The National Protection Cluster (NPC) is coordinating a joint protection monitoring exercise at the community level through key informant interviews to measure the protection impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict-affected and displaced communities in Iraq. The fourth round of data collection took place from 28 June - 19 July 2020 with 11 organizations interviewing 5142 respondents in 17 governorates and 127 sub-districts. Interviews were conducted in IDP camps, informal sites and out-of-camp/return areas.

Impact of COVID-19 measures and regulations

- 62% of respondents in camps report a ban on entry into / exit from camps, but with exceptions. The highest level of reporting is 78% in Ninewa and Anbar governorates, compared to 60% in Erbil, 16% in Duhok and 0% in Kirkuk governorates. 7% of respondents in camps in Iraq also report a ban on entry into / exit from camps, but without exceptions.
- 27% of respondents in camps report a ban on new admissions to camps. The highest level of reporting is 37% in Erbil governorate, compared to 33% in Ninewa, 6% in Duhok, 2% in Anbar and 0% in Kirkuk governorates.
- 41% of respondents in out-of-camp locations report facing restrictions on access to markets compared to 8% in camps. The highest level of reporting for out-of-camp locations is 76% in Kirkuk governorate, compared to 70% in Salah Al-Din, 47% in Anbar, 41% in Ninewa, 38% in Diyala, 31% in Duhok and 21% in Erbil governorates.
- 7% of respondents in camps report facing restrictions on access to health facilities, compared to 5% in out-of-camp locations. All locations combined, the proportion is the highest in Salah Al-Din governorate with 11%.
- The first main consequence reported for breaching public health regulations is a verbal warning cited by 61% of respondents in camps and 74% out-of-camps. The second main consequence is a fine, with arrest coming as third. The highest level of reporting for arrest is 55% in Duhok governorate, compared to 45% in Anbar, 25% in Diyala, 24% in Salah Al-Din, 23% in Ninewa, 18% in Erbil and 16% in Kirkuk governorates.
- 20% of respondents in camps report that measures and regulations apply solely or more strictly to IDPs and/or returnees, compared to 4% in out-of-camps. In camps, the highest level of reporting is 64% in Anbar governorate, compared to 24% in Ninewa, 17% in Erbil and 0% in Kirkuk, Duhok and Diyala governorates.

General protection

- 85% of respondents in camps report that protection issues affecting communities have significantly or very significantly increased since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to 67% in out-of-camps. The highest level of reporting for all locations is 98% in Anbar governorate, compared to 86% in Kirkuk, 83% in Salah Al-Din, 73% in Ninewa, 68% in Erbil, 47% in Duhok, 41% in Diyala governorates.

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3 The participating organizations are Dorcas, DRC, Heartland Alliance, Harikar, Intersos, IOM, IRC, LCN, Nonviolent Peaceforce, SWEDO, UNHCR.
Restrictions on freedom of movement are identified as the first main protection concern affecting communities, reported by 70% of respondents in camps and 65% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 90% in Anbar governorate, compared to 83% in Kirkuk, 80% in Duhok, 78% in Salah Al-Din, 64% in Ninewa, 45% in Erbil and 41% in Diyala governorates.

Trauma, stress and anxiety are identified as the second main protection concern affecting communities, reported by 61% of respondents in camps and 42% in out-of-camps. The highest level of reporting is 61% in Duhok governorate, compared to 51% in Ninewa, 45% in Salah Al-Din, 45% in Erbil, 32% in Kirkuk and 28% in Diyala governorates.

Lack of civil documentation is identified as the third main protection concern affecting communities, reported by 51% of respondents in camps and 18% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 44% in Ninewa governorate, compared to 32% in Anbar, 23% in Duhok, 21% in Salah Al-Din, 15% in Kirkuk, 12% in Erbil and 1% in Diyala governorates.

Lack of access to health care is identified as the fourth main protection concern affecting communities, reported by 39% of respondents in camps compared to 16% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 43% in Salah Al-Din governorate, compared to 31% in Ninewa, 27% in Anbar, 16% in Kirkuk, 8% in Duhok and 4% in Diyala governorates.

Social-cohesion issues are identified as the fifth main protection concern affecting communities, reported by 27% of respondents in camps compared to 12% out of camp. The highest level of reporting is 32% in Salah Al-Din governorate, compared to 24% in Duhok, 16% in Anbar, 12% in Ninewa, 11% in Kirkuk and 2% in Erbil governorates.

Gender-based violence

78% of respondents in camps report that protection issues affecting women and girls have significantly or very significantly increased since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to 63% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 97% in Anbar governorate, compared to 86% in Kirkuk, 69% in Salah Al-Din and Ninewa, 63% in Erbil, 47% in Duhok and 40% in Diyala governorates.

Trauma, stress and anxiety are identified as the first main protection concern affecting women and girls, reported by 67% of respondents in camps and 63% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 85% in Duhok governorate, compared to 79% in Kirkuk, 75% in Erbil, 70% in Anbar, 67% in Ninewa, 65% in Salah Al-Din and 55% in Diyala governorates.

Lack of specialized services for women is identified as the second main protection concern affecting women and girls, reported by 59% of respondents in camps and 39% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 57% in Duhok governorate, compared to 55% in Ninewa and Salah Al-Din, 44% in Anbar, 34% in Kirkuk, 27% in Diyala and 24% in Erbil governorates.

Lack of safe space and privacy is identified as the third main protection concern affecting women and girls, reported by 39% of respondents in camps and 35% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 59% in Salah Al-Din governorate, compared to 49% in Kirkuk, 44% in Anbar and Duhok, 41% in Ninewa, 14% in Erbil and 12% in Diyala governorates.
• Lack of access to sexual and reproductive health is identified as the fourth main protection concern affecting women and girls, reported by 32% of respondents in camps and 23% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 46% in Salah al-Din governorate, 39% in Ninewa, 28% in Kirkuk, 18% in Anbar, 21% in Duhok, 11% in Erbil and 3% in Diyala governorates.

• Violence and abuse within the household is identified as the fifth main protection concern affecting women and girls, reported by 26% of respondents in camps and 22% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 43% in Kirkuk, 36% in Salah al-Din, 30% in Diyala, 27% in Ninewa, 22% in Duhok 20% in Anbar and 11% in Erbil governorates.

Child protection

• 82% of respondents in camps report that protection issues affecting children have significantly or very significantly increased since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to 61% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 99% in Anbar governorate, compared to 98% in Kirkuk, 76% in Salah Al-Din and Ninewa, 69% in Erbil, 56% in Diyala and 43% in Duhok governorates.

• Lack of access to education is identified as the first main protection concern affecting children, reported by 87% of respondents in camps and 74% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 92% in Kirkuk governorate, compared to 87% in Anbar, 84% in Ninewah, 78% in Duhok, 72% in Salah al-Din, 67% in Erbil, 63% in Diyala governorates.

• Trauma, stress and anxiety are identified as the second main protection concern affecting children, reported by 60% of respondents in both camp and out-of-camp locations. The highest level of reporting is 92% in Kirkuk governorate, compared to 77% in Duhok, 64% in Erbil, 56% in Anbar, 55% in Ninewa, 44% in Salah al-Din and 32% in Diyala governorates.

• Child labor is identified as the third main protection concern affecting children, reported by 39% of respondents in camps and 34% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 69% in Kirkuk governorate, compared to 52% in Salah al-Din, 40% in Ninewa, 33% in Erbil, 25% in Diyala, 21% in Duhok and 20% in Anbar governorates.

• Violence, abuse or neglect within the household are identified as the fourth main protection concern affecting children, reported by 25% of respondents in camps and 13% out-of-camp. The highest level of reporting is 33% in Salah al-Din, 29% in Kirkuk, 26% in Anbar, 20% in Ninewah, 10% in Duhok, 4% in Erbil and 3% in Diyala governorates.

Access to services and basic needs

• The first main socioeconomic impact reported is the loss of employment and livelihoods, reported by 86% of respondents in camps compared to 93% out-of-camp. The second main impact reported is the difficulty or inability to purchase basic necessities, reported by 41% of respondents in camps and 68% out-of-camp; and the third main impact is the inability or difficulty to pay rent cited by 74% of respondents out-of-camp.

• The first main coping mechanism reported is reducing or changing food consumption, reported by 70% of respondents in camps and 76% out-of-camp. The second main coping mechanism is going into debt, reported by 68% of respondents in camps and 72% out-of-camp. The third main coping mechanism is spending savings, reported by 56% of respondents in camps and 74% out-of-camp. The fourth main coping mechanism is reducing the purchase of non-food items, reported by 60% of respondents in camps and 70% out-of-camp.
• Other coping mechanisms directly linked to protection risks are also being reported, including continuing to work despite government restrictions cited by 20% of respondents, use of child labor to generate an income cited by 14% and begging cited by 9%. The use of marriage - including child marriage - to generate an income or settle debt is also reported by 9% of respondents in camps.

• 31% of respondents report that none or not all of their community members have access to health care, with similar proportions in both camp and out-of-camp locations. The highest level of reporting is 72% in Salah al-Din governorate compared to 69% in Anbar, 41% in Ninewah, 30% in Kirkuk, 21% in Diyala, 15% in Erbil, and 7% in Duhok governorates.

• The first main barrier to access health care is the lack of medical facilities and personnel, cited by 23% of respondents. The second main barrier is the cost of medical care, cited by 18%. The third main barrier is the lack of information about medical facilities, cited by 14%. The fourth main barrier is the distance and lack or cost of transportation, cited by 12%. The fifth main barrier is the fear of mandatory quarantine or isolation at a government facility, cited by 9%.