

Protection Issues in Somalia

Abuses, such as physical assault, killing, gender based violence, child recruitment, illegal arrests and detentions, and evictions have been identified by the Protection Monitoring Network (PMN) as widespread protection issues in Somalia. These serious violations allegedly are being perpetrated with impunity by parties to the conflict and community members with devastating effect on Somalia's civilian population.

Humanitarian workers, as well as, human rights defenders, journalists, and members of civil society continue to be killed, abducted, or otherwise subjected to violence in Somalia.

The number of IDPs living in Somalia is estimated at 1.55 million. While most Somalis fled to nearby areas within Somalia, others left Somalia and made their way mainly to: Yemen, Kenya, and Djibouti. In Yemen alone approximately 16,700 arrived this year (See *OCHA Human Smuggling Fact Sheet*). Additionally, 503,000 Somali refugees are currently registered in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Eritrea, Uganda, Yemen, Djibouti, and Kenya.

Protection encompasses all activities aimed at securing full respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. Protection activities aim to create an environment in which human dignity is respected, specific patterns of abuse are prevented or their immediate effects alleviated, and dignified conditions of life are restored through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation.

This definition, originally developed over a series of ICRC-sponsored workshops, (ICRC 2001) was adopted by the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC)

Humanitarian response

Protection Strategy for Somalia for 2010: The Inter Agency Standing Committee's key strategic protection priority is: *"vulnerable populations, with particular focus on women and youth, will have a strengthened protective environment through advocacy, community mobilisation, and access to services"*. The Protection Cluster's work with focus on three main objectives: (1) Enhancing accuracy of knowledge of the protection environment of civilians in order to better inform and improve programmatic response and advocacy activities; (2) Strengthening the capacity of communities to reduce vulnerabilities and increase protection; and (3) Increasing access to services for those who have experienced fundamental human rights violations. As part of the overall strategy, the Protection Cluster will also strengthen linkages in particular with the Livelihoods Cluster, but also will provide guidance and support capacity building initiatives by other Clusters, Sectors, and Theme Groups, with the aim of improving programmatic responses and mainstreaming protection in other areas of humanitarian response.

Protection Monitoring Network (PMN): The PMN aims to track systematic patterns of protection concerns and to inform response processes. More than 80 national NGOs are involved in the Network. The PMN is closely linked with the Population Movement Tracking (PMT) system that was developed to track the rapid and constant movement of people. Both function to alert all concerned parties on emerging protection issues, new areas of vulnerability, and identification of long-standing problems.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): In line with the Secretary General bulletin '*Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse*,' Networks on PSEA were formed in Nairobi and in various field locations in Somalia during 2008 and 2009. The Network comprises of UN and NGOs, and serves as the primary body for coordination and oversight on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse of the beneficiary population by both international and national staff of UN and NGOs and affiliated organizations.

Sexual exploitation is defined as: *"any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another"*.

Sexual abuse is defined as *"The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions"*.

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Humanitarian Partners and Coordination Mechanism

The IDP Working Group chaired by UNHCR and UNOCHA was formed in 2005, while the Protection Cluster was formed in 2006, and is chaired by the same agencies. Both bodies are critical to a collaborative approach on protection and are replicated in various locations in Somalia. Active members of the IDP Working Group and the Protection Clusters are: Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council, FERO, INTERSOS, HISAN, Center for Peace and Democracy (CPD), IOM, UNDP, RASSOS, UNFPA, Relief International, International Rescue Committee, Bay Women Development Network (BWDN), Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC), UNAIDS, Improved Sanitation for Community Development (ISACOD), ASEP, UNICEF, Oxfam-Novib, AFREC, FAO, World Vision, SC-UK, Action Aid International, UNIFEM, as well as, other international and local organizations.