shelter, insufficient water etc. Partners attempted to negotiate with the JCC to let them through on humanitarian grounds as some of the persons have specific vulnerabilities and needs, but this was denied due to the strict requirement for MoI authorization. Partners therefore counselled the families to no remain at the CP given that restrictions will remain in place in the foreseeable future.

Sulaymaniah

- **Returns to SAD:** On 28 June, a convoy transporting 35 families departed from Ashti camp in Sulaymaniyah and reached Yathrib and Dujail sub-districts in Salah Al-Din (SAD) as part of a return process organised by the MoMD branches in both governorates. An exit survey conducted by humanitarian actors indicated that for seven HHs there were some concerns about returns being somewhat forced or coerced due to various reasons. Only 25 families out of the 35 traveling in the convoy were in possession of medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), thus leaving 10 families exposed to the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the transportation. Although the return movement took place without major incidents, it was reported that at least four families were forced to pay 500,000 IQDs at the Abbasi checkpoint in Hawiga district in Kirkuk, in order to obtain security clearance from security actors and be granted permission to move to SAD.

There are indications that MoMD Sulaymaniyah and Salah Al-Din are planning to initiate the returns of more IDPs from Sulaymaniah. In total, there are over 2150 IDPs from Salah Al-Din who are residing in 4 camps in Sulaymaniah, primarily Ashti and Arbat camps. Partners are currently conducting an intentions survey to determine whether or not these families are planning to return to their areas of origin in Salah-Al Din, and if so when. So far, only a small minority of IDPs expressed their intentions to return, and even fewer are planning to do so in the next 6 months. Once finalized, the intentions survey will be used to advocate with the authorities on proper consultation and planning to anticipate any large-scale returns.
2b. Strategic Update from Central-South PWG

Anbar
- **Movement restrictions**: Restrictions have been placed on residents in AAF camps as a precautionary measure after a security actor at the main checkpoint into camp was tested positive for COVID. Residents of HTC camp face increased restrictions on movement out of the camp to seek medical assistance as a result of one camp resident departing the camp without authorization.
- **Tabriya and evictions**: Through its Civil-Military function, OCHA scheduled a meeting with the Commander of Anbar Operations Command. As of 8 July, at least 229 HHs have been threatened with eviction if they do not undergo the tabriya process - almost all in Fallujah district and some returnees from Al Hol in Al Qaim. The NPC has provided advocacy points regarding the tabriya issue, emphasizing:
  i) The importance of individual criminal responsibility as stipulated in the Constitution of Iraq, emphasizing the extreme anguish related to renunciation, as well as long-term legal consequences.
  ii) The importance of voluntary, informed and dignified returns in line with the rights to freedom of movement and residency in line with Iraqi law, and the Principled Returns Framework.
  iii) The need to consolidate security databases with all stakeholders, including ISF commands, federal police, military intelligence and local police, as well as civilian entities such as the MoMD, so as not to re-screen individuals who have already received a security clearance as part of the departure process to leave camp.

In the meantime, only one HH has been evicted back to AAF camp. HHs have been asked to report to their local police stations to confirm their continued presence in the area. The Anbar Legal Partners’ Group has decided not to intervene in cases unless affected HHs reach out directly as security actors have informed HHs not to share information with third parties, including humanitarian agencies.

- **Kilo 7**: Remote Intention Surveys started at the Kilo7 informal site in Ramadi by Blumont, IRC and NRC. The population is 512 HHs. The survey aims to collect detailed information about the protection concerns of IDPs and their future plans. The survey will provide evidence-based advocacy with the authorities given issues barring return, including shelter/infrastructure damage and/or tribal issues in several areas of origin.
- **Qaim**: At least 25 homes belonging to IDPs in Al Qaim are under occupation by PMF actors due to their presence near the border with Syria. Local community members, tribal leaders and authorities have asked PMF to withdraw so IDPs may return.

Baghdad
- **Al Sham informal site**: The 1 July GRC meeting scheduled with the Baghdad authorities to discuss the Al Shams plan was cancelled due to COVID-19. A new date has not yet been confirmed. OCHA met with the Baghdad Operations Command who said no orders have been given to close Al-Shams. OCHA emphasized that residents of Al Shams should not be moved against their will to Al-Ahel camp or be forced to return to their areas of origin in Anbar. They also noted that security clearances issued from Baghdad may not be viewed as legitimate by the Anbar authorities. 10 HHs have indicated willingness to return to Anbar and are in the departure process. The Al Shams plan was developed by members of the Baghdad GRC and ICCG and includes options for IDPs to move to Al Ahel camp, to return to areas of origin within Anbar and to remain in the area if possible.

Diyala
- **Sa’ad camp**: On 5 July, the Diyala authorities approved the GRC timeframe for the consolidation and closure of Sa’ad camp. The timeframe and adjacent plan were developed by members of the Diyala ICCG and GRC. The plan will replace an order by the MoMD to close the camp, as well as another order by the Governor to close the camp by 21 May that was put on hold due to COVID-19. The plan will allow the 106 HHs resident in Saad six weeks to decide whether to return to their areas of origin, relocate to Al-Wand camps with their caravans, or to locally integrate in Baquba. Returns and relocations will begin on 16 August, taking 3 weeks for relocation to Al Wand camps; 3-6 months for returns. The timeline is contingent on a) no new curfew hindering preparations and b) the COVID-19 situation being stable. The Government will ensure COVID-19 prevention measures and transport of the caravans, as well as continued services in Sa’ad camp for the next 6 weeks.
Kirkuk

- **Laylan camp:** 2 women with perceived affiliation to extremists were arrested in Laylan 1 camp. The arrest warrant was issued in 2018. This follows a pattern of security actors using old warrants for arrests due to turnover in leadership wherein previous releases are not seen as legitimate and as security databases undergo consolidation in Kirkuk city. The women were reportedly interviewed on a television programme about Daesh and are accused of sewing garments for fighters. Partners have also raised the Tabriya issue in Kirkuk, with actors gathering further information to understand the extent of the problem in the governorate.

Salah Al-din

- **Al Karama:** A police officer securing the checkpoint at Al Karama camp exhibited COVID-19 symptoms on 6 July. He was taken to Tikrit Hospital. The case has not been confirmed for COVID-19, but partners are working with health actors to understand if he had interactions with IDPs in camp. No further reports of COVID-19 have been reported following a confirmed case in Al Shahama village in June.

- **Returns from Sulaymaniyah to Yathrib:** Humanitarian actors have reported that a majority of the returnees’ homes are completely or partially destroyed, thus forcing many to stay with relatives or live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. In addition, lack of infrastructure and services in the areas of return, including shelter rehabilitation, provision of water and electivity, food and medical assistance, have seriously hampered the returnees’ ability to meet their basic needs. In Yathrib city, the Mayor has established a committee, together with representatives of health, education, mine clearance and civil documentation departments, to address key issues related to the return, and humanitarian actors are coordinating with this entity as regards the next round of returns to the city. Limited assistance will be distributed to the returnees.

- **Returns from Tuz Khurmatu City to Tooz District:** 100 HHs originating Hiliwa Kaber and Hiliwa Sagher villages in Suleiman Beg sub-district in Tooz district are scheduled to return to their areas of origin from displacement within Tuz Khurmatu. An additional 800 HHs have applied to return to Hafia Kabeer and Hafia Sagher villages in Suleiman Beg sub-district, Tooz district, with an unclear timeline for return as families continue to undergo security clearance screenings by security actors, including ISF and PMF. On 5 July, the SAD MoMD informed humanitarian partners that 100 HHs originating from Hiefa Al Asriya village have indicated their willingness to return. HHs have been displaced in Hamreen sub-district, Al Daur district since 2003. Most families belong to the Al Obeyed tribe, whose leaders met with the Governor of SAD, the Mayor of Tooz district and the Director of the SAD MoMD to discuss the return process. Tribal leaders report that the SAD governor will issue a letter shortly to facilitate their return. Tribal leaders have requested that humanitarian partners provide support regarding shelter and basic services as most infrastructure in Hiefa Al Asriya are destroyed. Lack of infrastructure, shelter damage and continued presence of armed groups create concerns for sustainability of returns. Further pressure on healthcare infrastructure in Salah al-Din due to the impact of COVID-19 is also concerning. On 2 July, health authorities confirmed at least 14 positive cases of COVID-19 in Tuz. Returns are being coordinated with local authorities, as well as ISF and PMF actors, with no indication of coercion thus far. A majority of returnees are Sunni Arab who have been barred from return since the 2014 conflict by PMF factions, who continue to secure large areas of Tooz district.

2c. Thematic Update from GBV Sub-Cluster

- **GBV SC co-lead:** Reference to the GBV Sub-Cluster call for expression of interest for the Co-Chair role, after a careful consideration based on interested organisations’ capacity, time and human resources commitment, organisation’s experience in the GBV programming and GBV SC coordination, as well as geographical coverage, NCA has been selected as the Co-Chair of the GBV Sub-Cluster. The GBV SC and other clusters will be notified about the prospective Co-Coordinator start date.

- **IHF:** The GBV Mini Strategic Review Committee reviewed and vetted 2 GBV proposals submitted for approval under the 1st Standard Allocation of IHF. The committee as part of the vetting exercise gave special consideration to the proposed projects linkages to the allocation strategy under IHF, GBV SC strategic objectives and response plan, as well as prioritized groups and regions. Further emphasis was made on a partnership-based consortium approach of INGO and local NGOs, so that localised approaches is integrated. In total, 2 projects submitted by IMC and Oxfam worth USD 1 million were approved and endorsed by the GBV SC Strategic Review Committee as well as National Protection Cluster Strategic Review Committee.
• **GBVIMS**: In order to improve the capacity of GBV data gathering agencies on GBVIMS, the GBV SC organized a 3 days online training from June 16-18 comprised of 10 modules, aiming to enable participants to develop their understanding and skills to effectively report on GBVIMS and manage the sensitive nature of GBV-related data. Next GBVIMS Online Training is scheduled on 12-13 July, 2020. Reporting of the biannual SG report for CRSV ongoing. The reports are conducted bi-annually and the GBVIMS Task Force has a Protocol in place for CRSV reporting. The GBVIMS data analysis of 2nd Quarter will be conducted soon. The key trends will be shared with the GBV Sub Cluster and the Protection Cluster for improving programming, coordination and advocacy. The GBV SC and GBVIMS Task Force is taking into consideration the roll-out of the GBVIMS+/ PRIMERO in Iraq. Meeting of the GBVIMS Task Force held with the Technical Unit of the GBVIMS+/ PRIMERO. Participants approved the roll-out of the GBIMS+ which will further improve data management and case management.

2d. Thematic Update from Child Protection Sub-Cluster

• **Activation of PSS TF**: After many queries on how to count PSS beneficiaries with the non-structured PSS activities and remote modalities, and with having partners using different content such as family-based PSS kits, adapted structured PSS Programs or internality developed content, the SAG members agreed to activate the PSS TF to work on all of those issues. To harmonize the response among CP partners and to also develop tools to measure the impact of the non-structured PSS activity.

• **Child Protection Case Management WG Assessment Results**: The CMWG conducted a data collection from the partners recently to have a better understanding on the case trends, high risk cases, modality of service delivery and challenges. The collected data were disaggregated by age, gender, case trends, type of the cases and the delivered services. Partners reported that they have received more domestic violence cases after covid-19. The CMWG will follow up with partners to work on the causes and design messages. On the challenges partners are facing, remote case management over the phone seemed to be a challenge especially when the family don’t have cellphone or not enough privacy for the child to talk with the case worker. The age of the children is another challenge for the CM workers especially when face to face modality is not applicable due to movement restriction or due to the concern of the family on meeting an outsider person during this time. The number of partners who reported back were not many but the CMWG will follow up bilaterally with the partners who provide CM services for IDPs & refugees and will keep this activity ongoing on quarterly bases.

• **AI Reporting & Orientation**: second orientation session in Arabic & English was organized for CP partners on reporting to AI and using the new COVID-19 Indicators. The session was recorded and has been shared with partners. The recording can be found on the following link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=763n9DGCyU&M&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=763n9DGCyU&M&feature=youtu.be)

• **IHF**: 2 projects out of 4 have passed the Strategic Review and Technical Review and were approved for funding. They both are CP standalone projects targeting districts in Kirkuk, Anbar, Baghdad, Najaf & Kerbela.

2e. Thematic Update from Mine Action Sub-Cluster

• **Mine Action operations**: The Directorate of Mine Action decided to resume clearance and technical survey operations in federal Iraq in areas prioritized in consultation with DNGO, NOC and the Governors and based on the capacity of the partners within the governorates. Risk education will be implemented remotely through mass media, posters, billboards and leaflets that will be provided in the affected areas. Partners are required to submit three-month plan to the DMA for approval prior to commencing risk education activities.

• **MASC coordination**: To enhance coordination and information sharing with non-mine action actors, the MASC members have recently volunteered to act as focal point of the MASC at the sub-national level in three governorates (Anbar, Salah Al- Din and Ninewa). In addition, one national NGO joined the MASC members to ensure mine action activities are well coordinated which increased the membership to 21 organizations.

• **Risk Education to humanitarian workers**: UNMAS risk education team provided online training to the IIC operators to help address the mine contamination claims from affected communities, and present key messages and referral pathways. Remote risk education sessions provided to 13 UNDP cash for work field monitors.

• **Clearance**: Humanitarian mine action actors reported the clearance of 64,751 square meter of land and removed 63 IEDs in Ramadi and Haditha in Anbar. In Salah Al-Din, 1 IED was removed in Baiji in June.
2f. Thematic Update from HLP Sub-Cluster

- **HLP issues in Sinjar:** With regards to the recent returns from Dohuk to Sinjar (see 2.a), the Higher Committee for Relief and Support for the Displaced and HLP partners reported that one of the main obstacles faced by returnees are HLP issues, in particular the secondary occupation of their property. As a result, many of the returnees are residing with their relatives. Currently, most of the properties of non-Yazidis are occupied by members of the Yazidi community and consequently the Yazidi families will have to release the occupied properties, which may lead to secondary displacement. Partners reported that a protest has been organized by Yazidi youth against other ethnic and religious groups such as Muslims Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens to prevent them from returning to their property. It is believed that the protest was organized by a political actor. In addition, there are reports that Muslim families are selling their properties are an underpriced rate due to these concerns. HLP Sub-cluster is mobilizing partners to provide to offer legal assistance and counselling to the affected household. HLP partners are in position to receive referrals of HLP cases from other partners and have the capacity to respond accordingly. Due to the politicized nature of the issue and the communal tensions at play, social cohesion actors may need to be involved to address the issue of secondary occupations in Sinjar.

- **Advocacy campaigns related to COVID-19:** HLP partners continued their advocacy for a moratorium on evictions that may be caused by the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. HLP partners have launched an advocacy campaign with local authorities in various governorates to promote the suspension of evictions of tenants who may lack the financial resources to pay rent. HLP partners have contacted the Crisis Cell Management to discuss this issue.

  ➔ **HLP sub-cluster and partners to provide an update at the next NPC meeting about the conduct and outcome of this advocacy campaign.**

- **Awareness-raising campaign during COVID-19:** HLP partners continue to conduct awareness-raising activities on HLP rights, compensation scheme, request for legal services (particularly on evictions related to non-payment of rents and utility bills) etc. Different approaches are being used, including radio channels, hotlines, workshops etc. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, HLP partners are facing challenges to submit compensation claims. As a result, the number of submitted claims is rapidly decreasing as compensation offices and public institutions are either working at limited capacity and with reduced working hours. To meet targets, HLP partners are reorganizing their work and started to submit cases on bulk in order to increase the number of claims submitted.

- **Suspension of opening new compensation office in Kirkuk:** HLP Sub-cluster has been informed that the decision for new compensation sub-offices that were planned to be opened in Kirkuk governorate has been suspended. HLP SC is not aware of the reasons why the decision has been suspended but is inquiring. HLPSC is concerned that this decision will heavily impact beneficiaries as they will incur additional costs for transportation to visit the compensation office to file their claim for compensation for their damaged/destroyed properties.

- **1st Standard Allocation of IHF:** HLP Sub-cluster in coordination with the Protection Cluster held its Strategic Review Committee to review the IHF proposals. The HLP SC has approved two projects for funding. Both projects have HLP and Protection component and will be covering the Ninewa, Kirkuk and SAD governorate to provide HLP services.

2h. Updates from NPC

**HRP 2021**

In June, the HCT reached the following agreements on the 2021 Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC):

- A 2021 HRP will be required in Iraq, given the global and local context
- The financial requirements for the 2021 HRP should be realistic and moderate
- There will be a standalone plan for durable solutions, not included in the HRP
- The HNO/HRP should have clear boundaries and be centered on the population still affected by the conflict with ISIL and the drivers of displacement.
- Continued focus on the same target populations as in 2020: camp-based IDPs, highly vulnerable out-of-camp IDPs and acutely vulnerable returnees in areas of high severity
- Response confined to the geographic areas where these conflict-affected populations are located (Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Duhok, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, Sulaymaniyah)
- Protection will be mainstreamed into all aspects of the response and not be presented as a consequence
- Coping mechanisms will be introduced as a consequence
- There will be no change to the costing methodology, i.e. Activity Based Costing (ABC) will continue in 2021
- The 2021 HRP should include a timeline for a transition out of the cluster system, i.e. defining benchmarks for improvements in the humanitarian situation, phasing out the humanitarian response and developing a strategy for linkages with and handover to durable solutions and development actors and plans.
Protection monitoring

- **Consultation with partners:** The NPC organized a feedback session with the dozen of partners involved in the protection monitoring initiative. The main feedback from partners related to the following points: 1) questionnaire (too long and questions too technical), 2) KI's dissatisfaction (with the lack of services delivery following interviews); 3) challenges for female KIs (difficult to identify them and to conduct interviews due to sociocultural norms); 4) geographical coverage and coordination (some overlap in areas where a large number of partners operate) and 5) information products (dashboards and analytical briefs are useful and pertinent)

- **Future developments:** The NPC is currently working on developing a revised protection monitoring system, which will be less focused on the impact of COVID-19 but will allow for a more generic monitoring of protection issues. The feedback shared by partners will be integrated in the revised methodology and tools, for instance by reducing the frequency of KIs to reduce assessment fatigue and mitigate expectations in terms of service delivery, by simplifying the questionnaire to make interviews faster and easier, by reorganizing the geographical distribution of partners where necessary etc. In discussion with the Global Protection Cluster, the NPC is planning to develop an integrated “toolbox” of various protection monitoring tools that would be at the disposal of partners willing to use them. This would include the following tools: 1) community level monitoring through KI interviews (the priority); 2) household level assessment tool (which may be developed at a later stage); 3) returns monitoring (currently being discussed with the RWG and Durable Solutions Network) and 4) Incident reporting (Civilian character of camp and Rights violations matrices, already developed). The NPC coordination team is working on the development of the revised methodology and tools and will share further information with interested partners after review and approval from the SAG.

**Services Advisor**

As of 12 July, NPC will deactivate the online service mapping tool and request partners to update the services locations/modalities on Services Advisor. The online services mapping tool was developed to serve as a temporary tool to capture in a flexible way the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the services delivered by partners. As the COVID-19 restrictions continue, it was decided to return to Services Advisors as the only services mapping tool to avoid reporting burden for partners. At present, there are a total of active services in 397 locations and 59 organizations with active services. It is essential for partners to 1) review all existing locations and edit the list of services provided, 2) specify the exact location (sub-district level), 3) update focal point details for each location and 4) specify the alternative modalities of service provision during COVID-19 period in the comment box.

**3. AOB**

- The next NPC meeting will be on **Thursday, 13 August**.