

Provision of Assistance to Displaced Populations in Flux during Ongoing Conflict

Displaced populations have significant assistance needs during ongoing conflict. Meeting these immediate, life savings needs in a manner that maximizes individual/group choices and minimizes protection risks is the paramount priority of the humanitarian community. Recently, CCCM and Protection cluster colleagues learned that some humanitarian actors were about to sign and MoU with Government on establishment of “an IDP Camp” in an urban setting where displaced persons were primarily seeking physical security. This, together with state level inquiries on establishment of camps, suggests a need to look at consistent approaches to provision of assistance in the unique context of South Sudan. Given the diversity of need and fluidity of the operational context, humanitarian response must apply a range of assistance modalities in line with global IASC and CCCM principles which view the formal “camp model” as a mechanism of last resort. This means that assistance needs and modalities must be rapidly assessed and responded to on a case by case basis, without being distracted by ongoing dialogue with respect to encampment.

Key messages for HCT engagement in light of the current context in South Sudan:

- The humanitarian community will continue to engage with the people of South Sudan and their representatives to explore the best modalities to provide assistance to people affected by conflict, to reduce impact and enable durable solutions where possible.
- Encampment is a last resort option and has serious consequences in terms of diversion of aid, aid dependency, protection risks to the populations in particular in light of the serious human rights violations that have been observed.
- Assistance can be delivered outside formal camps and in different settings. Establishing camps is an option of “last resort” and a range of other options are available to address the complexity of displacement in South Sudan. Ensuring that humanitarian assistance is provided in an effective, appropriate, principled manner is a paramount consideration.
- Protection of civilians, namely the safety and security of civilians impacted by violence and conflict should remain a primary consideration in all decision-making.
- Encampment is a costly process with low guarantee of working, increasing aid dependency and potentially prolonging assistance and conflict patterns