

IASC BENCHMARKS ON THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

An introduction

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WHAT IS A PROTECTION RISK?

- A 'protection risk' is when a **right** is being or may be **violated** by any stakeholder (incl aid workers)
- A **protection risk** is the combination of a **threat**, the **vulnerability** to that threat, and the **capacity** to resist or rebound from that threat.
- We can **reduce** a risk by:
 - reducing the threat
 - reducing vulnerability to that threat;
 - increasing peoples' capacity to respond to that threat.



FORCED EVICTION

THREAT

- Technical assistance to gov to strengthen domestic legislation on tenancy rights
- Lobby local authorities to guarantee tenancy rights
- Lobby gov and development partners to make long-term housing options available
- Support landlords to upgrade accommodation

VULNERABILITY

- Provide multi-purpose cash support
- Provide livelihood opportunities to increase income
- Provide rental subsidies

CAPACITIES

- Referrals to legal aid services
- Public campaign on tenancy rights
- Empower community networks to lobby gov

CONCEPTUALISING THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

- ❖ IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016).
- ❖ IASC members are required to **work together to understand/analyse and seek to prevent, mitigate or end protection risks** (i.e. violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law).
- ❖ **Collective** action should be taken at **global, regional and country levels**.
- ❖ At country level, under the leadership of the HC, **all HCT members** have a responsibility to contribute to a collective protection response, **drawing on their individual mandate, expertise and capacities**.
- ❖ An HCTs' collective protection response must be underpinned by **humanitarian principles and international law**, and be **designed and undertaken with affected people**, supporting their and other **local actors' capacities**.

OPERATIONALISING THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

Based on a **shared analysis** of protection risks, agreeing 2-3 priorities outcomes (i.e. 2-3 risks that the HCT will try to reduce):

Discrimination against women, girls, and other vulnerable groups **is reduced** through improving the safety and dignity of all women, girls, and ethnic as well as religious minorities.

(Afghanistan)

Promote + strengthen capacities of vulnerable people, with support of communities and the state, **to prevent abuse, violence, exploitation and exclusion** (Haiti)

Ensure life-saving assistance is prioritized by all humanitarian actors for most affected population groups and households, **based on needs and** a common understanding of vulnerability and **at heightened protection risks exposure** (NW Syria)

Reduce indiscriminate **attacks on civilians** and **civilian assets** (Somalia)

Prevent further displacement and mitigate the impacts of long-term displacement, especially for the most vulnerable (NW Syria)

Reduce the risk of exclusion and denial of access to assistance (Somalia)

OPERATIONALISING THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

Taking a combination of actions at institutional and interagency levels **to address agreed priorities:**

- 1. Mainstreaming protection:** design and deliver programmes in a way that does not create new or exacerbate existing risks that crisis-affected people face. *Example: Provide shelter materials and appropriate distancing between dwellings that provide maximum privacy and dignity for households.*
- 2. Integrating protection:** protection and other sectoral objectives are combined in one programme/intervention. *Example: a joint Shelter-Protection cluster programme reduces the risk of forced eviction through combining rental subsidies and support to landlords for shelter upgrades and advocacy with local authorities on long-term shelter solutions for IDP households.*
- 3. Advocating on protection:** engaging duty bearers (state and non-state actors) on a bilateral basis or as part of an IASC or other interagency strategy with the aim of securing better protection of affected people. *Example: The shelter cluster contributes evidence and language for HC and HCT key messaging on conflict-related impact on the right to adequate housing (e.g. destruction/damage to residential properties).*
- 4. Specialised Protection Services:** specialised activities and programmes implemented by specialist/protection-mandated organisations that are designed to meet targeted protection objectives (e.g. child protection, mine action, housing land and property rights, etc). *Example: Protection cluster members support displaced households to obtain replacement legal ID to facilitate their HLP rights and access to health, education and other essential services.*

WHAT ARE THE IASC BENCHMARKS?

- The IASC Benchmarks on the Centrality of Protection are designed to help HCTs embed protection in their collective response.
- **Benchmark 1 (Analysis and Prioritization)** requires HCTs to:
 - undertake continuous analysis and monitoring of the protection risks prevalent in their context as articulated by affected people
 - use this analysis to agree 2-3 risks that they will prioritize for collective action
- **Benchmark 2 (Response Planning and Implementation)** requires HCTs to:
 - design and implement a collective, adaptive, multidisciplinary **action plan** to reduce the 2-3 prioritized risks
- **Benchmark 3 (Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation)** requires HCTs to:
 - regularly monitor and document any results and make necessary adaptations to the action plan in real time to seek to enhance results.

WHO SHOULD USE THE BENCHMARKS?

- The Benchmarks are intended for HCTs to support their collective action to reduce identified protection risks.
- The document sets out the different roles and contributions of different actors within an HCT – including HCs, heads of HCT member organisations, inter-cluster, protection cluster and other cluster coordinators.
- The Benchmarks are intended to support each member of an HCT in understanding where and how they can use their capacities to contribute to the collective protection response.

HOW SHOULD HCTS USE THE BENCHMARKS?

- The Benchmarks are not specifically tied to the HPC process. They can be used for any collective humanitarian planning process and response in any type of crisis.
- The Benchmarks are a **guide** – they allow **flexibility** in how each HCT wishes to take action to design and implement their collective protection response in their **context**.
- The Benchmarks should be used alongside existing guidance on the Humanitarian Programme Cycle – the three Benchmarks align with the different stages of the HPC:
 - Steps 1-7 align with Benchmark 1;
 - Steps 8 and 9 align with Benchmark 2; and
 - Step 10 and subsequent HPC mid and end of year reporting can/should incorporate reporting on the results achieved through the protection action plan.
- The Benchmarks are not compulsory but reporting against them can support accountability of the HCT to affected people and other local stakeholders, to donors and to the wider IASC.

WHAT IS YOUR CLUSTER'S ROLE?

Your cluster's role varies according to context and local arrangements but likely involves:

- **Benchmark 1:**
 - Contribute to the HCT's **analysis** of protection risks
- **Benchmark 2:**
 - Contribute to development of the HCT's **action plan**
 - Set out how the cluster response plan **contributes** to that HCT action plan.
- **Benchmark 3:**
 - Support development of indicators and a methodology to **monitor outcomes** of HCT's action plan *as appropriate*
 - Support **gathering and analysis of data** against those indicators *as appropriate*
 - Advise on **adaptations** to the HCT's action plan that are necessary to improve outcomes *as appropriate*

WHAT IS YOUR CLUSTER'S ROLE?

PRIORITY RISK: discrimination-based exclusion and denial of access to assistance

**Benchmark 1:
ANALYSIS?**

**Benchmark 2:
RESPONSE?**

- Mainstream?
- Integrate?
- Advocate?